

**To all Members of the County Council**

An ordinary meeting of the County Council will be held at **10.30 am** on **Friday, 15 July 2022** at **County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ**.

**Agenda**

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Members' Interests**

Members are asked to disclose any pecuniary or personal interests in matters appearing on the agenda.

3. **Minutes** (Pages 5 - 26)

The Council is asked to confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the County Council held on 27 May 2022.

4. **Result of By-election** (To Follow)

To receive the County Returning Officer's return of the by-election held on 7 July 2022 for the Worthing West electoral division.

5. **Review of Proportionality** (To Follow)

The County Council must, following a by-election, review the proportionality on its committees. An explanation of the proportionality rules and how they are applied together with a table showing the number of seats on committees will follow.

6. **Appointments**

(a) **Committee Appointments**

Following the by-election, to consider any proposed changes to appointments. Proposals will be circulated. Changes will take effect from the end of the meeting.

(b) **Appointment of Co-opted Member**

The Council is asked to approve the appointment of Mrs Julie Oldroyd, the current Deputy Director of the Education Service for the Catholic Diocese of Arundel & Brighton, as a voting co-opted member of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee. The appointment will take effect from 1 September 2022 when Mrs Oldroyd takes up her new post of Director of the Education Service for the Diocese.

7. **Address by a Cabinet Member**

At the discretion of the Chairman, to receive an address by a Cabinet Member on a matter of urgency and/or significant interest to the County Council and which relates to the powers and responsibilities of the County Council or which affects the Council.

8. **Governance Committee: Constitution Review** (Pages 27 - 34)

The Council is asked to review the changes made to Standing Orders to provide for virtual meetings and proposals for meeting cancellation, substitutes and treatment of notices of motion at Council, in the light of a report by the Governance Committee.

9. **Report of the Corporate Parenting Panel** (Pages 35 - 68)

The Council is asked to consider and note the report of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

10. **Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee: Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22** (Pages 69 - 78)

The Council is asked to note the Scrutiny Annual Report which summarises the main outcomes of scrutiny, best practice, lessons learnt, and any development issues identified during 2021/22, in the light of a report by the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee.

11. **Standards Committee: Annual Report 2021/22** (Pages 79 - 80)

The Council is asked to note a report from the Standards Committee on its activities for the period from April 2021 to March 2022.

12. **Question Time** (Pages 81 - 86)

Questions to the Leader and Cabinet Members on matters in the Cabinet report, written questions and any other questions relevant to their portfolios. Members may also ask questions of the Leader on anything current, relevant to the County Council. The report covers portfolio-related business since the meeting of the Council on 27 May 2022. A supplementary report may be published.

(2 hours is allocated for Question Time)

**Lunch (In the event that morning business is finished before lunch afternoon business will be brought forward.)**

13. **Notices of Motion**

(a) **Motion on Integrated Care System**

To debate the following motion, submitted by Cllr Ali, notice of which was given on 28 June 2022.

'This Council:

- (1) Welcomes the formation of the Integrated Care System (ICS) for Sussex from 1 July in accordance with the provisions of the Health and Care Act 2022.
- (2) Welcomes the opportunity afforded by the ICS to develop deeper collaboration between the NHS, local government and other partners to deliver improved outcomes in population health, address inequalities, improve productivity and value for money, and support social and economic development.
- (3) Notes that the Integrated Care Strategy, to be approved by the Sussex Health and Care Assembly, aims to improve health and care for the Sussex population and that the three Health and Care partnerships have responsibility for delivering improved and joined-up health and care across West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, and East Sussex.
- (4) Notes that the three Health and Wellbeing Boards have responsibility for agreeing Health and Wellbeing Strategies and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments for the three local authority areas, and so identify priorities for each place within the ICS.
- (5) Notes that while some health and care priorities will be pan-Sussex in nature, others will be more localised and place-based.
- (6) Calls upon the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing, as Chairman of the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB), to ensure that the HWB exerts its influence so that the Integrated Care Strategy reflects local place-based needs and priorities, and that the same inform the development and delivery of services via the three Health and Care Partnerships, noting that the Sussex Integrated Care Board and the Sussex Health and Care Assembly both have duties to consider HWB plans.'

(b) **Motion on Support for Carers**

To debate the following motion, submitted by Cllr O'Kelly, notice of which was given on 28 June 2022.

'The current cost of living crisis is leading to increased energy bills, food prices and fuel costs for West Sussex residents. Although fuel duty was cut by 5 pence per litre in the Spring Statement, prices continue to rise and are at

record highs.

West Sussex has 33,000 registered carers. They provide essential support in keeping residents in their homes with or close to their family and friends, and help to minimise the provision of costly in-home care visits and residential care. Many of our carers live with the person they care for but, for those who are not living with the person they care for, the impact of increased fuel bills is making the daily financial burden of being a carer even harder to manage.

In order to help these carers to continue to care, this Council calls on the Cabinet Member for Adults Services to set up an emergency fuel fund for registered carers, with the precise details of the funding and eligibility criteria left to the Cabinet Member.'

### **County Council concludes**

Items not commenced by 4.15 p.m. will be deferred to the following meeting.

Director of Law and Assurance  
6 July 2022

### **Webcasting**

Please note: this meeting is being filmed for live and subsequent broadcast via the County Council's website on the internet. The images and sound recording may be used for training purposes by the Council.

Generally the public gallery is not filmed. However, by entering the meeting room and using the public seating area you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes.

## West Sussex County Council – Ordinary Meeting

**27 May 2022**

At the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 am on Friday, 27 May 2022, at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ, the members present being:

Cllr Bradbury (Chairman)

Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Kenyon
Cllr Albury	Cllr Kerry-Bedell
Cllr Ali	Cllr Lanzer
Cllr Atkins, RD	Cllr Linehan
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Lord
Cllr Baxter	Cllr Markwell
Cllr Boram	Cllr Marshall
Cllr Britton	Cllr McDonald
Cllr Burgess	Cllr McGregor
Cllr Burrett	Cllr Mercer
Cllr Cherry	Cllr Milne
Cllr Chowdhury	Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Condie	Cllr Montyn
Cllr Cooper	Cllr Nagel
Cllr Cornell	Cllr Oakley
Cllr Crow	Cllr O'Kelly
Cllr J Dennis	Cllr Oppler
Cllr N Dennis	Cllr Oxlade
Cllr Duncton	Cllr Patel
Cllr Dunn	Cllr Payne
Cllr Elkins	Cllr Pudaloff
Cllr Evans	Cllr Quinn
Cllr Forbes	Cllr Richardson
Cllr Gibson	Cllr Russell
Cllr Greenway	Cllr Sharp
Cllr Hall	Cllr Smith
Cllr Hillier	Cllr Sparkes
Cllr Hunt	Cllr Turley
Cllr Johnson	Cllr Urquhart
Cllr A Jupp	Cllr Waight
Cllr N Jupp	Cllr Walsh, KStJ, RD

### **89 Her Majesty the Queen's Platinum Jubilee**

- 89.1 The Chairman reported that he has sent a Loyal Address to Her Majesty the Queen, offering the county's congratulations on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee.

### **90 Attendance and Apologies for Absence**

- 90.1 The following members attended the meeting virtually and therefore did not take part in or vote on items requiring a decision.

Cllr Hall (morning session), Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Pudaloff, Cllr Richardson and Cllr Smith.

90.2 Apologies were received from Cllr Bence, Cllr Bennett, Cllr Charles, Cllr Joy, Cllr Pendleton and Cllr Wall.

90.3 Apologies for the morning session were received from Cllr Oakley who arrived at 2.50 pm. Apologies for the afternoon session were received from Cllr Hall. Cllr Kenyon arrived for the afternoon session at 3.00 pm. Cllr Hillier gave his apologies and left at 3.30 pm.

90.4 Cllr Dunn and Cllr Evans left at 3.30 pm.

**91 Members' Interests**

91.1 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

**92 Minutes**

92.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the County Council held on 1 April 2022 (pages 7 to 36) be approved as a correct record.

**93 Appointments**

93.1 The Council approved appointments as set out below.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Change</b>
Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Payne in place of Cllr Charles
Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee substitutes	Cllr Baxter to fill vacancy Cllr Kerry-Bedell in place of Cllr O'Kelly
Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Evans and Cllr Patel in place of Cllr Charles and Cllr Richardson
Governance Committee	Cllr Walsh in place of Cllr Lord
Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee	Cllr Baldwin and Cllr McDonald in place of Cllr Evans and Cllr Payne  Cllr Payne as substitute in place of Cllr McDonald

**94 Address by a Cabinet Member**

- 94.1 Members received an address by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People on the Ofsted inspection of Children's Service.
- 94.2 In relation to the recently-published Independent Report to the Government on Children's Services, the Cabinet Member agreed to a request from Cllr Baldwin to keep members briefed on the implications and outcomes.

**95 Report of Urgent Action**

- 95.1 The report of urgent action taken under regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (pages 37 to 40) was noted.

**96 Question Time**

- 96.1 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 41 to 46) and a supplementary report (supplement page 1) and written questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 2).

**97 Motion on Water Neutrality**

- 97.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Burrett and seconded by Cllr Baldwin.

'This Council notes that in September 2021, Natural England issued a Position Statement with regard to planning applications within the Sussex North Water Supply Zone, which required Local Planning Authorities to only permit planning applications which were able to demonstrate water neutrality in response to concerns about the effect of new developments on the water table in several protected sites in the Arun Valley.

The Council also notes the serious delays this has caused for Local Planning Authorities and for developers seeking to build or convert premises within the county, meaning that proposals for thousands of new homes for West Sussex people, and for thousands of square metres of new business premises which would provide employment for West Sussex people, have had to be put on hold indefinitely due to the inability of the relevant Local Planning Authority to grant planning permission in the absence of the evidence to demonstrate that these developments will be able to ensure water neutrality.

The Council recognises the significant efforts made by all parties to work together to try to negotiate and agree a resolution to this issue, but expresses serious concern about the length of time that this is taking and the lack of any definitive timescale within which the matter is likely to be resolved. The Council therefore calls upon the Leader to make further representations to the relevant Government departments and other stakeholders involved, urging them to seek a sustainable resolution to the problem as a matter of extreme urgency.

The Council also notes that, even when this issue has been resolved, concerns about water stress will remain, and that a sustainable solution to that problem needs to be found in order to mitigate the effects of water stress in the long term. The Council therefore asks the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, urging the Government to introduce legislation to require all new developments to conform to a minimum level of water efficiency in the future.'

97.2 The motion was approved.

## **98 Motion on Pension Divestments**

98.1 The motion on pension divestments by Cllr Baxter was withdrawn.

## **99 Motion on Smokefree Fund**

99.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Ali and seconded by Cllr Cooper.

'This Council notes that:

- (1) Preventable disease continues to have a massive impact on the public's health, the NHS and the economy.
- (2) Tobacco is the biggest preventable cause of cancer and death in the United Kingdom.
- (3) Decades of comprehensive policy action have meant that adult smoking prevalence in the United Kingdom in 2019 was at a record low at 14.1%, but this masks significant inequality.
- (4) Differences in smoking rates make it one of the leading drivers of health inequalities, responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between the lowest and highest income groups in England.
- (5) That through their public health duties, local authorities are responsible for improving the health of their populations and do this through initiatives such as stop smoking services and wider tobacco control activities.



This Council believes that local government must be adequately resourced to fulfil their public health duties.

This Council asks the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing to support Cancer Research UK's calls for a Smokefree Fund (a fixed annual charge on the tobacco industry, making them pay for the damage their products cause without having any influence on how the funds are spent) to fund local tobacco control work, and urges the United Kingdom government to consider implementing a Smokefree Fund as part of its efforts to tackle health disparities.'

99.2 An amendment was moved by Cllr Walsh and seconded by Cllr O'Kelly.

'This Council notes that:

- (1) Preventable disease continues to have a massive impact on the public's health, the NHS and the economy.
- (2) Tobacco is the biggest preventable cause of cancer and death in the United Kingdom.
- (3) Decades of comprehensive policy action have meant that adult smoking prevalence in the United Kingdom in 2019 was at a record low at 14.1%, but this masks significant inequality.
- (4) Differences in smoking rates make it one of the leading drivers of health inequalities, responsible for half the difference in life expectancy between the lowest and highest income groups in England.
- (5) That through their public health duties, local authorities are responsible for improving the health of their populations and do this through initiatives such as stop smoking services and wider tobacco control activities.

This Council believes that local government must be adequately resourced to fulfil their public health duties **and deprecates the reduction in public health funding to local government over the last few years.**

This Council asks the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing to support Cancer Research UK's calls for a Smokefree Fund (a fixed annual charge on the tobacco industry, making them pay for the damage their products cause without having any influence on how the funds are spent) to fund local tobacco control work, and urges the United Kingdom government to ~~consider~~ implementing a Smokefree Fund as part of its efforts to tackle health disparities.'

99.3 The amendment was put to a recorded vote under Standing Order 3.35.

(a) For the amendment – 18

Cllr Baxter, Cllr Cherry, Cllr Chowdhury, Cllr Condie, Cllr Cornell, Cllr N Dennis, Cllr Gibson, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Kerry-Bedell, Cllr Lord, Cllr Mercer, Cllr Milne, Cllr O’Kelly, Cllr Oppler, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Sharp, Cllr Turley and Cllr Walsh.

(b) Against the amendment – 35

Cllr Albury, Cllr Ali, Cllr Atkins, Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Boram, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Britton, Cllr Burrett, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Crow, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr Duncton, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Forbes, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Hunt, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Kenyon, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Linehan, Cllr Markwell, Cllr Marshall, Cllr McDonald, Cllr McGregor, Cllr Montyn, Cllr Nagel, Cllr Oakley, Cllr Patel, Cllr Payne, Cllr Russell, Cllr Sparkes, Cllr Urquhart, Cllr Waight and Cllr Wickremaratchi.

(c) Abstentions – 0

99.4 The amendment was lost.

99.5 The motion was put to a recorded vote under Standing Order 3.35.

(a) For the motion – 53

Cllr Albury, Cllr Ali, Cllr Atkins, Cllr Baldwin, Cllr Baxter, Cllr Boram, Cllr Bradbury, Cllr Britton, Cllr Burrett, Cllr Cherry, Cllr Chowdhury, Cllr Condie, Cllr Cooper, Cllr Cornell, Cllr Crow, Cllr J Dennis, Cllr N Dennis, Cllr Duncton, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Forbes, Cllr Gibson, Cllr Greenway, Cllr Hunt, Cllr Johnson, Cllr A Jupp, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Kenyon, Cllr Kerry-Bedell, Cllr Lanzer, Cllr Linehan, Cllr Lord, Cllr Markwell, Cllr Marshall, Cllr McDonald, Cllr McGregor, Cllr Mercer, Cllr Milne, Cllr Montyn, Cllr Nagel, Cllr Oakley, Cllr O’Kelly, Cllr Oppler, Cllr Patel, Cllr Payne, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Russell, Cllr Sharp, Cllr Sparkes, Cllr Turley, Cllr Urquhart, Cllr Waight, Cllr Walsh and Cllr Wickremaratchi.

(b) Against the motion – 0

(c) Abstentions – 0

99.6 The motion was approved.

Chairman

The Council rose at 4.10 pm

## Interests

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

<b>Item</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
Item 7 – Question Time	Cllr Gibson	Member of Mid Sussex District Council
Item 7 – Question Time (school place planning)	Cllr Linehan	Parent of a child with SEND
Item 7 – Question Time (Electric Vehicle Chargepoints)	Cllr O’Kelly	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 7 – Question Time (road safety review)	Cllr Sharp	Member of RAVEN (Residents Against Vehicle Excessive Noise)
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Ali	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Atkins	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Baldwin	Member of Horsham District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Burrett	Member of Crawley Borough Council and Chair of its Planning Committee
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Duncton	Member of Chichester District Council and South Downs National Park Authority
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Elkins	Member of Arun District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Gibson	Member of Mid Sussex District Council and Worth Parish Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Johnson	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr N Jupp	Member of Horsham District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Milne	Member of Horsham District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Oakley	Member of Chichester District Council and its appointed member of Portsmouth Water’s Customer

<b>Item</b>	<b>Member</b>	<b>Nature of Interest</b>
		Scrutiny Panel and a member of the Water Resources South East Customer Challenge Group
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Sharp	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 8(a) – Motion on Water Neutrality	Cllr Walsh	Member of Arun District Council
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Burrett	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Condie	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr J Dennis	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Elkins	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Greenway	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Hunt	Chairman of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr N Jupp	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Lanzer	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Turley	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 8(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Urquhart	Member of Pensions Committee

## Written Questions: 27 May 2022

### 1. Written question from **Cllr O'Kelly** for reply by **Cabinet Member for Adults Services**

#### Question

There is national and local concern about access to adult social care. Can the Cabinet Member;

- (a) Summarise the current waiting times for assessment, reviews and actual care being delivered and provide comparable data to show whether (a) the situation has worsened and (b) there are geographical differences across the county;
- (b) Tell me whether assessments and support are having to be prioritised to manage the current workload and if so in what way;
- (c) Whether there has been any raising of the bar in terms of eligibility;
- (d) What impact the situation is having on those needing care assessments, reviews, care packages and personal budgets;
- (e) Whether any family carers have been asked to take paid or unpaid leave from work when care and support are not available for their family members; and
- (f) Comment on the action she is taking to address the situation and the timescale for improvements.

#### Answer

- (a) Unprecedented demand is being experienced across all locality teams throughout the county. All community teams have assessment waiting lists, although northern teams are experiencing the highest levels of demand at present. When responding to requests for assessment, if a customer is in crisis, then the teams are able to respond immediately or within 24 hours as appropriate, to mitigate any immediate risks. All teams have also been set target response times and endeavour to respond to urgent cases within seven days. Due to the level of demand and pressures on the workforce, customers are however waiting on average 16 days.

At the end of the last quarter of 2021/22, the percentage of users of adults' services and their carers that are reviewed and/or assessed in the last 12 months stood at 60%, which was the lowest during 2021/22. Reviews were temporarily suspended between December 2021 and March 2022, to allow for prioritisation of new assessment activity and manage the challenges of Covid-19 and pressures to facilitate discharge from hospital. Review teams have now been established to manage reviews moving into 2022/23, focusing on embedding a strength-based approach and reducing the numbers of customers waiting for review.

Ongoing care market capacity challenges are influencing the availability of care that can be delivered. This led to the County Council prioritising resources for paying uplifts in fees to the independent care market as part of its budget strategy for 2022/23. The outcome has been average increases of between 8%

and 10%, which should enable the market to improve opportunities to recruit care workers, ultimately bringing more capacity to the market and reducing the waiting times for those with an assessed need for social care. The numbers of older people being supported by the Council is approximately 4,500 out of a total customer cohort of 8,200 across all care types. Those numbers are largely the same as in March 2021, having not yet returned to their pre-Covid peak of 4,700 (8,400). Further data will be available at the end of the first quarter of 2022/23 which will show the impact of establishing the reviewing teams and making fee increases to the care sector and I will write with a further update then.

- (b) When responding to requests for assessment, if a customer is in crisis, then the teams are able to respond immediately or within 24 hours as appropriate, in order to mitigate any immediate risks. All referrals are prioritised on receipt, as either urgent, normal or low. Customers waiting are frequently reviewed and reprioritised if their circumstances change, to ensure that those people with the most pressing needs are responded to in as timely a way as possible. Directors of Adults' Social Services (ADASS) are reporting that most councils across the country are facing increasing waiting times for assessment and service, as referred to in response to question (f) below.
- (c) There has been no change in eligibility.
- (d) As set out in the answer to question (b), prioritisation processes and the monitoring of waiting lists are mitigating the impact on those needing care assessments, reviews, care packages and personal budgets. As stated, the number of older people being supported by the Council is approximately 4,500 out of a total customer cohort of 8,200 across all care types.

In terms of care costs, market-related factors led to the average cost of a care package for an older person increasing to approximately £505 per week in March 2022. This is £27 per week more than in March 2021. That represented an annual rate of increase of 5.7%, which equates to a real terms pressure of almost 4% when discounted for the inflationary uplift of 1.75% agreed by the County Council for 2021/22. To put this in context, approximately £125m is spent on care costs through the older people's budget, so every 1% increase in the average price equates to a pressure of £1.25m.

- (e) All assessments and support plans are based on individual circumstances which includes the ability of family and friends to provide support, in line with best practice and the strengths-based approach being taken by councils across the country. Support plans will therefore reflect an agreed approach to the role of family carers in providing care.
- (f) In relation to those waiting for care and support, ADASS published the results of a national survey on 13 May 2022, which set out the pressures that all councils across the country are experiencing. The County Council, through ADASS, the Local Government Association and the County Councils Network will continue to support the lobbying of the Government to address this ongoing pressure as soon as possible.

To address staff capacity and reduce current waiting times for assessments, community teams are not undertaking green assessments, although these are being reviewed regularly and reprioritised if circumstances change, including

any safeguarding concerns, change of need or request for re-assessment. All review activity is being undertaken by a stand-alone review team to enable community teams to concentrate on waiting lists within their locality.

Agency staff are also being recruited in order to address the vacancy gap for qualified social workers and occupational therapists. A cohort of newly qualified social workers and workers recruited from overseas are due to start work from July onwards, which will provide additional staff capacity.

The Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to 'consider the person's own strengths and capabilities, and what support might be available from their wider support network or within the community to help' in considering 'what else other than the provision of care and support might assist the person in meeting the outcomes they want to achieve'. Focus has been placed on this as part of a strengths-based approach to practice, providing interventions throughout the customer journey to meet people's needs through information and advice as well as provision of preventative services and redirection of customers who may have been added to assessment waiting lists.

Work is continuing to take forward the 'we will' statements included within the Adult Social Care Strategy, continuing the successful co-production work undertaken with customers and carers. This will inform the directorate's business planning, seeking to address the issues currently being experienced, which as the ADASS survey indicated, is a national issue.

The current situation reflects the ongoing challenges that are being experienced by all councils across the country. Financial constraints, growing demand, shortfalls on workforce, reducing market capacity and imminent Adult Social Care Reform means that local authorities will be needing to manage significant uncertainty for the foreseeable future. This Council will ensure that it continues to use all available resources to meet this challenge and work with customers, carers and broader partners to implement the Adults Strategy that was agreed by Cabinet in February. The impact of the steps we are taking will be reported through monitoring on Our Council Plan.

**2. Written question from Cllr Pudaloff for reply by Cabinet Member for Adults Services**

**Question**

According to BBC News (18 May) "UK inflation, the rate at which prices rise, jumped to 9% in the 12 months to April, up from 7% in March ....The Bank of England has warned that UK inflation could reach 10% in the last three months of 2022."

A level of inflation that has outstripped the central government and County Council calculations of 3%+. A cost-of-living disaster that has left affected County Council social care service users with insufficient income to cover their daily living expenses and a redundant Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) no longer fit for purpose. Given this reduction in purchasing power and the hardship caused, will the Council with due expedition, permit social care service users to retain more of their income, that is to say MIG plus uplift buffer to ameliorate the continuation of the present injustice, and if not, why not?

## **Answer**

As previously discussed, the Cabinet Member agreed to revert to statutory Minimum Income Guarantee (MIG) for working age adults in 2018.

The statutory MIG rates are issued by central government and have been increased in line with inflation as advised in the Social Care - charging for care and support: local authority circular - LAC(DHSC)(2022)1 which is sent to all local authorities. Any further changes to the statutory calculation would need to be made by central government.

The impact of rising costs is a national issue and we will continue to lobby the Government to consider how it can close the gap between the impact of the inflation on current costs when compared with the uplift that was applied to the MIG for this financial year.

We take an individualised approach when considering the impact of contributions to care and the person's ability to pay as individual customers circumstances differ.

If people are having difficulties contributing to their care, they should contact us directly regarding the affordability of the charge at [FinancialReassessments@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:FinancialReassessments@westsussex.gov.uk).

Affordability is also considered at the time of financial re assessment along with disability related expenses and household related expenses.

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

#### **Question**

Both climate change and population growth make water resources scarcer, and a European Commission's Joint Research Centre report estimates a 90% chance of wars being fought over water within 100 years.

The Government lacks any form of legislation on Storm Sewage Overflows, and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework and other legislation forces Southern Water to connect new housing developments to sewage systems, even where there is known to be no or limited sewage capacity remaining.

It is incorrect for the County Council to say, as I was told recently, that issues like sewage capacity and nutrient neutrality are only issues for borough and district councils, as these factors directly impact all County Council-planned developments too.

Will the County Council act to create a cross-party task and finish group by the end of July to review four factors related to water supply and associated environmental damage, namely sewage capacity, storm sewage overflows, nutrient neutrality and water neutrality?

#### **Answer**

Water quality and capacity, along with adequate sewage infrastructure, is of concern to the County Council as it impacts on residents' well-being in many areas. It also



impacts on our environment, economic growth and jobs.

However, with regard to planning, the capacity of wastewater infrastructure to meet demands associated with new housing and associated development is not the responsibility of the County Council. It is a matter for the local planning authorities to consider through the preparation of their local plans and when determining planning applications. For example, Chichester District Council (CDC) has useful information on this and related matters on its [website](#).

As county planning authority and a minerals and waste planning authority, the County Council is only responsible for considering wastewater infrastructure in relation to the County Council's own development and minerals and waste development (outside the South Downs).

Although the discharge of untreated sewage is of great concern, it is not the responsibility of the County Council. It is a matter for the Environment Agency, which is responsible for pollution prevention under the environmental permitting regime.

In West Sussex, currently, nutrient neutrality is only an issue for CDC in relation to planning applications likely to discharge into Chichester Harbour. CDC is working with other affected authorities (in Hampshire) to address this issue and has details on its [website](#) whilst keeping the County Council fully informed.

The issue of water neutrality is the subject of a Notice of Motion on this agenda. In summary, the County Council is already working with other affected authorities, Natural England, Southern Water, and the Environment Agency to address this issue. Information is available on the County Council's [website](#).

Therefore, a cross-party task and finish group is not required to review sewage capacity, storm sewage overflows, nutrient neutrality and water neutrality.

**4. Written question from Cllr Cherry for reply by Cabinet Member for Finance and Property**

**Question**

The UK is committed to net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and a 78% reduction by 2035.

The current Woodlands Meed development project is running successfully but has failed to maximise opportunities to achieve carbon neutrality. There are some solar panels planned but these will not substantially negate reliance on fossil fuels. Options like ground source heating seem not to have been considered.

So how conscientious is the County Council in pursuing a policy of carbon neutrality with its building projects? The component parts of this question are as follows.

- (a) How many active new building projects does the County Council have?
- (b) How many will commence in the next five years?
- (c) How many will rely on fossil fuels to meet a significant proportion of their energy needs?
- (d) How many will be totally carbon neutral?

### Answer

- (a) The County Council currently has 40 new-build projects that are being built or where a business case has been prepared or where the project is going through the viability stage.
- (b) Currently around 23 projects are in the pre-construction stage, that is viability, feasibility design etc. It is anticipated that these will start on site within the next five years. However this number is anticipated to increase as directorates further refine their requirements. Further information is provided in the [Capital Programme](#) (PDF, 5.7MB) (Annex 2a, Appendix A).
- (c & d) The aim is that all projects that are included within the County Council's Capital Programme will be carbon neutral and comply with the Council's Climate Change Policy. For example, the new secondary school planned for Burgess Hill, which is currently in the design stage, is being planned to achieve this level of compliance. However, it should be noted that an extension to an existing asset will be influenced by the existing infrastructure and the Council's ability to achieve carbon zero which may require offsetting to be carbon neutral.

Even though the County Council will design to a zero-carbon standard there are factors outside of its direct control such as the users purchase of electricity which may not be 'green' and so will require carbon offsetting.

The 23 projects identified above are at viability stage which will consider factors such as affordability, deliverability and whether it will meet the objectives. The presumption is that these 'new builds' will be carbon neutral.

### 5. Written question from **Cllr Gibson** for reply by **Cabinet Member for Finance and Property**

#### Question

- (a) How much has the County Council received in New Homes Bonus since the grant was introduced in 2011 (by district if known)?
- (b) Has this money been used to support revenue expenditure or spent on capital or strategic projects within the communities in which the development that generated the grant?
- (c) How much of this money remains unspent (by district if known)?
- (d) How has the Council met the Government requirement to "engage with the communities most affected by housing growth to decide how the money is spent, so residents can share in the benefits of growth" when deciding where and on what New Homes Bonus money is spent?

#### Answer

- (a) The County Council has received £36m in New Homes Bonus Grant (NHB) since its introduction in 2011. The district and borough councils have collectively

received £145m. The portion received by the County Council can be attributed to housing growth in the district and borough areas as follows:

<b>Area</b>	<b>£m</b>
Adur	£0.95
Arun	£6.62
Chichester	£5.66
Crawley	£3.68
Horsham	£8.92
Mid Sussex	£7.99
Worthing	£2.45
<b>County Council</b>	<b>£36.28</b>

- (b) The County Council has used the NHB Grant to support its revenue expenditure.
- (c) The County Council has no unspent NHB Grant.
- (d) The County Council has used the NHB Grant to further support its revenue budget. Increased housing leads to an increasing population which in turn engenders greater demand on council services, such as an increased demand for adult social care services, increased demand for children's services, increased traffic on county roads and increased waste disposal. The basis of grant distribution from the Government is not updated to reflect the growth in housing and the increase in the council tax base is not sufficient to cover the costs of the increase in high demand services, such as social care. If the Council did not use the grant to support its revenue budget, further savings would need to be identified to balance the budget.

**6. Written question from Cllr Kerry-Bedell for reply by Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Question**

42% of West Sussex residents and over half of our businesses are located in rural areas, with nine out of ten of our rural population living in small towns and villages. Reliable and cheap local transport is key to the recovery and sustainability of rural communities' post COVID as a third of residents are over 65 and a third rely on public transport.

- (a) What is the projected breakdown of the £17.4m spend awarded from the Government in towns versus rural areas, and by district.
- (b) What categories will money be spent on e.g. new or replacement bus stations, bus lanes, bus shelters, new and replacement bus stops, real time information screens and digital demand responsive transport trials?
- (c) Also, will a Digital Demand Responsive Transport trial be considered for the far west of the county that is highly rural and that relies on the bus network for jobs, education, social and shopping needs of its residents?

**Answer**

The £17.4m Bus Services Improvement Plan (BSIP) funding is currently an indicative

amount that could be awarded to the County Council and remains subject to the Department for Transport (DfT) agreeing with the priority BSIP ambitions. These ambitions are subject to ongoing discussions with the bus operators and other key partners, as well as highways engineers, on deliverability within the 2022-25 funding window.

The County Council has yet to meet the DfT to discuss the priority ambitions, the outcome of which will inform final submission to the DfT due at the end of June 2022. The current outline list of ambitions totals in excess of £17.4m.

- (a) The current list broadly amounts to £8m for rural areas and £10.2m for more urban areas. This is to be expected with costs for capital funded bus infrastructure improvements such as bus lanes being in urban areas where they help bus speeds where there is congestion. At present the split by District/Borough has not been determined, partially as several items are county wide.
- (b) The current list of ambitions includes all of the categories mentioned. In addition, fare price reductions for young people and provision of improved information is being considered.
- (c) A number of trials of Digital Demand Responsive Transport solutions including in the west/north-west of the county to improve rural access are under consideration. This could include working with bus operators, community transport, taxi operators and using some of the County Council's internal fleet.

**7. Written question from Cllr Milne for reply by Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Question**

West Sussex residents will be surprised to learn that in many urban areas, WSCC Highways do not own the freehold of the land on which the roads are built. It resides with the original vendor or property company. Increasingly these freeholds are now being sold off, for example in the case of Greenfields Farm, Roffey North, Horsham. Frequently they are being bought by speculative developers in the hope of getting permission to build on small pockets of green space left in the original street plan.

Will the Cabinet Member look into this situation urgently, as it is causing residents great distress and in some cases, costs running into tens of thousands of pounds?

**Answer**

In the majority of cases land that has highway status (urban or rural) is not owned by the County Council as highway authority. The surface of the highway is vested in the highway authority and the owner of the sub-soil is, in most instances, the person who owns the land adjoining the public highway. However, it is illegal for anyone to build on land that has highway status. Changing ownership does not increase the risk that highway land will be subject to development.

A market has developed over recent years whereby landowners are selling land that is part of the public highway. This is permissible in law and something that the County Council is aware of. This is an issue nationally. As soon as the County Council becomes aware of the sale of land that forms part of the highway a notification is sent to the seller/auctioneer explaining that any purchaser needs to be aware that the land

is part of the public highway and they will not be permitted to encroach upon, develop the land or obstruct the highway.

In the case of the land at Roffey North, the relevant plot was offered for sale with a note to the effect that it was occupied by adopted public highway and that relevant permissions would be needed for the land to be used for any other purpose.

There are two routes for obtaining permission to remove highway status from land so as to make other use of it.

- (1) As part of a larger development the owner or developer can seek planning permission and then, if it is approved, may seek the agreement of the Secretary of State for the removal of highway status if it can be shown to be necessary to enable the development for which permission has been given.
- (2) This proposal will form part of the planning application and so will be evident at the point of public consultation. Interested parties will also be able to comment on any application. Such requests are usually only considered where highway rights are being improved or differently provided as part of the development.
- (3) The owner of land with highway status can make a formal application to the County Council requesting it to 'stop up' the highway – which removes the highway status. This involves an application to the Magistrates Court and requires wide public notice and consultation with interested parties. Only the County Council can make such applications.

When such applications are received the County Council considers each application taking into account such matters as use, safety, highways management, future need, amenity etc. The local member will also be involved.

The position of the County Council is that, in the absence of a compelling case, requests to 'stop-up', are likely to be contrary to the public interest in the maintenance of the public rights to pass and re-pass along the highway. The County Council has a duty to maintain such rights.

**8. Written question from Cllr Milne for reply by Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Question**

WSCC Highways control significant potential tree planting areas in the form of roadside verges. Currently, most applications for planting come at the initiative and the expense of local residents. In order to make a stronger contribution to the climate emergency, will the Cabinet Member consider introducing a proactive tree-planting policy including:

- (a) A more aspirational target than the current 125 per year.
- (b) A more flexible approach to funding.

**Answer**

In December 2020 the County Council adopted its [Tree Plan](#) and the three strategic aims are:

- to maintain the trees and woodlands in the County Council's ownership
- to protect trees and woodlands from new development and other threats
- to improve tree cover in West Sussex through natural regeneration, the planting of new trees, and the creation of new woodlands

West Sussex has extensive tree coverage; the county has 42,500 hectares of woodland of which over 82% is broadleaved. This equates to woodland cover of 23% compared to 10% for England as a whole.

However, it is recognised that the data the County Council holds relating to Council-managed trees is not as good as it could be and work is underway to improve this.

Opportunities exist for residents, parishes and other bodies to promote tree planting and utilise highway verges for this. The County Council promoted 'donate a tree' scheme has seen more than 400 trees planted over the last two years. Whilst this may not appear to be a significant number it should be noted that highway verges are a small proportion of the land the County Council controls and that planting and improving hedgerows, for example, are sometimes the better ecological option (the cost of planting and caring for a young tree cost around £500 for the first three years.)

A cross-directorate officer group is currently looking at how the County Council can best support the aspirations within the Tree Plan and to submit bids for external funding to support a wider programme which includes highways trees.

**9. Written question from Cllr Cornell for reply by Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills**

**Question**

How many surplus places are there currently in West Sussex primary schools and, given the reported 5% drop in birth rate, what measures are under consideration to identify, support and protect schools that may become vulnerable?

**Answer**

As of the October 2021 School Census, there were 130,057 places across all West Sussex schools and 116,853 pupils on roll. This equates to an overall surplus capacity of 11.2%. However, this varies by locality as the primary bulge begins to work through into our secondary schools with some localities having in excess of 16% surplus provision in primary schools.

Regular discussions take place between County Council officers from the school place planning and admissions teams with locality groups of schools. This determines pupil numbers across an area and identifies where any additional conversations may be needed to discuss support to schools experiencing a decline in pupil numbers.

Whilst there has been a drop in pupil numbers applying to start school in September 2022, there will be a further review of projected pupil numbers during the summer to help inform conversations about provision in future years.

## **Question Time: 27 May 2022**

Members asked questions of members of the Cabinet. In instances where a Cabinet Member or the Leader undertook to take follow-up action, this is noted.

### **Leader**

The Leader answered questions on the following matters:

Visitor economy across Sussex, from Cllr Cherry, Cllr Cornell, Cllr N Dennis, Cllr Lord and Cllr Nagel.

Funding for a free public Wi-Fi space for each borough and district, from Cllr Ali and Cllr Kerry-Bedell.

### **Cabinet Member for Adults Services**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Urgent action decision on the contract for Adults Services professional services support, from Cllr Baxter.

In response to a request, the Cabinet Member agreed to provide Cllr Baxter with an explanation of the aims and output of the procurement process and the need for urgency.

Recruitment of qualified social workers from overseas, from Cllr Ali, Cllr Condie, Cllr O'Kelly, Cllr Oppler and Cllr Payne.

The Cabinet Member agreed to a request from Cllr O'Kelly to provide figures on how many social work staff who were EU nationals have left the Council.

The Cabinet Member also agreed to a request from Cllr Condie for detail about how the recruitment agency ensures that all safeguarding considerations are accounted for.

### **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the Youth Cabinet, from Cllr Burgess and Cllr Greenway.

### **Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

School place planning, from Cllr Gibson, Cllr Linehan and Cllr Lord.

Latest Ofsted reports, from Cllr Sparkes.

Draft Education Strategy, from Cllr Cornell and Cllr Mercer.

In response to a question from Cllr Mercer about whether the progress of the SEND inclusion strategy will go the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee in July 2022, the Cabinet Member agreed that this would be the case.

### **Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Electric Vehicle Chargepoint project, from Cllr Cornell, Cllr O'Kelly, Cllr Quinn, Cllr Sharp, Cllr Turley and Cllr Walsh.

In relation to a question from Cllr Quinn, the Cabinet Member advised that district and borough council members would be invited to the webinar for members on this topic.

Written question 3, from Cllr Kerry-Bedell and Cllr Montyn.

Scheme to recycle hard plastic waste, from Cllr Condie, Cllr Duncton, Cllr O'Kelly, Cllr Quinn and Cllr Walsh.

Carbon neutrality and County Council buildings, from Cllr Boram, Cllr Mercer and Cllr O'Kelly.

### **Cabinet Member for Finance and Property**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on maximising the use of the Council's assets, from Cllr Cooper.

### **Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Countywide road safety review, from Cllr Albury, Cllr N Dennis and Cllr Sharp.

Cycling and walking network, from Cllr Sharp

With reference to the Government's Active Travel fund, Cllr Sharp commented that she understood that failure to follow current guidance could lead to cuts in funding. She asked whether the Council's continued use of 'cyclists dismount' signs, which were no longer recommended, could lead to cuts to wider transport funding. The Cabinet Member agreed to check with officers and let her know.

### **Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Public Health priorities, from Cllr Hillier and Cllr McGregor.

Child and Adult Mental Health Service (CAMHS), in conjunction with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, from Cllr Cornell, Cllr O'Kelly and Cllr Smith.

The Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing also agreed to provide for Cllr Cornell and all members, an illustration of how the agencies work together to commission and deliver CAMHS.

In response to a question on the number of embedded CAMHS officers in schools, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing agreed to send the figures to Cllr O'Kelly.

In relation to CAMHS waiting lists, the Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing agreed to discuss an individual case with Cllr Smith.



**Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on enhanced digital infrastructure supporting the county's horticultural sector, from Cllr Atkins, Cllr Gibson, Cllr Kenyon and Cllr Lord.

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## **Governance Committee: Constitution Review**

### **Background and context**

- 1** Over the last two years a number of changes have been made to the Constitution, some in response to the coronavirus pandemic and others to help make County Council meetings run more effectively.
- 2** Virtual formal meetings were allowed by emergency regulations from April 2020 to May 2021 but the Government has indicated that it does not intend to make provision for virtual formal local government meetings in the near future. It is therefore timely to review the Standing Orders introduced to allow limited virtual meetings during the pandemic and consider in which circumstances members should be able to participate virtually in a meeting.
- 3** There are also proposals in relation to meeting cancellation, substitutes and treatment of motions at Council not reached due to lack of time and the time limit for motion subjects returning for consideration.

### **Proposal details**

- 4** Appendix 1 sets out a number of proposed changes to Standing Orders as explained below.

#### **Virtual attendance at meetings**

- 5** For non-decision-making meetings under the Local Government Act 2000 (i.e. scrutiny committees) the legal position is that these can meet virtually, physically or in hybrid form. This option is not available for decision-making business at non-Executive committees nor the County Council. Standing Orders currently allow members to participate virtually in the non-decision-making parts of County Council meetings. This includes question time and any address by a Cabinet Member.
- 6** The main advantages of virtual participation are that it can save on travel time for members, giving them more time for other work and reducing the carbon impact of travel. It also allows participation for members who are unwell or have other commitments and it can assist members with caring responsibilities and leads to improved attendance. In-person participation has the advantage that members are better able to network and have informal discussions. Confidence in full engagement in the meeting is also greater and procedures for speaking and voting are simpler. Chairing can be easier with all members in one space.
- 7** The Governance Committee has considered the options available and recommends that, as County Council meetings are the main forum for political debate, it is timely to return to meetings in-person only. If members are only able to attend the meeting by being physically present in the chamber, it will be possible to revert to using the screens in the chamber for functions such as the speech timer.
- 8** The Committee recommends that the flexibility of virtual attendance at scrutiny committees be maintained but should be dealt with to encourage in-person attendance. It is therefore proposed that it should be a requirement that a member contacts the Chairman in advance of the meeting to request virtual attendance and the proposed changes to Standing Orders in Appendix 1 include examples of reasons for such a request being considered positively.

### **Decisions to cancel meetings**

- 9** Following the experience in February 2022 where the County Council meeting had to be rearranged at the last moment due to extreme weather, it is proposed to add a new Standing Order to provide for a chairman, on the advice of the Director of Law and Assurance, to agree to the cancellation of a meeting when the agenda has already been issued. In such circumstances it would be for the chairman to determine whether the meeting should be rearranged or the business rolled forward to the next scheduled meeting. A proposed addition to Standing Orders is set out in Appendix 1.

### **Substitutes**

- 10** Another proposed change to the Constitution is to allow substitution on the Governance Committee, due to the significance of its responsibilities. It is proposed to appoint a panel of substitutes in a similar manner to the Planning and Rights of Way Committee. For consistency, it is also proposed to create a panel of substitutes for the scrutiny committees, to provide more flexibility in substitution than the current one-per-group arrangement. Proposed additions to Standing Orders are set out in Appendix 1.

### **Treatment of motions not reached due to lack of time**

- 11** One of the changes introduced last year to the order of Council business is that notices of motion are at the end of the agenda, following decision-making items and question time. Standing Order 2.23 (k) states that any item of business that falls away from the previous agenda will be added to the next meeting and is expected to be taken early on the agenda.
- 12** Now that Standing Orders 2.48 and 2.49 assume a limit of two notices of motion at each meeting, to be determined by the Chairman, in consultation with group leaders, this conflicts with Standing Order 2.23 (k) which would limit the options for that meeting to consider. It is proposed that notices of motion are excluded from the rule in Standing Order 2.23 (k) to make it clear that motions on the agenda for one meeting, but not reached, are not automatically added to the next meeting's agenda. They will instead be included with any new notices of motion submitted for consideration by the Chairman, in consultation with group leaders.

### **Time limit for motion subjects returning for consideration**

- 13** The Committee has considered whether the rule which prevents the subject of a motion being re-considered within six months of last consideration should be extended to a longer period to ensure that the motions debated are those that are most relevant and timely. This is particularly pertinent now there is a limit of two motions per meeting in order to allow for the full two-hour question time. There are only five Council meetings a year where motions are considered (excluding the budget meeting). When motion topics are resubmitted for debate, if nothing has changed the debate can lead to a repeat of the previous debate.
- 14** It is therefore proposed that, subject to the discretion of the Chairman, in consultation with the Director of Law and Assurance, to allow a shorter time if there is a significant change in circumstances relevant to the subject matter, the time limit should be extended to the four-year Council term. This will allow for a wider range of topics to be debated. Standing Order 2.55 in Appendix 1 sets out

the proposal. The management of the council agenda will continue to be a matter for the Chairman in consultation with group leaders, which gives an opportunity for an argument for consideration to be put forward when a motion is submitted.

### **Recommended**

That the following changes, as set out at Appendix 1, be approved:

- (1) Changes to virtual attendance at meetings (paragraphs 5 to 8 and Standing Order 3.09 (e));
- (2) New Standing Order on meeting cancellation (paragraph 9 and Standing Order 3.09 (f));
- (3) Arrangements for substitutes (paragraph 10 and Standing Orders 6.03, 6.04 and 7.03);
- (4) Treatment of motions not reached due to lack of time (paragraphs 11 and 12 and Standing Order 2.23 (k)); and
- (5) Time of for motion subjects returning for consideration (paragraphs 13 and 14 and Standing Order 2.55).

### **Pete Bradbury**

Chairman of Governance Committee

**Contact Officer:** Charles Gauntlett, Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor, 033 022 22524, [charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed changes to Standing Orders

### **Background papers**

None

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## Proposed changes to Standing Orders

(additions shown in bold, italic text with deletions struck through)

### Virtual attendance at meetings

- 3.09(e) ~~When a member is unable or unwilling, for good reason, to attend a meeting of the Council in the chamber due to public health concerns, the Chairman will allow the member to participate virtually via video conferencing, when the facility is available. This will be treated as attendance at the meeting but members attending remotely cannot vote or count for the purpose of calculation of the quorum of the meeting. Members participating remotely may take part in information and non-decision items only, namely the items of business set out in Standing Order 2.23 (d), (e), (i), (j) (save for a vote on any proposition), (k) (save for any decision items or voting required), (n), (p), (q), (r), (s), (t) and (u) (save for any decision items or business requiring a vote).~~
- 3.09(ef) ***In-person attendance at meetings is expected.*** When a member of a ***Scrutiny*** Committee decides, for good reason, not to attend a meeting of that committee due to personal or public health concerns, ***caring responsibilities, disability, or the need to attend other meetings, they can ask*** the Chairman of the committee ***in advance to*** will allow the member to participate virtually via video conferencing, when the facility is available. This will be treated as attendance but the member does not count for the purpose of the calculation of the quorum for the meeting. The member may not participate in any business for which a vote on a decision is required unless it comprises the recommendations on an item of business of a Scrutiny Committee.

### Decisions to cancel meetings

- 3.09(f) ***The relevant Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in the Chairman's absence) can agree to the cancellation of a meeting when the agenda has already been issued in exceptional circumstances and on the advice of the Director of Law and Assurance. In such circumstances the Chairman (or Vice-Chairman in the Chairman's absence) will determine whether the meeting should be rearranged or the business rolled forward to the next scheduled meeting.***

### Substitutes

#### Substitutes for Governance Committee

- 6.03 Substitute members are permitted to attend a meeting of the ***Governance and*** Planning and Rights of Way Committees.
- 6.04 The County Council will, at each annual meeting, nominate a panel of ***eight*** substitutes for the Planning and Rights of Way Committee ***and a panel of four substitutes for the Governance Committee, to be appointed in line with political proportionality but including at least one member for each group represented on the Committee.***
- 6.05 If a member is not able to attend a meeting, his or her political party may arrange a substitute by giving appropriate notice to the Director of Law and

Assurance in writing, including the name of the member to attend in his or her place from the appropriate panel of substitutes.

- 6.06 The notice should be given by the appropriate Group Leader, Deputy Group Leader, Group Secretary or Group Chairman to the Director of Law and Assurance by 5.00 p.m. on the day before the meeting if possible and not later than the start of the meeting.
- 6.07 Members appointed as substitutes are in the same position in terms of responsibilities and duties as any other member of the committee, for example in relation to the declaration of any interest they might have.

### **Substitutes for Scrutiny Committees**

- 7.02 Substitute members are permitted to attend a meeting of each Scrutiny Committee to which the member has been appointed as a substitute. They will receive notifications and papers as if they were a member of the relevant Committee.
- 7.03 The County Council will, at each annual meeting, approve a panel of **five** substitutes **for Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee and four** for each of the other Scrutiny Committees. **The panels will be appointed in line with political proportionality but including at least** one member for each political group represented on the relevant Committee.
- 7.04 If a member is not able to attend a meeting, his or her political group may arrange a substitute by giving appropriate notice to the Director of Law and Assurance in writing, including the name of the member to attend in his or her place.
- 7.05 The notice should be given by the appropriate Group Leader, Deputy Group Leader, Group Secretary or Group Chairman to the Director of Law and Assurance by 5.00 p.m. on the day before the meeting if possible and not later than the start of the meeting.
- 7.06 Members appointed as substitutes are in the same position in terms of rights and responsibilities as any other member of the committee, including the duty to declare any interest they might have.

### **Treatment of motions not reached due to lack of time**

- 2.23 The order of business at a meeting of the County Council shall be determined by the Chairman, in consultation with political group leaders. Items of high significance are likely to be prioritised on the agenda. Business may include any of the following, at the Chairman's discretion, and subject to any statutory requirements:
- (k) To deal with business remaining from the last meeting, if any, **excluding notices of motion, which are subject to Standing Order 2.48;**
- 2.48 The Chairman, in consultation with political group leaders, may decide that a motion shall be:
- (a) moved and debated at the next meeting (usually no more than two per



meeting unless the Chairman determines otherwise); or

- (b) deferred so that it can be considered for selection to be moved and debated at the following meeting.

2.49 Any notice of motion not selected for debate after two meetings (not including the February Council meeting where the budget debate takes precedence) will fall away and cannot be resubmitted before six months from the date of the Council meeting for which it was last considered for selection.

#### **Time limit for motion subjects returning for consideration**

2.55 A motion cannot be in order if it attempts to rescind, reverse or is inconsistent with any decisions made within the preceding six months, ***or, in the case of a decision arising from or the outcome of a previously debated motion, the four-year Council term.*** The only exceptions are:

- (a) The right of the Leader to challenge a decision of the County Council under Standing Orders 2.67 to 2.71 (Disputes Procedure); ~~and~~
- (b) The notice required in Standing Order 2.45 bears the names of at least a quarter of the County Council in addition to the proposer;
- (c) ***Where the Chairman considers it appropriate to consider its inclusion because of a significant change in circumstance related to the subject matter, in consultation with the Director of Law and Assurance.***

[N.B. This Standing Order is relevant only to motions moved by members at County Council meetings and not to recommendations of committees.]

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## Corporate Parenting Report for the Children we Care for June 2022

### Background and Context

- 1** The County Council's Corporate Parenting Panel (CPP) is a multi-agency Panel that meets at least four times a year to ensure the voice of the child is at the centre of services for children looked after and care leavers.
- 2** At the County Council meeting on 22 October 2021 a refreshed terms of reference for the CPP was agreed which updated the remit and purpose of the Panel and reviewed the membership to ensure it is focused and effective.
- 3** In addition to the above, the terms of reference agreed to present a Corporate Parenting Report to the County Council on a yearly basis, to highlight the work of the Panel and the services to our Children we Care for and Care Leavers. This also recognises the collective responsibility of the Council and all members in their role as 'Corporate Parents'.
- 4** The Corporate Parenting Report for Children we Care for is **set out at Appendix 1**. The report outlines the range of activities and impact of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the last year. It also provides a position statement on the development of the service over the last year, what progress has been made and the areas of focus for the next 12 months.

### Recommended

That the Corporate Parenting Report for Children we Care for, as set out at Appendix 1, be noted.

### Jacquie Russell

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

**Contact Officer:** Daniel Ruaux, Assistant Director (Corporate Parenting) – [daniel.ruaux@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:daniel.ruaux@westsussex.gov.uk)

### Appendices

Appendix 1 – Corporate Parenting Report for Children we Care For June 2022

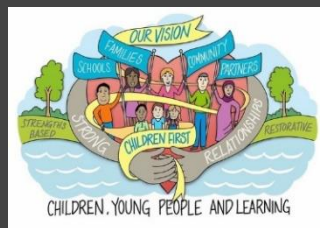
### Background papers

None

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## West Sussex Children, Young People & Learning Corporate Parenting Report for the Children we Care for June 2022



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## Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Corporate Parenting Annual Report, which details the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and our services to the Children we Care for and our Care Leavers.

During the past 24 months the Corporate Parenting Panel has been mindful of the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and the impact this has had on all local authority services and activities nationally. The role of 'Corporate Parent' is a collective responsibility of the council that we all have a responsibility and duty to deliver. Many of our Children we Care for and Care Leavers have faced difficulties and trauma that will place them amongst the most vulnerable in our communities if we do not provide them with the nurture, love, care, stability, and support they need to help them achieve their ambitions. Contributions from our children through the work of our Children in Care Council, Care Leavers Advisory board and Voice and Participation Service form an integral part of panel meetings and have significantly influenced West Sussex County Council's improvement journey. Our Children we Care for and Care Leavers voices keep us focussed on our children's real and lived experiences and influence the development of the council's services positively.

As corporate parents we all want the best for our children. We are proud of their achievements and remain focussed on providing them with the opportunities that will enable them to reach their potential and together we celebrate their successes. As a corporate parent I am proud of all our children and young people and it has been my one of the greatest privileges to have worked and to continue to work alongside them.

As a council it's so important that we take the necessary actions to be the best corporate parents we can and provide for our family in the most effective way possible. I am completely committed to doing everything I can to support our children and young people so that they can benefit from the many opportunities our council and our communities have to offer. But we must all be united in this endeavour, from local business to the voluntary sector to families who can offer a foster home to our children who need one.

This annual report is a summary of the work presented to the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2020-2022 and is a celebration of the success and achievements of both our children and young people and staff. I would like to take this opportunity to thank panel members both past and present for their contributions to our continuing evolutionary journey.



Cllr. Jacquie Russell  
Co-Chairman of Corporate Parenting Panel and Cabinet Member for  
Children and Young People, West Sussex County Council

## Directorate Summary

This report draws together the range of activities and impact of the Corporate Parenting Panel over the past year.

It has been an extraordinary period for all of us, particularly our children and young people. The challenges we have all faced because of the pandemic have provided a sharpened focus for us as we have adapted to the various national restrictions and the impact of these on how we deliver services to the Children we Care for and our Care Leavers. In doing so we have listened to our children and young people and are aware that there are some elements of the 'virtual world' they enjoy, we are keen to better understand how to use this effectively over the coming year.

Since joining the council some 18mths ago, the centrality and importance of listening, hearing, and acting on the voices of our children and young people with board members has been one of the areas that has shone through across this time. Board members have welcomed the opportunity to have both informal, formal, and themed discussions to support planned agendas as well as adhoc conversations as they occur in real time. We have ensured the pandemic has not prevented the improvement of services, and our leadership team remain committed to the promise made to our Children we Care for and our Care Leavers.

Daniel Ruaux

Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting, West Sussex County Council



## Our Vision & Principles



- To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of our children and young people.
- To encourage our children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings and to challenge each other if their voices are not actively listened to and acted on.
- To listen, hear and do something when our children and young people tell us things.
- To make sure our children and young people know how to access, and make the best use of, services provided by us as a local authority and partners.
- To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for our children and young people.
- For our children and young people to be safe, and have stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work; and to prepare our children and young people for adulthood and independent living.
- This will make sure that our children and young people are not placed at significant disadvantage when compared with the support any child or young person may receive from their family.

## Our Promise



### THE PROMISE 2020

The Promise 2020 is a partnership commitment to support young people in care and care leavers.

It has been written by young people in care, care leavers, professionals who work with them and the West Sussex Corporate Parenting Panel.

#### INVOLVING YOU WE PROMISE

- To ask your views, listen and act on what you tell us
- Tell you what you need to know
- To give you information you need at the right time, to help you make the right decisions
- To be a good friend

#### HEALTH AND HAPPINESS WE PROMISE

- That you will have somewhere safe to live
- To help you stay in touch with people who are important to you
- To support you to be happy and healthy

#### SUPPORT AND ADVICE WE PROMISE

- To avoid unnecessary changes
- To make sure you know who will support you and that important people keep in touch with each other to help you
- You will get the support and resources you need to help toward your goals
- You will have a social worker and have access to other professionals you might need

#### EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK WE PROMISE

- We will help you develop skills for life and work
- To celebrate your successes with you
- To champion your education
- To help you get the qualifications, interview skills, training and opportunities you want

#### LEAVING CARE WE PROMISE

- To put in place what you need when you leave care
- To help you make a clear plan for your life ahead after care

west sussex county council Children first

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## Corporate Parenting Roles and Functions

The Lead Member of Children's Services has a statutory role that was established in the Children Act 2004. The role has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy, and effectiveness of Children's Services, and is responsible for ensuring that the needs of all our children and young people and their families and carers, are addressed.

The Lead Member is not involved or responsible for operational management of Children's Services and Education, however, the role provides strategic leadership, support, and challenge to both the Director of Children's Services and their Senior Management Team, as appropriate. It is a requirement for the Lead Member to provide an annual update to other elected members on how we are meeting our Corporate Parenting responsibilities.

## Corporate Parenting Panel

As of 2022 the council's Corporate Parenting Panel is chaired by not only our Lead Member for Children and Young People, but also by the chair of our Children in Care Council and chair of our Care Leavers Advisory Board. This refresh to the leadership and governance of the panel provides a 360-degree lens through co-production, ensuring robust assurance of the whole corporate parenting system, maintaining that children and young people in West Sussex receive outstanding corporate parenting; and that our Children we Care for and Care Leavers can achieve their potential.

Members of our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Advisory Board sit on the panel as equal members and have a standing item on the agenda to report on their priorities, challenges, any activities, updates, or issues they would like to bring to the panel's attention. All reports submitted to the Corporate Parenting Panel have a children and young person friendly approach and methodology, which is considered by the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Advisory Board members prior to the panel meeting so that they can prepare questions and challenges in advance.

The voices, views, wishes and feelings of our Children we Care for and Care Leavers are central to the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Over the last 12 months a review of our Corporate Parenting Panel has been undertaken to ensure it provides appropriate overview and scrutiny of the council's corporate parenting work and priorities. This has included:

- A refresh of the terms of reference
- A refresh of how our children in care council engage as equal members of the Panel and the design of child friendly reports to accompany full reports

- Review of membership to ensure appropriate seniority across the council and partnership involvement (Corporate Parenting Panel Membership is set out in Appendix 1)
- A refresh of the agenda format with standing items for our children in care council, data and highlight report.
- Development of a clear forward plan and action log for monitoring and understanding progress against agreed actions

The Panel champions and monitors the corporate parenting strategy and helps to drive its implementation. The panel of children, cross-party members, officers, foster carers, adopters, and senior managers meets at least four times a year, receiving reports, including performance reports, undertaking strategic and thematic enquiry into specific elements of the strategy, and seeking ways of resolving barriers to its success. Collectively and individually, Panel members engage regularly with children, young people, staff, and carers to help to further develop their understanding of issues affecting our Children we Care for and Care Leavers.

Since October 2020 the panel has met on 8 occasion considering reports on the following themes:

- Education progress and outcomes
- Children access and support to remain in educational employment and training (EET)
- Children Social care performance to improve care planning for our children
- Criminal Exploitation and Missing
- Care Leaver pathway planning and our local offer
- Progress and outcomes for Children we Care for and Children Seeking Asylum
- Permanency & Adoption
- Placement Sufficiency
- Primary and mental health need
- Placement Stability for Children we Care for
- Residential children homes development programme and quality assurance reporting
- Fostering service redesign and quality assurance reporting
- COVID-19 Impact, Arrangements and Recovery

## Corporate Parenting Panel Subgroups

Over the past 12 months, we have launched our corporate parenting subgroups which sit below the main Panel and are responsible for driving the corporate parenting strategy, the subgroups focus on:

- Health and wellbeing
- Children we Care for and Children Seeking Asylum
- Education
- Journey to Independence (Care Leavers)
- Children we Care for with Disabilities

Although in their infancy, the subgroups are already co-chaired by our children and young people, as well as having a nominated special interest elected member and officers as part of the membership; thus, maintaining the 360-degree authenticity to co-production as modelled by the main panel. The subgroups have a key role in reporting on progress as well as identifying and addressing barriers to effective change, making recommendations on how issues can be resolved to improve the lived experiences of our Children we Care for and Care Leavers. There are a variety of tasks and finish groups that focus on the work identified within the strategy and their work reports into the respective subgroup.

## An Induction to Corporate Parenting

We are keen to ensure that all elected members across the council exercise their responsibilities as corporate parents to our Children we Care for and our Care Leavers. A corporate parenting induction programme has been developed for all members which is mandatory being held twice yearly. The training has supported members in their respective roles on the panel, scrutiny committee and within the constituencies to keep the needs of Children we Care for and our Care Leavers as a priority to and to understand how to practically exercise their role as a corporate parent.

## Position Statement for Corporate Parenting (October 2020/June 2022)

This position statement provides an update as of 01 June 2022, It summarises and evidences the impact and progress of our improvement activity over the past 24 months. The statement highlights practice, performance, and sustained improvements across all key performance indicators within the service:

- **Improved participation and engagement** including feedback and influence in practice from our children and young people
- **Stronger and more effective** Corporate Parenting Panel
- Feedback from staff engagement is that **culture is shifting**, and leaders and managers are working better together as one service
- **Action** to address difficult problems

- **Sustained improvement**; visiting, reviews, supervision, management oversight and case summaries
- **Improved performance in** Annual Health Assessments and Personal Education Plan's
- **Embedded** Quality Assurance Framework
- Compliance and consistency of audits is significantly **improved**
- Audit moderations show **improved practice** for children
- **Strengthening** the voices of our children within audit from summer 2022

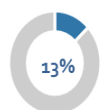
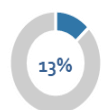
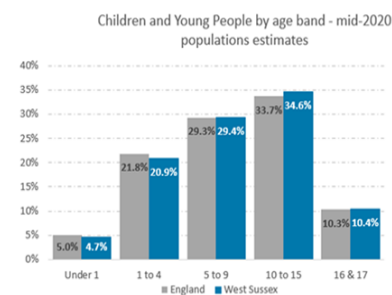
Our monitoring and quality assurance activity evidence's significant improvement across the service, with compliance now being sustained, focus is now on quality and sustainability. As anticipated, there is some variability in practice for our children who recently have become cared for due to the inevitable staff disruption caused by the launch of the Family Safeguarding Model in February 2022.

## Background & Context

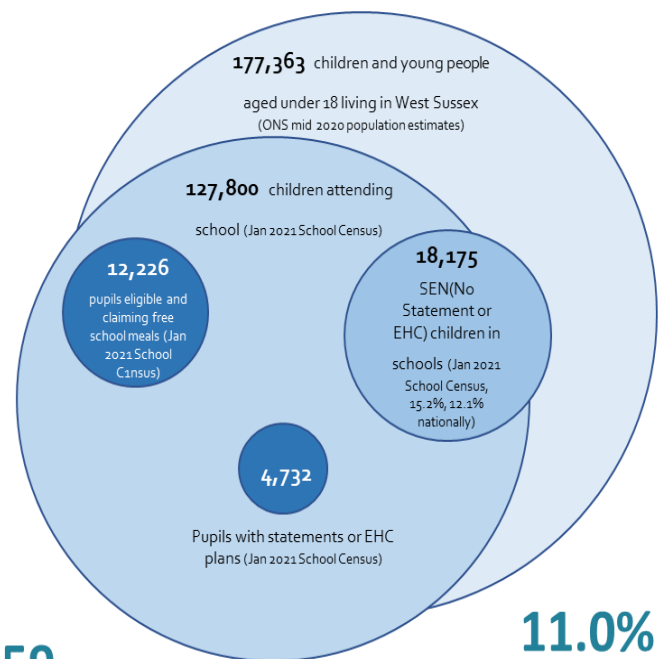
**20%** children and young people as a % of total population



● 0 - 17    ● 18 and over



**5,288** families turned around and claimed for against national vulnerability criteria (Supporting Families Programme – Sep 21)

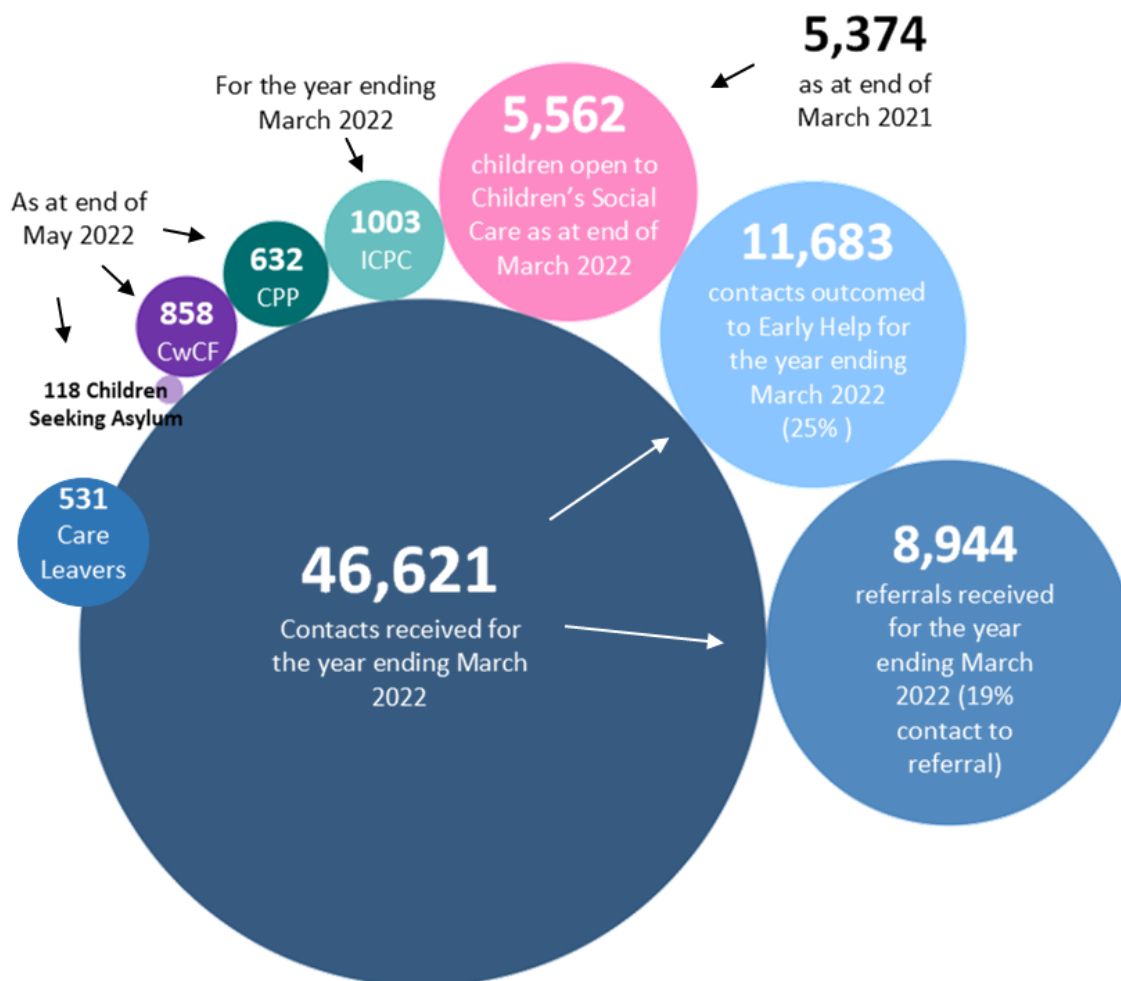


**159** Care Leavers who are NEET (42%, Dec-21)

**11.0%** pupils classed as persistent absentees in 2020/21 autumn term (13.0% nationally)

West Sussex County Council is currently caring for 858 children. We have seen a slight decrease over the past five months. We did however see an increase in February 2022, and this is attributed to an increase in the number of children seeking asylum we are caring for which is in line with both the local and national picture. For our wider children looked after

population, we have seen this number stabilise in line with the continued focus on proportionate and consistent application of our safeguarding and entry to care thresholds.



## Improvement activity & Service Development

In line with the Children and Young People's Business Plan for 2022/23 and with the Corporate Priorities, the service has a detailed service plan which details our key areas of improvement and our progression. We have worked comprehensively across all areas of our practice, in conjunction with relevant partners, to improve sustainable outcomes for children we care for as follows:

- Voice, Engagement & Participation
- Improving Care Planning
- Improving Health, Wellbeing & Partnership Working
- Management Oversight & Supervision
- Leadership and Governance
- Placement Sufficiency
- Quality Assurance & Audit



- Permanence Planning
- Transitions

Alongside this, we are undertaking work with Hertfordshire County Council to progress reunification work with children and their families using the Family Safeguarding Model and strengthening family approach.

## Current Performance

The service has a range of key performance indicators which are closely monitored to ensure that children are having regular updated planning that reflects their needs and wishes and that they are seen regularly. Our current performance (as of 1 June 2022) indicates that our Children we Care for are seen regularly (recording of statutory visits 97%) and recording of care plans are up to date (98%). For the 10% of our children who experienced delayed visits, this was due to the ongoing prevalence of Covid-19, where virtual visits are then followed up as soon as possible by in person visits, accompanied by management oversight. Children with out of time visits for other reasons are tracked at performance meetings held by Team and Service Managers. These improvements have been maintained and any decreases are minimal, evidencing sustained improvement. These are monitored via regular performance meetings between the Heads of Service and operational teams. We also use our auditing process alongside management oversight on plans to monitor and oversee quality and effectiveness of planning. The evidence from our quality assurance audits is that plans are becoming more effective and improving in quality.

## Voice, Engagement & Participation

For the first time in the history of our organisation we now have children co-chairing and informing service planning, delivery, and scrutiny. This has been achieved by the development of our Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers advisory board (CLAB), for which there are now appointed chairs, vice chairs and ambassadors.

Our CiCC and CLAB continues to contribute to our service development. Alongside our Children First Vision, our CiCC and CLAB have developed and produced a Youth Charter, which clearly outlines our children's and young people's expectations of us as their Corporate Parents. This was launched in March 2022 and now forms part of our directorate's mandatory induction for all our staff.

The CiCC and CLAB have completed the 'new into care pack' which has been written from a young person's perspective to support children when they first enter care.

They also co-chair our Corporate Parenting Panel with the Lead Member for Children. As part of the Corporate Parenting panel subgroups, we also have children and young people involved



in both participating and co-chairing these groups, notably, the Children we Care for subgroup, the Journey to Independence subgroup and Children Seeking Asylum subgroup.

The Corporate Parenting Panel holds officers and members to account on key issues; the areas of focus to date have been changes of social worker for Children we Care for, family time and addressing wider areas of service provision required for children seeking asylum as this cohort of young people increases. Through these discussions specific challenges and reflection from our children and young people have influenced service delivery. This includes dentist provision; scrutinising the activity and impact of the chairman of the Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee on the access of dentistry for Children we Care for and Care Leavers, Adoption practice (Adopt South East); with regards to letterbox, as well as the refresh of our Care Leavers Pathway Plan and Local Offer.

We have various mechanisms to ensure the voices of our children in care are heard and their concerns are addressed appropriately. Findings from recent BrightSpots surveys regarding children in our care evidenced:

- 96% always felt safe where they lived
- 97% of all our children liked their bedrooms
- 95% of our 11–18-year-old said they trusted their social workers
- 81% of all our children surveyed said life was getting better
- On average more of our 11–18-year-old reported that they liked school compared to other cared for children in other local authorities (93% vs National avg. 78%)
- 98% of our 8–18-year-old reported the adults they lived with showed an interest in their education all or most of the time (this is higher than the general population)
- 97% of our 8-11 and 92% of 11-18 spent time outdoors in the last week (this is higher than the general population)

This survey will be undertaken again later this year (2022) and our children (CiCC and CLAB) we will be working with CoramVoice to be part of the BrightSpots national survey to gauge subjective wellbeing of young people in care. We have previously participated in this and used the findings to inform service development so it will be helpful to participate again and compare from previous findings and further contribution to service development.

We also plan to include children in our audits from October 2022 so this will contribute to strengthening our practice and learning.

## Improving Care Planning

At the end of May 2022 98% of children had an up-to-date Care Plan in place, 100% within the Children we Care for Service. The impact of care and permanence planning is also manifested in the statistics around permanence referred to above.

The percentage of children participating in their reviews has increased since October 2020, to 96%. The child's voice remains a key part of the current improvement agenda for our Service. The expectation is that every child must have the right support and preparation in place to attend and participate meaningfully in their review meeting and that children (age appropriate), are supported and encouraged to chair their own reviews. It is also a clear expectation that a child's views will be represented in their review and that it will be child focused. Review reports are written as a letter to the child and work is planned to review and update the routes by which we can capture feedback from our children and families.

The timeliness of statutory reviews has also improved further over this year to 97%. Priority work is continuing to mitigate and resolve identified errors in the completion of performance data, or late notifications to the service, to ensure our service performance on children's reviews being held within timeframes is accurately reflected. The child's next review date is set at their previous review meeting and our Conference and Reviewing Officers are directed to undertake early preparation ahead of a child's subsequent review to ensure that all the right arrangements are in place. This also allows time to change a review within timeframe, for example if a key person in a child's network or the child or a family member cannot attend, and a change of date would benefit the child.

In terms of quality of planning, audit has evidenced that this is an area of improvement where they are now more consistently child focused and up to date, though we still need to drive through the consistency of SMART planning. To this end, we are undertaking a review of documentation to facilitate this within our processes, but importantly including a focus on plans being 'outcome-focused' to ensure congruence across the system. Additionally, we also want to become more multi-agency in our planning, we have started work to increase the development of our partnerships, to include more clarity around the expectations we have of our partners.

We have identified that an area of challenge within planning is around transitions to adulthood. We have run a series of joint service meetings to share information and challenges across Children we Care for and Care Leavers. We are currently finalising a new Assessment and Pathway Planning document which has been co-produced with our young people as members of the Care Leavers Advisory Board and will more explicitly focus on what is important to our young people. We also expect to see improvements in pathway planning in line with the increased resources being provided to the Care Leavers Service.

An Entry to Care Panel was initiated in January 2022. This Panel ensures there is Assistant Director oversight of the children who enter care as well as requests and reviews of placement changes, to ensure we are seeking and providing the right placements for our children to meet their needs from the earliest point. We have also reviewed our placement planning processes in response to audit and have now made it mandatory as of January 2022 that children's placement plans are reviewed and updated for every review so that changing needs are responded to.

### Improving Health, Wellbeing & Partnership Working (internal & external)

This is an area we highlighted in our self-assessment to Ofsted at a recent monitoring visit in March 2022 (full report at Appendix 2) as requiring further improvement and we have targeted activity to achieve this. Performance in respect of Initial Health Assessment (IHA) is now an area of improvement. A problem-solving event recently held with health partners has led to a new IHA action plan, which we are now progressing to improve our initial health assessments. This has resulted in specific, measurable, realistic, and timely actions for both health and children's social care to progress improvements at pace. This is included as part of our service plan and will continue to be monitored to track progress. We hope to see tangible progress from this work over Q2/3. In respect of review health assessment (RHA) performance has generally been over 80%, with a small recent drop attributable to a change in recording process. The primary challenge in respect of RHA's is children placed out of county.

We have continued to offer a substance misuse intervention to children identified as requiring one at an increased rate in comparison to our statistical neighbours and nationally. Currently our conversion rate to engage our children is above the regional and national % figures. It is notable that fewer children in West Sussex, compared with previous years, have been identified as having substance misuse needs and that in this area we are moving back towards national averages. This indicates that either there is more effective identification, treatment and disruption of substance abuse networks, or better educational work with our children and young people.

A bi-monthly operation meeting is held between children's social care and health partners in respect of the health of our Children we Care for and Care Leavers; this has led to improvement in terms of creating new processes for the referral of Initial Health Assessments and Review Health assessments and supported access for a number of children to dentistry in a very challenging national context. This has been utilised to inform planning, stemming from the recent Somerset judgement in respect of children requiring legally compliant medical summaries. Our Care Leavers are now routinely provided with a health summary as they leave care.

Extra business support resource has been provided to the permanence team since February 2022. This support is primarily focused on ensuring we make improvements in the timely completion of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQ), which we know is an area of challenge. Our children considered to have mental health needs are however, regularly identified and triaged through our Therapeutic Access Panel which is run jointly between Children's Social Care and the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAHMS) Permanency Service.

We work closely with our colleagues within our assessment and family safeguarding teams to support the timely transition of children to ensure they are in the right part of the service to avoid unnecessary changes of social worker. We now track the data for changes of social worker for Children we Care For so we can mitigate against changes of social worker if possible.

Further work is currently being undertaken to identify children who would benefit from an earlier move to the Children we Care for teams in line with their care planning. Further resources are being put into place in the Children we Care For teams to progress this.

We continue to have a monthly interface with our health colleagues for Children We Care For. The focus remains on improving health outcomes for our children. This includes health assessments, dental checks, SDQs and mental health support.

## Education

In working together with education, monthly meetings are held between the Virtual School and Children's social care, with the Virtual School providing quality assurance of every Personal Education Plan (PEP). PEP compliance has now been over 90% for over two years and over 95% for the last year. There is also increased prioritisation of the education of children in care through the inclusion of the Virtual School at the Entry to Care panel held weekly.

## Management Oversight & Supervision

This has been an area of significant improvement which is reflected within our data showing 91.4% of Children we Care For having had supervision recorded within last 8 weeks and 98.9% of Children we Care For having had management oversight in past 8 weeks. This is evidencing that almost all our children's case files have regular management oversight and that the rationale for decisions is clearer. Supervision is taking place to support care planning, and feedback from audits is that the quality is also improving. A focus on more outcome-based planning will continue moving forward across Q3/4 2022.

## Leadership & Governance

All members and officers of the County Council hold a shared responsibility as corporate parents, and all our members now receive training for this role as a compulsory part of their induction or continued training.

There is a permanent, stable leadership team in place committed to driving the service forward and motivating the workforce to make this journey with the required communication and support mechanisms in place.

In early 2021, the service joined together as one becoming the Children we Care for and Care Leavers Service; with our updated service name informed and designed by our children and young people via our Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Advisory Board. This has supported our improvement work in transitions and service development.

## Placement Sufficiency

The service has produced a Sufficiency Strategy which is due for review in 2022/23. There has been significant investment and development within our fostering, residential and support housing pathway which have been implemented to improve our overall placement sufficiency. Specific actions have been implemented and are already underway or are planned for the near future to improve this further and we have seen improvement in all key performance indicators as set out below:

Q4 comparison 2020 to 2021 - including statistical neighbour (SN) Regional (SE) and National Average (NA)

	West Sussex 2020	West Sussex 2021	Statistical Neighbour 2021	South East 2021	National Average 2021
<b>Children placed at distance (out of county more than 20mls)</b>	23%	20%	21%	22%	16%
<b>Children who have 3 or more placements in 12 months</b>	13%	10%	9%	11%	9%
<b>Children in placement for 2 years or more</b>	67%	72%	67%	65%	68%

As part of our service redesign a review of the fees and allowances for foster carers was carried out in April 2021(Phase 1), and a further light-touch review will be completed in Phase 2 (2022/23) as part of our wider fostering redesign. Evidence of impact of Phase 1 illustrates

that between April 2021 and February 2022; for recruited/mainstream (not including Children with Disabilities or Children Seeking Asylum) we have observed:

- 223 children placed with an Independent Foster Agency (IFA) – this is now 191 (net reduction of 32)
- 197 children placed in house (recruited/mainstream carers) – this is now 212 (net increase of 15)
- This gives a ratio of (IFA) 47%:53% (In house)
- Visitors to our fostering website have increased by 76%
- Fostering enquiries have increased by 36%
- Mainstream fostering placement approvals have increased by 33%
- Transfer requests (IFA & other LA's) have increased by 140%
- 26 new fostering assessments are underway - an increase of 47%

The service provides 44 placements for our children, delivered across 6 residential children's homes to ensure that we can provide appropriate residential care placement that can meet the needs of our children (including those who have more complex needs). These provisions are local (all within West Sussex), keeping them closer to their family, schools, and support networks. Early evidence of a positive impact in the residential service is summarised as follows:

- Recent full inspections (last 9mths) have graded 4 of the Council's homes as 'Outstanding'.
- The Council's 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> homes, are new homes, both of which are now Ofsted registered
- The 5<sup>th</sup> home has just been graded as 'Good' the highest grading possible at a first inspection
- The 6<sup>th</sup> home is awaiting its first inspection
- Following successful registration with Ofsted, 8 of our children have moved into the new placements which includes 6 returning to the county, who were previously placed at distance

## Quality Assurance & Audit

Through increased oversight as evidenced in our data for management oversight and supervision, at all management levels our quality assurance has improved and our work moving forward is to increase the consistency across the service. To support this, we have been reviewing and updating our practice guidance for Children we Care For and this will

continue into Summer and Autumn 2022. Alongside this, quarterly service days and regular group supervision within teams and service areas sharing good practice examples to both celebrate and share the learning.

Audits continue to support our practice in identifying themes and areas for development. This has been key around our transitions work and resulting work included within our service plan. Moving forward, we will be including the voice of the child within audits and our team managers will become part of the auditing work which will be beneficial to the process and service improvements having first line managers directly involved in the auditing process.

## Permanency Planning

This has remained a focus for the service with a monthly permanence oversight board with full cross service representation including legal contributing to joint permanence plans and improving the pace and consistency of permanence outcomes. A dedicated permanence team has been established, promoting, and monitoring all aspects of permanence service wide, including updating procedures and practice guidance which also includes life story work. A focus on an increase in the pace of adoption including early permanence with foster for adopt placements has led to an increase in the use of this option for early permanence.

Both our use of permanence planning meetings in tracking permanence and our permanency panel continues to be well utilised to secure permanence for our children. We have more than doubled the number of children in permanent arrangements and our panel is evidencing that permanence is being considered much earlier, and our practice is improved and embedded. 243 children were matched in permanent foster placements as of the end of May 2022.

Performance in respect of adoption is on a positive trajectory despite the delays and challenges caused by Covid-19 restrictions within the court system. In the 6 months period to January 2022, we saw reductions of 25 days in the timeliness of both entering care to moving with an adoptive family and from placement order to matching.

We continue to monitor any children who are residing in unregulated arrangements, understanding the rationale for this position, and acting as needed to rectify this position.

For the small group of children under 12yrs residing in residential placements, there are regular reviews with Head of Service oversight to ensure planning is robust and exit planning is kept under review to ensure it is in the child's best interest. Further work is being undertaken to determine and deliver timely exit planning and permanence for this group of children.

Specialist training for staff at all levels on achieving permanence is supported through Adoption South East and all agency decision makers and panel advisors will be accessing specialist training through CoramBAAF by Q2.

The above work and focus on permanence have been significantly scaffolded by the introduction of the Permanence Service in October 2021.

## Transitions

Transitions for our children as they get older and move into adulthood is key. The move to make Children we Care for and Care Leavers one service has supported improvements in our work on transitions, as set out within our service plan. We have increased resources for our care leavers service to ensure going forward Personal Advisors come on board at 17yrs, and caseloads for personal advisors are reduced to support this area of work. We have embedded a process of joint supervision as children approach their 18th birthday.

We are currently revising our needs assessment and pathway planning. This is being informed by our young people to improve better assessment and pathway planning for our young people as they move into adulthood. Our new needs assessment tool is currently being developed by our Integrated Childrens System team in our IT department, and we are on track to complete this over Q2/3 2022/23.

Where we have identified an ongoing need for our young people, as they move into adulthood, we have a multi-agency transitions panel to consider this, and progress Care Act assessments as required.

## Care Leavers in Employment or Training

The number of our care leavers in employment or training is improving. The Care Leavers service is recruiting more personal advisors who will soon be able to support Children We Care For at an earlier age and increase our support alongside social workers and the virtual school. The care leavers service is striving hard to build relationships with any providers, Department for Work and Pensions, in-house services, and educational establishments to provide greater levels of support for our care leavers, with the aim of creating and promoting a greater level of opportunities for our care leavers. Seven of our young people received funding this year to attend the Bridging the Gap Course with Chichester University. Two of these young people have successfully secured places on our 2023 Social Work apprenticeship programme and the University is keen to continue this work with our service and provide similar opportunities. We now have a guaranteed interview scheme for care leavers and a working group to increase wrap around support and opportunities for apprenticeships with us. We are exploring how we can use media platforms to notify our care leavers of opportunities that become available, including courses, apprenticeships, internships, and job fairs. The care leavers service is meeting with colleagues from our career service and we now have a Team Manager and personal advisor as specific points of contact whom are leading on improving educational opportunities. Guidance is being produced to ensure accommodation providers and personal advisors work together to review Pathway Planning with a focus on employment and education opportunities.



## Care Leavers in Higher Education

There continues to be an increase in the number of our care leavers attending university and higher education. We have a rising number over the age of 21 years, currently 18 are between the ages of 22-24 years and 2 young people aged 18. Some of our older care leavers are doing their master's degree and returning for extended duties to support them with their education. Our Local Offer is providing additional financial support, if needed, for those completing their master's degree as well as those undertaking graduate courses. We have also ensured all of our eligible care leavers benefitted from the Department for Education and XMA project funded laptops and iPads via our virtual school.

## Local Offer for our Care Leavers

Across 2021/22 we have been working with an organisation called the Care Leaders (national subject matter experts) whom have been supporting us to develop youth participation across the local authority and facilitate the process for the redevelopment and launch of our leaving care offer.

Through this partnership, the participation service has been successfully rebranded and restructured. This has included a full consultation with all those engaged in the service and our children and young people. This has proved a challenging and worthwhile exercise and has received valuable support from the Senior Leadership Team, which has enabled its success. We have been struck by the clear commitment that our children and young people's views are central to all that we do, and we have seen an increase children and young people attending forums, engaging in the work, and providing feedback that has shaped the project.

As part of the restructure, the participation service has produced a new Participation Strategy and developed a brand which enables the service to communicate with children and young people through a brand that relates to them directly.

Our care leavers service has been instrumental and supportive in developing the refreshed care leavers local offer, as we recognised that our previous offer contained gaps and was not communicated in a way that was easily understandable or accessible. Over the last 9 months we have worked extensively with the Care Leaders, service, leaving care workers, partners and our children and young people to rewrite the offer. We have identified and filled gaps in service provision and developed a plan to create a digital version of the offer. In the process of doing this we have seen considerable commitment and passion that has led the total rewrite of an offer that acts as a step-by-step guide for our children and young people to access services, for example applying for a NI number, accessing housing, writing a CV and more.

Since completing this work the Director of Children's Services has received notification from the Care Leaders noting that; from their knowledge West Sussex are the only local authority

who offer this type of guide to our Care Leavers and from their knowledge it is the most comprehensive.

We are now moving on the next phase of the project, which is to digitise this offer and make it accessible through web and mobile platforms. The progress of this is on track and due for completion across 2022/23.

## Conclusion

We have worked hard to improve the **consistency** and **quality** of our practice for our children:

- In building positive relationships with children with better quality assessments and planning to achieve outcomes
- In our regularity and quality of visiting children, their reviews, supervision, management oversight and case summaries
- In the fostering service and significant investment in residential to improve choice and stability of placements for children
- Within the virtual school to consistently deliver high quality PEP's
- Permanence planning and foster for adoption
- Improved participation with children and their families, Children in Care Council (CiCC) and Care Leavers Advisory Board (CLAB) – including positive feedback from children
- Corporate Parenting Panel now includes children so that they can influence service developments and provide feedback
- Quality assurance framework is better embedded; compliance and consistency of audits is much improved and audit moderations show improved practice for children and the voice of the child to be piloted from April 2022 in audits
- Feedback from staff engagement is that culture is shifting, and leaders and managers are working better together as one service
- Action to address difficult problems such as initial health assessments, unregulated connected carers placements

## Our Priorities

We know we need to continue to improve, and will focus on the following areas over the next 12 months:

- Embed participation, listening and capturing the wishes and feelings of children in all our work
- Consolidate child centred practice for children we care for
- Improve our placement choice and sufficiency for children

- Promote contact and family time and relationships and connections with family and friends
- Improve transition points for children
- Embed the Family Safeguarding Model to ensure quality of practice is enhanced and sustained when children first become care for.
- Correct the impact on performance due to the implementation of the Family Safeguarding Model
- Focus on staff recruitment and retention across the service; problem solving event planned

## Closing Reflections

As set out within this position statement, there are many areas where we have seen significant improvements for Children we Care for, as a service we are proud of improving the outcomes for our children and retaining a stable workforce. This progress has been evidenced despite the recent Covid-19 pandemic which demonstrates the level of commitment and tenacity that the service must achieve and deliver higher aspirations for our children and young people.

Our Service Plan clearly sets out the areas which require improvement and the actions to deliver these at pace to ensure continuity and consistency for all our children which we care for irrelevant of where they sit in the service. The ownership and aspiration of our leaders, managers and staff will ensure we continue to drive forward the necessary actions and activity to further improve outcomes for the children we care for and care leavers.

## Appendix 1 – Membership of Corporate Parenting Panel

The core membership of the Panel is set out below. The Panel can decide to invite representatives from across the Council and partner agencies as required, depending on the agenda items.

### Current Core Membership:

Name	Role
Cllr Jacquie Russell	Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (Co-Chair of CPP)
Cllr Chris Oxlade	Vice Chairman of CPP
A	Chairman of Children in Care Council (Co-Chair of CPP)
C	Chairman of Care Leavers Advisory Board (Co-Chair of CPP)
Cllr Brenda Burgess	County Councillor
Cllr Alison Cooper	County Councillor
Cllr Nigel Jupp	County Councillor
Cllr Paul Linehan	County Councillor
Cllr Kirsty Lord	County Councillor
K	Children in Care Council Ambassador
L	Children in Care Council Ambassador
C	Care Leavers Advisory Board Ambassador
Lucy Butler	Director of Children, Young People and Learning, WSCC
Dan Ruaux	Assistant Director (Corporate Parenting), WSCC
Dawn Siddens	Designated Nurse – Children and Young People in Care, Sussex NHS Commissioners
Angela Putland	Named Nurse – Children and Young People in Care, Sussex NHS Commissioners
Natalie Brahma-Pearl	Chief Executive, Crawley Borough Council
Sue Hollowell	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Foster Carer
Chris Day	Adopter
Toby Wilson	Team Manager- Voice and Participation Team, WSCC
Claire Tooke	Voice and Participation Team, WSCC
Adrian Dyka	Head of Service – Children We Care for and Care Leavers, WSCC

Sarah Clark	Head of Virtual School, WSCC
Laura Mallinson	Head of Service – Reviewing and Conferencing, WSCC
Kelly Wilkes	Head of Service – Children We Care For
Katherine De La Mora	Senior Advisor - Democratic Services
Ann Little	Assistant Democratic Services Officer (note taker)

[Appendix 2: Ofsted Monitoring Visit Report March 2022](#)

(see next page)

9 May 2022

Lucy Butler  
West Sussex  
County Hall  
West Street  
Chichester  
PO19 1QT

Dear Ms Butler

### **Monitoring visit to West Sussex children's services**

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to West Sussex children's services on 30 March 2022. This was the fourth monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in May 2019. Her Majesty's inspectors for this visit were Tracey Scott and Sarah Canto.

### **Areas covered by the visit**

Inspectors reviewed the progress made in the following areas of concern identified at the last inspection:

- The quality and effectiveness of assessments, care planning and the support provided to children and young people in care.
- The quality, timeliness and impact of supervision, management oversight and decision-making, social work capacity and caseloads.

This visit was carried out in line with the inspection of local authority children's services (ILACS) framework. This visit was carried out partly by remote means. Inspectors were on site but used video calls for discussions with some local authority staff.

### **Headline findings**

Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of practice in West Sussex and have remained resolute in their approach to improving support for children. The quality of social work practice and the experiences of the children in the care of West Sussex children's services have significantly improved since the May 2019 inspection. Political and corporate support, including considerable financial investment, has assisted with a continued focus on practice improvement and has enabled more children to live in local, stable homes. A reconstituted and strengthened corporate parenting board readily hears and responds to children's voices. Comprehensive performance reporting and oversight have ensured that many important performance

measures, such as timeliness of visits to children and reviews of their arrangements, have significantly improved, and this improvement is being sustained. The timeliness of initial health assessments and completion of strengths and difficulties questionnaires remain an area of focus for improvement. Child-centred, impactful audits provide a largely accurate view of practice and reflective learning opportunities for practitioners. However, the impact of audit on the progression of children's plans remains inconsistent. A multi-faceted approach to recruitment and retention is beginning to increase permanence and stability within the workforce. There is a tangible shift in culture within the organisation.

Recent service redesign and the implementation of a new practice model have prompted some turbulence within the wider service. This has included changes in social worker and a small number of unallocated children awaiting an assessment when first referred to the service. Senior leaders are confident that this is short-term and are focused on the incremental implementation of the model to further strengthen practice in West Sussex. Despite significant endeavour, the number of children living with friends and family in unapproved arrangements has not reduced. A small number of children are living in unregulated arrangements where the support and care being provided is not sufficient to meet their needs.

### **Findings and evaluation of progress**

Most children are living in arrangements that meet their needs and in settled, long-term homes. Their circumstances have improved, and many are doing well. A small number of vulnerable young people are living in unregulated arrangements that do not meet their current care and support needs. The local authority had recently reviewed these arrangements prior to inspectors being on site and had begun to take steps to strengthen the support and care children receive.

Some children continue to live in homes with family and friends' carers that fall below the expected standard for fostering regulations. Despite significant endeavour since the monitoring visit in May 2021, the number of children in such arrangements has remained similar to that of November 2021. This continues to be an area of real focus for the local authority.

Some children continue to experience too many changes of social worker, and this has an impact on the quality of relationships and on the progression of their plans. However, the frequency of this is reducing and increasingly the children the local authority cares for are able to develop meaningful relationships with their social worker.

Most children are seen regularly by their social workers. Thoughtful direct work and conversations with children enable them to express their wishes and feelings, and they create opportunities for children's experiences to be understood and for them to have a clear sense of the decisions that are made on their behalf and why, at a time that is right for them. For a few children, especially during times of change or



instability, the frequency of visits was not proportionate. Children told inspectors that they enjoy spending time with their social workers, and some said that they would like to see their social worker more often. Inspectors also saw a small number of visits being undertaken virtually, where the reason for this was not apparent.

Careful thought is given to the frequency of, and arrangements for, children to spend time with their family and others who are important to them. For some children, photographic story boards vividly capture time spent with family, to complement written records and inform future life story work.

The quality of records to and for children has improved. Records written to the child are reflective and show a real warmth and genuine care for the child.

Practitioners consider the progress of children and formulate plans to meet presenting needs effectively in timely reviews of children's looked after arrangements. The vast majority of reviews are taking place virtually and the return to face-to-face meetings has been too slow and not driven by children's needs. Some reviews would benefit from greater participation with partner agencies such as health or education. Most children are supported to attend and participate or are consulted prior to the meeting taking place. Sensitive letters are written to the child explaining what decisions have been made. These will help children understand their histories and the reason decisions were made for them. On occasion, language is too professional or jargonistic.

Initial health assessments are not taking place quickly enough. The local authority is aware of this and anticipates that a recent problem-solving event with health partners will lead to an improvement. Children's emotional well-being needs are being considered and addressed in key planning forums such as their children in care reviews and personal education plans. Children benefit from a range of emotional well-being support.

The virtual school is having an effective and positive impact on the support provided to children in relation to their education and well-being. The vast majority of children now benefit from having a personal education plan, the quality of which is improving and helping children reach their potential. School staff value the support and responsive communication provided by the virtual school.

Strengthened practice, increased awareness and management oversight of permanence planning has significantly enabled greater security and stability for many children. A small number continue to experience delay in this being achieved for them.

The allocation of personal advisers for children to support their transition to adulthood is not taking place early enough. The local authority is aware of this and has secured additional investment to increase capacity to meet the need.

Leaders have responded positively to the need to provide care for a greater number of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children via the National Transfer Scheme. Interpreters are used to support assessments and visits, and access to education is swift. Children and young people benefit from the support of a specialist Child and Adolescent Mental Health worker in addressing their emotional health needs. Practitioners are mindful of children's situations, and of their identities. They seek children's wishes and feelings, and focus strongly on ensuring that community networks are strengthened.

Most supervision is in line with the local authorities practice expectation but not always in keeping with the level of complexity and need. Most records of supervision provide an update for the child. However, although these records have improved, the extent of reflection and analysis, and of the impact that they have on progressing the child's plan remains inconsistent.

The implementation of a comprehensive participation strategy has ensured that children's voices are actively sought, heard and responded to. Children are involved in the training and recruitment of carers and staff, and their views inform service planning. A well-run children in care council is cohesive and productive. A range of events are organised, so children have opportunities to develop their skills, share experiences and, importantly, enjoy fun activities. Children's presence at corporate parenting meetings is meaningful and influential and has resulted in senior leaders positively receiving challenge to improve children's lives.

The independent reviewing officer's footprint is more evident on children's files. While stronger than previously, the timely impact of this for the child isn't always evident. The quality of the relationship between the independent reviewing officer and the child is also inconsistent, with some children benefiting from visits and communication between reviews and others being absent from the child's life between reviews.

Leaders actively responded to the challenge of placement sufficiency in West Sussex. Significant financial investment has supported an increase in local fostering capacity and high-quality residential provision, enabling more children to live closer to home, their communities and networks.

Comprehensive performance reporting and oversight provides an effective line of sight to practice. This has supported sustained compliance in a number of key areas.

The constitution, profile and effectiveness of the corporate parenting board has significantly improved. The chair of the board is highly committed to ensuring that children are empowered to participate and influence the work of the board. She continues to strive to raise the profile of corporate parenting and increase meaningful engagement across all members and leaders within the council.

Compliance with audit completion and a rigorous approach to moderation have been sustained. Increasingly, there is a shared understanding of what good practice looks like, and there is a significantly reduced number of children's experiences now considered by the local authority to be inadequate. The implementation of a new quality assurance framework and audit tool in November 2021 has supported an increasingly child-centred and impactful audit narrative and process to support a reflective learning approach. However, the impact on the progression of children's plans remains inconsistent. Leaders have recognised this and have plans to provide greater oversight of these children to ensure a timelier improvement to children's circumstances.

A comprehensive approach to recruitment and retention is beginning to reap positive results. While some parts of the service are more challenging to recruit to, the 'children we care for' workforce is almost all permanent staff, which creates greater stability and consistency for children.

Caseloads remain too high in some parts of the service, but the vast majority of practitioners report their workload to be manageable.

Inspectors observed a growing sense of optimism, enthusiasm and belief within the workforce. Leaders and managers are visible. Practitioners are excited and enthusiastic for the implementation of the new practice model.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

Yours sincerely

Tracey Scott  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

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## **Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee: Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22**

### **Background**

- 1** The Annual Scrutiny Report on activity during the previous year aims to promote effective scrutiny and identify areas of best practice or for development.
- 2** All scrutiny members contributed to the report, each committee holding an informal session for comments and an all-member session on programme planning in March provided an opportunity to see how well scrutiny is working and identify areas for development. The Scrutiny Annual Report, **attached at Appendix 1**, was endorsed by the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee (PFSC) at its meeting on 17 June 2022.
- 3** Reporting scrutiny performance through County Council helps to raise the profile and benefits of strong scrutiny in line with statutory guidance which encourages all members to be aware of and engaged in scrutiny processes.

### **Discussion**

- 4** PFSC assessed scrutiny activity during 2021/22 using the following indicators (agreed by the Governance Committee and the County Council in 2019):
  - Influence policy ideas or proposals before they are developed
  - Spend time on matters critical to service outcomes for residents
  - Provide meaningful challenge to the performance of services
  - Show the difference scrutiny makes to service outcomes for residents
- 5** The Report identifies areas that members felt had worked well and those needing improvement, as summarised below.

#### **Worked well:**

- Members building good relationships and developing ways of working together.
- The flexibility of being able to meet in person as well as virtually.
- Different ways of working, such as information sessions to increase understanding and the use of pre-meetings to help prepare debates.
- The range of issues covered and Cabinet Member engagement in work planning.
- Task and finish groups enabling flexibility and the ability to deep dive.
- More robust performance, budget and risk monitoring.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- A clear 'Focus for Scrutiny' in reports to help steer questioning in meetings.
- A better balance between proactive and reactive scrutiny, with more and earlier involvement in policy development.
- More timely scrutiny input into the decision-making process and time for proper consideration of scrutiny recommendations.
- Use of external witnesses/external subject matter experts for a range of views.
- More visits to the services being scrutinised and more informal briefing sessions to help members build their knowledge.

- 6** A scrutiny development action plan is in place monitored and overseen by scrutiny committee chairmen, and the Annual Report lists actions taken. Actions for the future include:
- The development of an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol.
  - A review of the Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee.
  - Continuing to strengthen scrutiny input into monitoring performance against the Council's priorities.
  - All scrutiny committees to ensure they are considering the impact of climate change in all matters.
  - To better evidence the impact of scrutiny (including a system for tracking and monitoring scrutiny recommendations and a review of the scrutiny business planning checklist)
  - Sharing scrutiny best practice by liaison with Surrey County Council.
  - Opportunities to raise the profile of scrutiny.

### **Recommended**

That the Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22, as attached at Appendix 1, be noted.

### **Pieter Montyn**

Chairman of the Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee

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

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22

### **Background papers**

None

# Annual Scrutiny Report 2021/22

## An overview of scrutiny activity at West Sussex County Council in 2021/22

This was an election year for the County Council with 33 new councillors elected and 30 of these appointed to a scrutiny committee. A full programme of member training and induction for all scrutiny committee members ended with a work programme planning session in March 2022 focused on priorities for scrutiny for the year ahead. Learning from virtual working during the pandemic led to new approaches including hybrid meetings, virtual briefings and engagement with stakeholders and witnesses. Most committee meetings are held in person, but with the flexibility to work virtually, particularly for informal meetings. Scrutiny committees appointed their own chairs and vice chairs in the summer of 2021.

### Scrutiny at West Sussex County Council

Information on [Scrutiny at the Council](#) is on the Council’s website. For details of each committee, including membership, areas of responsibility, meeting dates, agendas, and minutes, use the links below:

- Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee ([CYPSSC](#))
- Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee ([ECSSC](#))
- Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee ([FRSSC](#))
- Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee ([HASC](#))
- Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee ([PFSC](#))

### The Scrutiny Year at a glance

<b>28 committee meetings held</b>	<b>7 key decisions previewed</b>	<b>hybrid technology enabled virtual participation</b>	<b>Witnesses from a range of partners and interests</b>
<b>3 task and finish groups for in-depth scrutiny</b>	<b>The voice of young people from the West Sussex Youth Cabinet</b>	<b>38% of business on policy development</b>	<b>All committee meetings webcast with 4,186 views</b>

### Scrutiny Impact

#### Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- ✓ Influence policy ideas or proposals before they are developed
- ✓ Spend time on matters critical to service outcomes for residents
- ✓ Provide meaningful challenge to the performance of services
- ✓ Show the difference scrutiny makes to service outcomes for residents

#### a) The value of scrutiny to the Council’s business and its role in the County

**Listen and engage:** External witness input into scrutiny was provided by NHS Trusts, the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner, a local charity for victims of sexual violence, Carers’ Support West Sussex, Gatwick Diamond, the South East Climate Alliance and Sussex Wildlife Trust. CYPSSC Committee members carried out independent engagement with

local school governors and parents for feedback on children’s progress at school. Healthwatch West Sussex, the health and social care champion, as well as having a seat on HASC, has provided reports on specific issues under scrutiny to ensure the patient voice is represented.

**Working well in partnership:** Hybrid working enabled partners such as the NHS to attend committee meetings virtually. The West Sussex Youth Cabinet continues to have a standing invitation to attend and speak at CYPSSC meetings and Healthwatch represented the voice of health and social care users at HASC on important items such as dentistry.

**Learning and good practice:** A scrutiny induction programme included input from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Southeast Employers. HASC members used RNIB to better understand the needs of people with a visual impairment. Pre-meetings have been used to inform scrutiny work and programme planning and have helped members with the focus for scrutiny and key lines of enquiry.

More informal briefings/information sessions have been held to clarify issues and raise awareness, allowing more time for effective scrutiny in the formal meetings. Briefings were arranged for PFSC members on the Council’s property joint venture, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the Capital Programme (the latter open to all councillors). HASC received an NHS briefing on Stroke Services and future plans. Members of FRSSC visited the Joint Control Centre to inform its performance monitoring of the service.

Scrutiny Chairmen meet regularly to share learning and best practice and meet quarterly with the Cabinet. Cabinet Members are invited to attend committee business planning processes to help identify where scrutiny can add value.

**Influence and impact:** Scrutiny committees have sought a work programme balanced between strategic proposals (key decision preview), performance monitoring and policy development. During 2021/22, seven key decisions were previewed compared with 21 in 2020/21. A new style quarterly performance and finance report was introduced with each committee carrying out quarterly performance monitoring in public whereas only PFSC used to do this routinely. Feedback from scrutiny on performance monitoring is reported direct to the Cabinet. Data on scrutiny input into policy development was not previously gathered, but it formed 38% of main agenda items at scrutiny committees during 2021/22.



A hybrid scrutiny committee meeting in action



## b) The value of scrutiny to service priorities – the focus of scrutiny

### Children and Young People’s Services Scrutiny Committee (CYPSSC)

- The Committee continued to hold the Executive to account through assessing the progress of the **Children First Improvement Programme**. CYPSSC identified priorities within the Programme to focus on for meaningful challenge, including a review of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the **Fostering Service redesign** where the Committee highlighted its views on diversity in recruitment and how councillors could support the promotion of foster recruitment. It also assessed the activity and improvements in services for children we care for ahead of an Ofsted monitoring visit and welcomed progress particularly in achieving outstanding Ofsted ratings at three residential homes.
- In July 2021 an additional meeting was held on the redesign of the **Early Help Services** and the input from public consultation, following on from previous input the Committee had in early 2021 to inform the aims and principles of the redesign. Members focused on what the proposals were seeking to achieve in the context of the Council’s priorities and how they would deliver improved outcomes for vulnerable children and families. Its recommendations to the Cabinet included ensuring sufficient resources to work with schools, partners and early years settings to identify and address the needs of children and families at an early stage and constant monitoring of the impact of the new service design to address any unintended consequences early. The Committee will scrutinise the impact of the new model after 12 months.
- In January 2022 the Committee reviewed the **attainment and achievement of children and young people across West Sussex**, the approach to addressing the attainment gap and the plans and actions in place to improve outcomes. The Committee heard evidence from Durrington Research School and its work with schools to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children. Members identified school readiness and mental health support as key areas that impact the attainment of young people and recommended that these be focused on in the development of the Council’s new Education and Skills Strategy, to be developed in 2022. This will be subject to scrutiny by the Committee during 2022-23.
- Through the year, the Committee raised concerns about the impact of the pandemic on **Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**. A briefing on the work of the NHS, Public Health and the Children and Young People and Learning was provided to CYPSSC and HASC members. As the NHS is responsible for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), a further briefing will be sought to enable CYPSSC and HASC to identify how and when scrutiny could add value to this vital area of responsibility.

### Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee (FRSSC)

- A key area of focus for the Committee has been the Fire & Rescue Service (FRS) **Improvement Journey**, including measures to reduce risk, protect the public and promote the right values to encourage fairness and diversity, seeking assurance that improvements are on track. Members welcomed the improved financial data and how well the Service has addressed the need to support staff and increase the diversity of the workforce.
- The Committee has continued to review performance through the new **Performance and Assurance Framework**, enabling timely and constructive input and focusing on areas of concern. The Committee has been able to identify issues for further scrutiny, including the recruitment of retained firefighters (for a TFG during 2022/23).

- The Committee was able to influence the development of the **Community Risk Management Plan** at an early stage, making suggestions on the direction of travel such as the impact of retained firefighters in rural areas.

### Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC)

- The Committee scrutinised **post Covid-19 recovery planning by the NHS**, with an update from the NHS West Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). It asked for evidence of the patient voice and engagement with residents and asked the NHS to ensure that further reports have a higher level of data. Members also raised concern with West Sussex MPs on the importance of ensuring staff from overseas are able to work within the NHS and the need for the committee to dig deeper into mental health service challenges at a future date.
- **Access to dentistry** across West Sussex was identified as a priority. In January 2022 HASC received an update from NHS England (responsible for commissioning dental services) and raised concerns about accessing NHS dentists, getting appointments, treatment backlog, fluoridation rates and the recruitment and retention of dentists. Access to dentistry for children we care for and children seeking asylum was considered at the request of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Committee agreed to write to the Secretary of State to highlight the need to address the national shortage of dentists and to show that public concerns are being heard. It also asked NHS England for a plan for dealing with the backlog of appointments.
- The Committee was able to give early input into the new **Adult Social Care Quality Assurance** process, suggesting elements to include such as wider benchmarking data and a workshop for councillors on the audit process.
- In March 2022, HASC was consulted by the NHS on proposals to change **neonatal services** at St. Richard's Hospital Chichester. Members commented on the engagement strategy and highlighted the need to consult parents/families who had used this service and to include a full picture of neonatal services accessed by West Sussex residents, which includes Worthing and Brighton.

### Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee (CHESC)

- The Committee established three TFGs to input into plans for **On-Street Parking Management**, the **Gatwick Northern Runway Consultation** and the **Bus Enhanced Partnership Plan**. These facilitated timely and meaningful contributions to the decision-making process with each able to agree significant recommendations addressed by the Cabinet Member with comprehensive responses back to the groups.
- The Committee previewed the Council's proposed response to Highways England's **consultation on the proposed A27 bypass at Arundel** at a special meeting in February. Members for divisions most directly affected provided evidence and around 100 residents commented via email. After a comprehensive debate the Committee voiced concerns about aspects of the proposals, including the impact on local villages and the natural habitat, the potential financial impact on the County Council, and the reliability of the traffic modelling assumptions, whilst being supportive of the need for a bypass. The Committee's consensual approach to its output received praise from members and residents and its recommendations led to a strengthened consultation response.
- The Committee continued to monitor the **booking system in selected Household Waste Recycling Centres**, in particular scrutinising survey feedback from residents and

businesses and service data. Members triangulated the evidence with views from their divisions and supported the proposal to implement the pilot scheme permanently.

- The Committee previewed the **draft Local Transport Plan**, which was strengthened in line with the Committee's concerns around new settlements and the piecemeal nature of the County's cycling network.

### Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee (PFSC)

- **The Council Plan and Budget for 2022/23** were scrutinised before consideration at County Council in February 2022. They were reviewed together to ensure targets and objectives in the Plan were linked to the financial resources available and could be managed and monitored together. An all-member session was also held to enable each portfolio to be reviewed ahead of the PFSC session for more effective and efficient scrutiny.
- A new style **Quarterly Performance Management** process was introduced in 2021/22. The report includes improved information on performance targets, budget, workforce and corporate risk as well as a summary of the transformation programme and the impact of Covid. PFSC comments on the Quarter 1 report led to better formatting and content in later reports. Service scrutiny committees review data relevant to their portfolio, the chairmen feeding any issues into PFSC. The new process has worked well and has been well received by members as it enables a review of complete information in a timely manner. It also means that each scrutiny committee takes responsibility for their portfolio areas.
- The **economy** was recognised as a priority for scrutiny in 2021/22 due to the adverse impact of Covid-19. The Committee received reports on the Growth Deals Programme and progress to date in achieving the targets set in the Economy Plan, with specific scrutiny of the visitor economy (tourism) and how the Council is helping businesses across the county. The Committee will continue to monitor progress in achieving the economy targets through the quarterly PRR and will request further reports if required.
- Progress in developing the **Property Joint Venture** was reviewed by the committee. This is seen as an important step in making the best use of our resources in line with the Council Plan. An informal session was held to ensure all committee members understood the journey of the joint venture to date and this helped the scrutiny focus for the formal meeting.
- Scrutiny of future plans for the Council's **Customer Service Function** took place early to enable the Committee to influence proposals. The Committee made recommendations for how the partner organisation due to be appointed to deliver this service interacts with vulnerable customers and carries out staff training. The importance of communication between in-house and outsourced services was also highlighted.

### Scrutiny Evaluation 2021/22

Each committee held an informal review of the year in March 2022 to discuss what had worked well, what could be done better, what new committee members need to know and to identify any priorities for the future work programme. The work programme planning session in March provided an opportunity to evaluate how well scrutiny was working and areas for development.

#### What worked well:

- Committees are building good relationships and developing ways of working together
- The flexibility of being able to meet in person as well as virtually

- The use of pre-meetings to help prepare for meetings and focus questioning.
- Different ways of working, such as briefings/information sessions to increase understanding.
- The range of issues covered in work programme planning and Cabinet Member engagement in this process. For FRSSC, the involvement of the whole committee in this was seen as beneficial.
- Task and finish groups (TFGs) enabling flexibility and the ability to deep dive into issues.
- Quarterly scrutiny of the Council's Performance and Resources Report has enabled more robust performance, budget and risk monitoring.

#### **Areas for improvement:**

- The 'Focus for Scrutiny' included in reports needs to be clearer and more outcomes-focused, helping to steer questioning in meetings.
- To have a better balance between proactive and reactive scrutiny, with more and earlier involvement in policy development.
- Ensuring timely scrutiny input into the decision-making process and time for proper consideration of scrutiny recommendations.
- Use of external witnesses/external subject matter experts to hear a range of views.
- More visits to be programmed, relating to the services being scrutinised and more information/briefing sessions to help members build their knowledge.
- Maximise time for discussion at meetings through keeping introductions and presentations short.
- To ensure scrutiny reports have clear summaries setting out the key points for review.

#### **Future priorities:**

Issues identified for future scrutiny will be shared with the committees for consideration as part of work programme planning. The importance of scrutiny input into the **Budget** process was highlighted, as well as the need for all scrutiny committees to ensure they are considering the impact of **Climate Change** in all matters. It was also suggested that **joint scrutiny** with district/borough councils should be considered for any cross-cutting issues.

## **Scrutiny Development**

A scrutiny development action plan is in place, monitored and overseen by scrutiny committee chairmen. This ensures scrutiny continues to build on best practice and to identify and tackle areas for improvement. During 2021/22 this included:

- Chairmen meeting regularly to review the work programme and share best practice.
- Strengthened liaison with the Cabinet; Cabinet Members taking part in work programme planning to help identify where scrutiny may add value.
- Different ways of working including pre-meetings, informal briefings, task and finish groups, visits and independent evidence gathering by members.
- Chairmanship training for all scrutiny committee chairmen and vice chairmen.
- More focused pre-agenda meetings to help planning for committee meetings.

## Future Plans for Scrutiny

Plans for Scrutiny in 2022/23 include:

- **The development of an Executive-Scrutiny Protocol** to describe the working arrangements between Cabinet and scrutiny committees. This is being developed through member engagement, including Performance and Finance Scrutiny Committee in June 2022, prior to formal approval by the Council's Governance Committee in the autumn.
- A review of the **Fire and Rescue Service Scrutiny Committee**, two years on.
- Continuing to strengthen **scrutiny input into monitoring performance** of the Council's priorities, as set out in [Our Council Plan](#).
- How to better demonstrate or **evidence the impact of scrutiny** within the Council
- Reviewing the scrutiny **business planning checklist** for work to be outcomes-focused and balanced between decision preview, policy development and performance monitoring.
- **Sharing scrutiny best practice** by liaison with Surrey County Council, including exchange visits by scrutiny committee members.
- **Raising the profile of scrutiny**, including consideration by scrutiny committees of proposing scrutiny debates at Full Council.

June 2022

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## **Standards Committee: Annual Report 2021/22**

### **Introduction**

- 1** This report outlines the activities of the Committee from April 2021 to March 2022 and records issues the Committee considers important for the future. In summary, the work of the Standards Committee is:
  - Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct.
  - Casework conducted through Sub-Committees.
  - Ensuring that appropriate training is organised for members.
  - Overseeing Council policies on complaints handling and whistle blowing.

### **Promoting and maintaining high standards of conduct**

- 2** The promotion of high standards of conduct was principally demonstrated through the comprehensive training for members. Following the County Council elections in May 2021, the induction programme included sessions on standards and the code of conduct by the Monitoring Officer. This was delivered virtually and was recorded, so any member unable to attend was asked to observe the recording. All members have confirmed that they have done this, meaning a 100% compliance, in line with the Council's expectations.
- 3** All members newly elected in May 2021 submitted their register of interests forms by June 2021. All members have been reminded to keep their register of interests up to date and many updates have been recorded over the last year. Advice was given to assist members with their entries. The most recent reminder to all members was issued in June 2022.

### **Independent Persons**

- 4** The role of the independent persons is to assist the County Council in ensuring and maintaining a high level of integrity in the conduct of the elected members of the council and in how they discharge council business, through upholding the Member Code of Conduct and the constitutional arrangements supporting it. They also advise the Standards Committee's sub-committees in casework.
- 5** Mr John Donaldson and Mr Steve Cooper have undertaken the role of Independent Person over the last year, including involvement in individual casework and commenting on government consultations being considered by the Committee.

### **Casework**

- 6** In the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 four complaints against councillors were received. All failed to meet the criteria for presentation to an assessment sub-committee for review, the Monitoring Officer making this judgment with the assistance of the independent persons. The main reason for rejecting complaints at this initial stage continues to be that the behaviour complained of is clearly not connected with the member acting or appearing to act on Council business.
- 7** It is clear that familiarity with the Code helps members feel more confident in their role. Early discussion with the Monitoring Officer about potentially

problematic situations is both encouraged and useful. The lack of valid complaints is an indication of the effectiveness of the training and guidance given and of members' positive approach to standards of conduct.

### **Ethical Governance, Whistle Blowing and Complaints Handling**

- 8** The Committee receives reports on any cases under the County Council's Whistleblowing Policy. The reports are helpful in indicating whether any measures are needed to address underlying problems. There have been no cases in the last year. There is nothing to suggest, by reference to concerns raised through other routes such as grievances, internal audit, or formal complaints that there is any cause for concern about awareness of or use of the whistleblowing procedures.
- 9** The Committee also receives regular reports about complaints handling across the authority. Generally, there is a positive culture within the organisation about complaints. The Committee has monitored levels of complaints and discussed the reasons for increases in some areas during 2021.
- 10** The Committee also noted a Public Interest Report issued by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman about a children's services matter. The ombudsman had found faults with the Council's handling of the matter and had set out its findings and proposed remedies. The Committee supported the Council's approach in accepting the findings and implementing the remedies and recommendations made by the Ombudsman.

### **Conclusion**

- 11** It is clear that maintaining good standards of conduct is taken seriously in the County Council. The Standards Committee believes that this can only serve to improve public confidence.

### **Recommended**

That the report be noted.

### **Pete Bradbury**

Chairman of the Standards Committee

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### **Background papers**

None



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## Cabinet Report: Delivering Our Council Plan 2021-25

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

### Leader – Paul Marshall

- The Leader attended the **Coastal West Sussex Partnership** board at Ricardo Centenary Innovation Centre on 9 June. Thirty decision makers representing both public and private sector organisations joined the meeting to discuss current opportunities and challenges for the coastal economy. The meeting highlighted the need for economic readiness by providing the space, skilled workforce and infrastructure for growth, all underpinned by responsible sustainability and working collaboratively. The audience welcomed presentations from the University of Chichester and Wired Sussex on the emerging coastal West Sussex creative technologies opportunity which could give a significant boost to the coastal economy and which the County Council fully supports.
- The Leader attended the **Transatlantic Ties Symposium** at the University of Chichester on 11 June to mark the end of a three-year learning and outreach project by West Sussex Record Office. The project was funded by a \$100,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation in New York as a result of the discoveries surrounding the Sussex Declaration in 2017-18. The Sussex Declaration is one of only two known of parchment manuscripts of the American Declaration of Independence. A [new website](#) has been launched to share these findings and provide access to a range of new digital learning resources. An exhibition is currently on display at the Record Office until 22 July and will tour County Council Libraries over the coming year. The Sussex Declaration and Transatlantic Ties now provide a firm foundation to promote these connections, generate tourism and benefit the local economy.
- [The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs](#) (DEFRA) has announced that **Sussex wine** is to be designated as a UK Geographical Indication (GI). Wine produced in Sussex will join **Protected Designation of Origin** and the Protected GI registered products, such as Champagne. With a number of vineyards in the South Downs National Park producing wines of provenance, it is an important part of the West Sussex visitor economy offer.
- Last month the Leader attended the **LGA Conference 2022** in Harrogate, North Yorkshire. The conference provided a valuable opportunity to meet councillors from local authorities across the country to discuss the latest issues affecting local government, including the cost-of-living crisis, adult social care, services for children and young people and climate change. Key-note speakers at the conference included Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and Rt Hon Nadhim Zahawi MP, Secretary of State for Education. The conference also provided an opportunity to lobby for essential funding for the County Council.

### Adults Services - Amanda Jupp

- Backed by the County Council, the NHS and charity [Carers Support West Sussex](#), Carers Week ran from 7 to 13 June. Over 100,000 people are thought

to be regularly caring for a friend or family member in West Sussex. A programme of carer-focused workshops was offered, where attendees had the opportunity to learn something new or improve knowledge; virtually meet others in a similar situation and have a chance to socialise and have a break from caring roles. For anyone that was unable to attend the workshops, there is year-round Carers Support including the offer of a [free Carers Discount Card](#), which gives family and friend carers in the county a range of exclusive offers and discounts.

- The Cabinet Member attended the official opening of an [Extra Care housing](#) development in West Sussex. The facility supports independence while offering round-the-clock assistance to people with care needs, disabilities or limited mobility. The County Council invested £960,000 in the redevelopment of the site on London Road, East Grinstead. Feedback received by the Council revealed that most people want to stay in their own home wherever possible, even when they might need some extra care or support and so creating this opportunity is one of the key priorities in the new [adult social care strategy](#).

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

- A [film](#) highlighting the [positive impact of services available across West Sussex to support LGBT+ children and young people and their families](#) has been created by the County Council and the Allsorts Youth Project. Allsorts offers in person and online youth groups, one-to-one support and peer support groups for LGBT+ children, young people and their families. These are funded by the County Council as part of a programme of new initiatives to ensure all young people are supported with their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

### **Learning and Skills – Nigel Jupp**

- The County Council is working with a range of providers to offer a [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) programme during the school summer holiday](#). This enables children and young people aged 4 to 16 who are eligible for benefits-related free school meals to enjoy enriching activities and a nutritional meal free of charge during the holiday period. The programme aims to build on the positive impact of the summer 2021 HAF which saw over 2,000 children attending over the holiday period.

### **Community Support, Fire and Rescue – Duncan Crow**

- West Sussex Library Service is running its annual [Summer Reading Challenge](#) from 9 July with this year's theme, 'The 'Gadgeteers'. Libraries are teaming up with the Science Museum Group for a special science-themed Challenge that will inspire children to use their imagination and creativity. Gadgeteers is free for families to take part in, and will feature amazing books, rewards, and plenty of ideas for experiments and activities to discover science. [Volunteers are being sought](#) to help deliver the challenge to families in libraries until September.
- The West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has been supporting the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) **Safety Campaigns** with messaging including [Summer Season alerts](#) around the safe disposal of BBQs, [Water Safety](#) and [Home Fire Safety Week \(13 June to 19 June\)](#). The aim is to reduce fires and preventable

deaths by aligning West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service messaging with a calendar of Safety Campaigns.

- The West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service has marked a special anniversary as it celebrates **[10 years of Community Volunteers](#)** within the service. The milestone was celebrated during [Volunteers Week](#), which is an annual event that takes place between 1 and 7 June to thank those who give their spare time to help others. Since the launch of a volunteer pilot scheme in 2012, the volunteers have completed more than 8,500 hours of activity, which is equivalent to 354 days. Community Volunteers support the service with community engagement activities, such as helping at events, generating Safe and Well Visits and carrying out Heart Start first aid training.

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

- The County Council has agreed funding for a **£7.7m programme to install solar panels and/or battery storage facilities** at a further 31 corporate buildings and 65 schools. This will reduce electricity demand, contribute to achieving carbon reduction targets and help meet the agreed priorities in the recently adopted [Energy Strategy](#) (PDF. 2.5MB). A [procurement exercise](#) will take place this year followed by detailed surveys at each site. Installation is currently scheduled to begin in spring 2023.
- **[Sussex-Air, a partnership of local authorities across Sussex, has been awarded £876,300](#)** from the Department for Food, Environment and Rural Affairs. Retrofitting of around 40 mid-life double-decker buses to super low emissions will help to improve air quality for everyone in Brighton & Hove and parts of East and West Sussex. Taxi operators in West Sussex will also be helped to transition to electric vehicles. In addition, the Sussex network of air quality analysers will be supplemented with additional particulate monitors and a network of sensors.

### **Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis**

- The Department for Transport (DfT) offered an indicative funding allocation (for 2022/23 to 2024/25) up to £17,401,596 (£11,982,180 capital and £5,419,416 revenue) to commence delivery of the [Bus Services Improvement Plan](#). The [Draft Enhanced Partnership Plan](#) was submitted to the DfT on 30 June and, subject to final approval by the DfT, benefits will include a bus fare discount scheme for young people (16 to 21-year-olds), infrastructure and bus stop improvements, new Littlehampton to Chichester bus services (no. 55) and Demand Responsive Transport services in some rural areas.
- Transport for the South East, the sub-national transport body, has published a [Draft Strategic Investment Plan](#) (SIP) setting out a series of strategic transport investment opportunities for the Government, Local Transport Authorities and transport providers to consider investing in. Once finalised, the SIP will inform future decision-making on investment programmes such as the Government's Roads Investment Strategy. The Draft SIP is being published for public consultation between 20 June and 12 September and local stakeholders are encouraged to respond.
- Significant sections of the A24/A264, part of the major strategic road network, have been resurfaced which has improved the strength of the carriageway

construction, improved ride quality, reduced road noise and will reduce tyre generated spray in wet conditions. The County Council and the contractor worked collaboratively and made **significant environmental savings** by adjusting the design to reduce the CO2 emissions ordinarily associated with a project of this scope.

- [Community Road Verges](#) (CRVs) around West Sussex are helping to promote the growth of wildflowers and support important pollinators. There are nature-friendly CRVs in 24 neighbourhoods (selected by residents) which are only cut once in the autumn, after which the local community rakes and disposes of the cuttings. This reduces the fertility in the soil and encourages wildflower growth as it allows them to out-compete the grass after a few years.

### **Public Health and Wellbeing – Bob Lanzer**

- The Cabinet Member has welcomed County Council [member support](#) for a **Smokefree Fund**. The Smokefree Fund, proposed nationally by organisations including Cancer Research UK and Action on Smoking & Health (ASH), is a fixed annual charge on the tobacco industry to fund work to help reduce the prevalence of smoking among communities. Smoking remains the number one cause of preventable illness and premature death in England and is a major risk factor for cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory illness. Smoking rates have gradually fallen over recent years. However, approximately 70,000 people in West Sussex still smoke. Support is available to anyone who lives or works in West Sussex via [Stop Smoking Services on the West Sussex Wellbeing](#) website.
- The success of the [Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Innovation Fund](#) in West Sussex was celebrated at a recent high-profile event hosted by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). Funding from the DHSC and Department for Work and Pensions enabled the development and implementation of a new service aimed at early identification and support to people drinking alcohol during their pregnancy, as well as the county-wide expansion of an existing specialist therapeutic service for children and young people (CYP) affected by parental alcohol use. Additional funding from NHS partners enabled the scope of the therapeutic service to be extended to children affected by parental drug use. Local evaluation by West Sussex Public Health comprised some positive outcomes, including reduced alcohol use reported by pregnant and new parents, and improved outcomes in CYP receiving therapy. The evaluation's findings and recommendations will contribute to the evidence base for commissioning of services and improving outcomes for children and families affected by alcohol use.
- The West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board has published its draft [Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment \(PNA\)](#) in line with its statutory duty, and is seeking feedback from organisations, community groups and residents with an interest in local pharmaceutical services. The PNA is a statement of the current and future needs for pharmaceutical service provision within a local area and is used by NHS England and NHS Improvement (NHSE&I) when considering applications for new pharmacies, dispensing doctors or appliance contractors and changes to existing services. It is also used to inform commissioning of services from community pharmacies by NHSE&I, and local commissioners such as the NHS and local authorities. The [consultation](#) runs from 20 June until 28 August.

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**Background papers**

None

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