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West Sussex County Council – Annual Meeting

1 April 2022

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

Cllr Bradbury (Chairman)

Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Albury

Cllr Ali

Cllr Atkins, RD

Cllr Baldwin

Cllr Baxter

Cllr Bence

Cllr Boram

Cllr Britton

Cllr Burgess

Cllr Burrett

Cllr Cherry

Cllr Chowdhury

Cllr Condie

Cllr A Cooper

Cllr B Cooper

Cllr Cornell

Cllr Crow

Cllr J Dennis

Cllr N Dennis

Cllr Duncton

Cllr Elkins

Cllr Evans

Cllr Gibson

Cllr Greenway

Cllr Hall

Cllr Hillier

Cllr Hunt

Cllr Johnson

Cllr Joy

Cllr A Jupp

Cllr N Jupp

Cllr Kenyon

Cllr Kerry-Bedell

Cllr Lanzer

Cllr Linehan

Cllr Markwell

Cllr Marshall

Cllr McDonald

Cllr McGregor

Cllr Mercer

Cllr Milne

Cllr Mitchell

Cllr Montyn

Cllr Nagel

Cllr Oakley

Cllr O'Kelly

Cllr Oppler

Cllr Payne

Cllr Pendleton

Cllr Pudaloff

Cllr Quinn

Cllr Richardson

Cllr Russell

Cllr Sharp

Cllr Smith

Cllr Sparkes

Cllr Turley

Cllr Urquhart

Cllr Waight

Cllr Wall

Cllr Walsh, KStJ, RD

71 Chairman

- 71.1 Cllr Wickremaratchi, the Vice-Chairman of the Council, took the chair for the election of Chairman of the County Council.

72 Election of Chairman

- 72.1 The Vice-Chairman stated that he had one nomination for the office of Chairman of the Council, that of Cllr Pete Bradbury. Cllr Bradbury was elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

- 72.2 Cllr Bradbury made the prescribed declaration of acceptance of office and took the chair.

73 Election of Vice-Chairman

- 73.1 The Chairman stated that he had one nomination for the office of Vice-Chairman of the Council, that of Cllr Sujan Wickremaratchi. Cllr Wickremaratchi was elected Vice-Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.
- 73.2 Cllr Wickremaratchi made the prescribed declaration of acceptance of office.

74 Support for Ukraine

- 74.1 The Chairman referred to the on-going situation in Ukraine and thanked members for wearing blue and yellow as a mark of support for all those who were suffering the ravages of war. He expressed a hope for a speedy resolution to the conflict.

75 Death of Former Member

- 75.1 The Chairman reported the death of Mrs Dorothy Hatswell who had represented the Imberdown division from 1996 to 1997.
- 75.2 The Council stood for a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Hatswell.

76 Butler Trust Award

- 76.1 The Chairman reported that Paul Wood of the Youth Offending Team had received one of the 10 national awards made annually by the Butler Trust. The awards, presented by the Trust's Royal Patron, Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal, are given to those working in prisons, probation and youth justice to reward the most outstanding examples of the dedication, skill, and creativity found throughout the criminal justice. Members expressed their congratulations to Paul on his achievement.

77 Women's Cricket World Club Final

- 77.1 The Chairman congratulated the England women's cricket team on reaching their sixth World Cup Final.

78 Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Attendance

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

Cllr Elkins, Cllr Hall, Cllr Hillier, Cllr Markwell, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Payne and Cllr Richardson (afternoon session).

Apologies

- 78.2 Apologies were received from Cllr Bennett, Cllr Charles, Cllr Dunn, Cllr Forbes, Cllr Lord, Cllr Oxlade and Cllr Patel.
- 78.3 Apologies for the afternoon session were received from Cllr Britton, Cllr B Cooper and Cllr O'Kelly. Cllr Joy gave his apologies and left at 3.00 pm.
- 78.4 Cllr Evans was absent for the afternoon session. Cllr Oppler left at 3.15 p.m.

79 Members' Interests

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

80 Minutes

- 80.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 28 February 2022 (pages 5 to 18) be approved as a correct record.

81 Review of Proportionality

- 81.1 The County Council noted its statutory duty to review the proportionality on its committees each year and following the recent formation of the Green and Independent Alliance Group. A paper on the application of the proportionality rules and how they were applied, together with a table showing the number of seats on committees, was set out on pages 19 and 20.

- 81.2 Resolved –

That the review of proportionality on committees be agreed.

82 Notification of Appointment of Cabinet Members and Advisers to Cabinet Members

- 82.1 The County Council was reminded that the Leader was required each year to give notice to the Council of his appointments to the Cabinet and allocation of Cabinet portfolios between the Cabinet Members, together with the appointment of Advisers to Cabinet Members.
- 82.2 The Council noted that Cllr Marshall had given notice to the County Council of his appointments for the ensuing year, as set out on supplement pages 21 to 26.

83 Appointments

- 83.1 A schedule setting out the nominations for the re-appointment of the members of non-Executive committees, the chairmen, vice-chairmen, panels and substitutes of those committees and the

members of Scrutiny Committees was circulated. Members were reminded that appointments of the chairmen and vice-chairmen of Scrutiny Committees will be dealt with at the next round of committees in the usual way.

83.2 The schedule was agreed as set out at Appendix 2.

84 Address by a Cabinet Member

84.1 Members received a joint address by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Children on Young People on the new statutory direction meaning Children's Services will remain under the direct control of the County Council.

84.2 Members received an address by the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue on the County Council's response to the refugee situation in Ukraine.

84.3 The Cabinet Member placed on record his thanks to Crawley Borough Council and Gatwick Airport for their support in the work to assist refugees arriving via the airport.

84.4 In response to a comment from Cllr Quinn that there is need for mobile phones for refugees to help them contact family and friends, the Cabinet Member agreed to talk to officers.

84.5 In response to a suggestion from Cllr Sharp, the Cabinet Member agreed to look at the system operating in Wales and Scotland where the governments are acting as sponsors for Ukrainian refugees.

85 West Sussex Transport Plan

85.1 The Council considered the adoption of the West Sussex Transport Plan, in the light of a report by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport (pages 27 to 38).

85.2 Resolved –

That the West Sussex Transport Plan 2022-36 be adopted.

86 Question Time

86.1 Members asked questions of members of the Cabinet on matters relevant to their portfolios, as set out at Appendix 4. This included questions on matters contained within the Cabinet report (pages 39 to 44), a supplementary report (supplement page 1) and answers to written questions pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 3).

87 Motion on Growth Deals

87.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Boram and seconded by Cllr Albury.

'This Council acknowledges the success of the Growth Deals since they were first introduced in 2015. The partnerships formed with the district and borough councils, along with other external partners, have delivered a number of projects across the county that have benefitted not only the economic vitality but also the public realm offering across many local areas. It is also worthy of note that the current Growth Programme has attracted £141m of external funding, including levelling up and Local Enterprise Partnership funding.

However, we now believe that in addition to the refresh of the individual deals that is underway, the Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development should also consider a refresh of the fundamental components of the Growth Deal programme to take account of the following:

- (1) The impact of the COVID pandemic on economic growth in the county, particularly those areas that have been hardest hit;
- (2) New ways of working and the shift in work patterns that may result from a return to a new normality; and
- (3) The new government policies including the Levelling Up Agenda including funding and the targeting of resources.'

87.2 It was noted that Chichester district should have been included in the list of deals being refreshed in the briefing note on factual background information.

87.3 An amendment was moved by Cllr Sharp and seconded by Cllr Gibson.

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- (3) The new government policies including the Levelling Up Agenda including funding and the targeting of resources; ***and***

- (4) The Government's Environment Act, Decarbonisation priorities and Climate Change Committee advice in the wake of COP26.'***

87.4 The amendment was lost.

87.5 The motion was approved.

88 Motion on Pension Divestments

- 88.1 Due to lack of time the motion was deferred to be considered for inclusion in the agenda for the next meeting.

Chairman

The Council rose at 4.25 pm

Interests

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

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 9 – Address by a Cabinet Member	Cllr Burrett	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Atkins	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Boram	Member of Adur District Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr N Dennis	Annual Rail Season ticket holder between Horsham and London
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Elkins	Member of Arun District Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Gibson	Member of Mid Sussex District Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Kerry-Bedell	Founder of Bourne Community Bus Service (free to residents)
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Pudaloff	Guide dog user and Guide Dogs' Campaigners ambassador
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Sharp	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Smith	Member of Worthing Borough Council and child attends a special school
Item 10 – West Sussex Transport Plan	Cllr Waight	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Ali	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Boram	Member of Adur District Council
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Burrett	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Elkins	Member of Arun District Council
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Hillier	Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Net Zero, Mid Sussex District Council

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 11 – Question Time	Cllr Sharp	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 11 – Question Time including Written Question 6	Cllr Atkins	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 11 – Question Time (Government response to the Landscapes Review: National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty)	Cllr Montyn	Member of Chichester Harbour Conservancy
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Ali	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Atkins	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Boram	Member of Adur District Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Burrett	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Elkins	Member of Arun District Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Hillier	Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Net Zero, Mid Sussex District Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Lanzer	Member of Crawley Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr McDonald	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Sharp	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Sparkes	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 12(a) – Motion on Growth Deals	Cllr Waight	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Burrett	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Condie	Member of Pensions Committee

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr J Dennis	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Elkins	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Greenway	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Hunt	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr N Jupp	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Lanzer	Deferred Member of West Sussex Local Government Pension Scheme
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Sharp	Member of Chichester District Council
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Turley	Member of Pensions Committee
Item 12(b) – Motion on Pensions	Cllr Urquhart	Member of Pensions Committee

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Appointments to Committees – April 2022

(excluding non-Council members)

Changes shown in bold text

Scrutiny Committees

Note: The chairmen and vice-chairmen of scrutiny committees will be appointed at the first meeting of each committee.

Name	No. of members	Members	Substitutes
Children and Young People's Services	12	Cllr Baldwin Cllr Burgess Cllr Charles Cllr Cherry Cllr Cornell Cllr Duncton Cllr Hall Cllr Linehan Cllr McGregor Cllr Mercer Cllr Smith Cllr Sparkes	Cllr Chowdhury Cllr Evans Cllr Lord
Communities, Highways and Environment	12	Cllr Albury Cllr Ali Cllr Baldwin Cllr Britton Cllr Greenway Cllr Kenyon Cllr Milne Cllr Oakley Cllr Oppler Cllr Oxlade Cllr Patel Cllr Quinn	Cllr Burgess Cllr B Cooper Cllr O'Kelly
Fire & Rescue Service	7	Cllr Bence Cllr Boram	Cllr Albury Cllr Oppler

Name	No. of members	Members	Substitutes
		Cllr Charles Cllr Chowdhury Cllr Milne Cllr Pendleton Cllr Richardson	Cllr Oxlade
Health and Adult Social Care	12	Cllr Ali Cllr Atkins Cllr A Cooper Cllr B Cooper Cllr Dunn Cllr Forbes Cllr Nagel Cllr O'Kelly Cllr Patel Cllr Pudaloff Cllr Wall Cllr Walsh	Cllr Burgess Cllr Cornell Cllr Joy
Performance and Finance	15	Cllr Burrett Cllr Boram Cllr Britton Cllr B Cooper Cllr Condie Cllr Elkins Cllr Evans Cllr Gibson Cllr Kerry-Bedell Cllr Linehan Cllr Montyn Cllr Payne Cllr Sparkes Cllr Turley Cllr Wall	Cllr Baxter Cllr McDonald Cllr Walsh

Non-executive committees

Name	No. of members	Members	Other members
Governance Committee	9	Cllr Baxter Cllr Bradbury (Chairman) Cllr Burrett Cllr A Jupp Cllr Lord Cllr Marshall Cllr O'Kelly Cllr Waight Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)	Not applicable
Planning and Rights of Way Committee	13	Cllr Ali Cllr Atkins (Vice-Chairman) Cllr Burrett (Chairman) Cllr Duncton Cllr Gibson Cllr Hall Cllr Joy Cllr McDonald Cllr Montyn Cllr Oakley Cllr Patel Cllr Quinn Cllr Sharp	Substitutes: Cllr Boram Cllr Cherry Cllr Forbes Cllr Johnson Cllr Kenyon Cllr Markwell Cllr Turley Cllr Wickremaratchi
Regulation, Audit and Accounts	7	Cllr Boram (Vice-Chairman) Cllr N Dennis (Chairman) Cllr Dunn Cllr Greenway Cllr Montyn Cllr Turley Cllr Wall	Not applicable
Standards Committee	9	Cllr Bradbury (Chairman) Cllr Burrett Cllr Cherry Cllr Johnson	Not applicable

Name	No. of members	Members	Other members
		Cllr Kenyon Cllr A Jupp Cllr Lord Cllr Sparkes Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)	

Informal Panels and Groups

Name	No. of members	Members	Other members
Corporate Parenting Panel	7	Cllr Burgess Cllr A Cooper Cllr N Jupp Cllr Linehan Cllr Lord Cllr Oxlade (Vice-Chairman) Cllr Russell (Chairman)	Not applicable
Foster Panel (North)	1	Cllr Linehan	Not applicable
Foster Panel (South East)	1	Cllr Chowdhury	Not applicable
Foster Panel (South West)	1	Cllr Oppler	Not applicable
Additional Foster Panel	1	Cllr Hall	Not applicable
Safeguarding Adults Member Reference Group	3	Cllr Chowdhury Cllr A Jupp Cllr O'Kelly	Not applicable
Treasury Management Panel	5	Cllr Condie Cllr Dunn Cllr J Dennis Cllr Hunt (Chairman) Cllr Sparkes	Not applicable

Written Questions: 1 April 2022**1. Written question from Cllr Pudaloff for reply by Cabinet Member for Adults Services****Question**

The Council's Adult Social Care Strategy claimed the following co-design activities relating to service users and carers:

- (a) Focus group discussions: in-depth conversations with smaller groups of customers and carers, with more opportunity for personal stories to come through.
- (b) Six 1-1 interviews: more detailed dialogue with customers and carers who requested more personalised conversations.
- (c) Public survey: a survey for people who access care, their careers.

The Labour Group concern refers to activities falling short of co-production to work with voices of lived experience. Co-production means people are involved in planning and designing services from the very beginning and is distinct from general participation work or partnership working between organisations.

Does the Cabinet Member agree, what has been omitted from the Council's co-design strategy are the diverse range of voices of service users/carers and disabled person led organisations to sit down with Council staff to co-design and implement solutions?

Answer

The focus group discussions and the interviews were with people with lived experience, both those who access services as well as family and friend carers. Many who responded to the survey also had lived experience and thus the co-design activities included a diverse range of voices.

What they told us was directly reflected in the strategy priorities. The strategy was written using the words they used and the issues that they told us were important to them. This was much more than general participation work. It was genuine collaboration and co-design with people who use Council services, their carers, partners, Council staff and members of the public, which was used to build a strategy that reflects what they want from their care.

We have had feedback from several different people and groups saying that the voices of people with lived experience came through very strongly in the strategy.

The strategy sets out the priorities and 'we will' statements. These outline what we are trying to achieve, but not how to get there. As you rightly point out, we now need to sit down with people who access our services, together with carers, frontline staff and partners in order to co-produce the solutions that will help deliver on these commitments. This is what we are starting to do now, and the outcome of this work will help inform the development of the Council's plan for 2023/24 onwards.

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

Question

Does the Cabinet Member agree with me that working-age social care service users living in the community, who have recently undergone a financial assessment, DRE (disability related expenses) should only be disallowed in very rare instances when the expense was manifestly not related and or did not ameliorate the consequences of an individual's disability?

Furthermore, does she think it is acceptable to allow those service users with a long-term disability to have their quality of life reduced significantly at the same time as saddling them with a long-term debt?

Answer

Disability related expenses (DRE) are considered on an individual basis and in line with the legislation. Where a customer's disability benefit is being taken into account, as part of the financial assessment, allowance is made to pay for DRE to meet the costs of needs not being met otherwise. This is in line with the statutory guidance.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure all customers making a financial contribution to the cost of their support are treated equitably and reasonably, in accordance with the legislation and guidance and irrespective of their age. The Council's approach follows the legislation. We have agreed that relevant policies will be reviewed on an ongoing basis, with the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee being updated on this work in September.

If any customers have any issues regarding their ability to contribute to the cost of their care the Council has advised that they contact the service so that their concerns can be discussed on an individual basis. This is, again, a fair and reasonable approach.

3. Written question from Cllr Baxter for reply by Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue

Question

I welcome the news that refugees, including from Afghanistan and Ukraine, are being supported to settling into life in West Sussex. I am pleased that this Council is supporting them through the following schemes: The UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS), The Afghan Assistance and Relocation Policy (ARAP) and The Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS).

As a community leader:

- (a) Is there anymore that the Council can do to help the local co-ordination of support for refugees, including voluntary support?
- (b) Is there anything more that the Council can do to identify more local accommodation for refugees?
- (c) Are arrangements in place to ensure that children get swift access to education?

Answer

- (a) The Resettlement Team are particularly keen to make best use of the skills and welcoming nature of those who wish to help support those families resettling in our area. Although we already work alongside a number of wonderful volunteer groups, we are always looking to recruit more support for our resettled families. We are especially interested in hearing from volunteers who:

- Have experience/interest in teaching English to speakers of other languages
- Have language skills in Arabic, Dari, Pashto, Uzbek or Ukrainian and would be interesting in befriending activities or supporting existing voluntary groups
- Are able to offer some work experience or employment opportunities to resettled families
- Could support families in accessing community-based activities

The collection, storage and distribution of physical donations can be difficult to process as we are a small team with limited storage space, so we are not asking for any objects to be donated at this time. However, the voluntary groups we work with are often looking to obtain bicycles (adults and children), scooters and good quality second-hand IT equipment. If you have any of these items, we would be happy to put you in touch with a voluntary group who could distribute it appropriately. They will, of course, also accept financial donations.

- (b) We are always looking to take on more self-contained accommodation for permanently resettling the ARAP/ACRS cohort, as detailed in the most recent update letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. We are very interested in hearing from private landlords who are willing to let their properties in line with the Local Housing Allowance rates, to ensure the rent is affordable for the resettled families. If anyone is interested in discussing further details of renting their property via this route, they should contact the Resettlement Team directly. For those who do not have self-contained accommodation but would be interested in offering a room in their house, details of the Homes for Ukraine scheme can be found on the Resettlement Page of the Council website.
- (c) The Resettlement Team works closely with the admissions team to ensure that all students resettled within West Sussex are placed in school as swiftly as possible. We work closely with schools to arrange visits for the students before they start to help familiarise the family with the new school setting and give reassurance to both the students and the school about how they will settle in. We aim to ensure that schools feel supported in supporting the students by engaging with the Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service and have set up teachers' forums for primary and secondary schools supporting resettled students. In addition to this, we are working alongside International Rescue Committee, who are currently developing an array of resources aimed specifically at support schools to best support students from a refugee background. We also provide tailored briefs to schools, written by a cultural advisor – for example we are sharing a brief on the context and practicalities of the upcoming month of Ramadan, to help those schools supporting our resettled Syrian and Afghan students who may be observing Ramadan.

4. Written question from Cllr Cherry for reply by Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue

Question

HSBC is closing its retail banking branches in Burgess Hill and East Grinstead, as part of a plan to close 69 Branches across the UK. This will be a heartfelt loss to both residential and business communities in both towns.

So, my question falls into three parts:

- (a) What is the cumulative impact of this; how many bank branches in West Sussex have closed in the past three years?
- (b) Although branch closures are commercial decisions made by the banks, lobbying bank leaders can often make a difference and be persuasive in moderating the banks' plans. So how many conversations has the Cabinet Member had with banks, MPs or other influencers about bank branch closures?
- (c) What further actions does the cabinet member plan to take on this matter?

Answer

As an Authority we have no commercial control over banks decisions to close branches, the local MP can be lobbied as can the bank directly.

National Picture

The location of bank branches is primarily a matter for the individual companies. The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) regulates the financial services industry in the UK. Its role includes protecting consumers, keeping the industry stable, and promoting healthy competition between financial service providers.

Since September 2020, the FCA has published [guidance](#) for firms on considering the of branch and ATM closures on their customers' everyday banking needs and consider the availability and provision of alternatives.

The guidance requires: "Firms should have carried out a robust analysis of the impact of a proposed closure or conversion on their customers, particularly in terms of lost access and potential harms to vulnerable consumers... They should also have analysed the services that the firm's customers can access at alternative sites, and how those compare to the services currently used at the site proposed for closure, as well as an analysis of new alternative access arrangements that the firm could reasonably put in place."

The FCA's data shows that most people currently have reasonable access to cash through a combination of bank, building society, or Post Office branches and ATMs.

The FCA's [Access to Cash Coverage in the UK Q3 2021](#) estimates that for access to any bank, building society, Post Office branch, or any ATM (either free or pay-to-use):

- 95.7% of the UK population are currently within 2km of a cash access point
- 99.7% of the UK population are currently within 5km of a cash access point

For free-to-use access points only:

- 95.5% of the UK population are currently within 2km of a cash access point
- 99.7% of the UK population are currently within 5km of a cash access point

These coverage estimates are unchanged from 2021 Q2. However, the types of available access points have changed between Q2 and Q3:

- The number of brick-and-mortar branches of the larger banks and building societies providing personal current accounts (PCA) continued to fall, as 224 (4%) ceased to do this. Coverage by these branches decreased from 60.1% to 59.6% of the UK population at 2km and from 87.5% to 87.4% at 5km.
- There was an increase in the availability of Post Office branches, which offset the reduction in branch coverage.
- The number of free-to-use ATMs declined, but the impact on coverage appears negligible.

In summer 2021, the Treasury [consulted](#) on establishing geographic requirements for the provision of cash withdrawal and deposit facilities, designating firms for meeting these requirements, and establishing further regulatory oversight of cash service provision. The outcome of this consultation is still awaited.

Local Picture

Across the county there has been a reduction in bank branches although we have no records as to the numbers involved, it is a commercial decision made by the banks and we as an Authority have not been involved in those decisions. The cost of providing bank branches in many areas of West Sussex are high and customer demand is diminishing. We have seen banks agree to provide ATM facilities for a period of two years post closure to enable residents to continue to access cash.

In recent years we have seen the growth in online banking, as an authority we promote safe use of online services, build resident confidence and regularly raise awareness of online scams especially when it relates to banking.

The banks offer mobile banking services in areas showing demand, they work with local communities to assist residents to build confidence in online and app services. Mobile banks utilise local assets, car parks, alongside libraries and fire stations to bring banking back to communities where geographic and access barriers exist.

The latest initiative in communities is pop-up banks in community venues that support basic banking demand and promote alternative ways to access banking services including telephone banking where people feel more confident speaking to a person.

The emergence of collaborative facilities in communities is also now supporting local residents and improving access, there is a growth in banking and post office facilities in convenience stores which are universal regardless of who you bank with.

Having read the [current article](#) relating to HSBC in East Grinstead, Uckfield and Burgess Hill, I note that while it a further loss of local branches, that HSBC are offering a range of modern day cost effective methods of accessing bank services that reflects the consequences of the pandemic and gives residents the opportunity to choose the way they bank in the future. They also appear to be putting in measures to assist customers who will be impacted by the loss of branches.

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

Question

Given huge increases in energy costs due to wholesale gas price uplifts, the war in Ukraine, and increase in use of electric cars, does West Sussex County Council plan to expand the Halewick Lane, Sompting, battery storage plant facility and accelerate the integration of with local electricity supply or suitable local industrial estate facilities?

Answer

The recent volatility in gas prices has caused justified concern to the county's residents and business owners. The County Council's finances have been insulated from much of this price volatility so far due to the flexible procurement approach with LASER Energy Buying Group and the competitive prices secured for electricity generated from the County Council's solar farms.

Advice from LASER Energy Buying Group indicates that prices are likely to stay high for at least the next three years. As a result, the County Council's energy projects that generate electricity and help to provide resilience to the local and national grid have never been more important.

Through the County Council's solar farms and solar PV systems on corporate buildings and schools, the County Council continues to invest in energy assets that will allow a greater proportion of electricity used locally to be generated from renewables. The battery storage project at Halewick Lane will primarily provide resilience to the electricity grid and additional stability to enable more renewable energy generators to be integrated into the County Council's supply. Cabling work to connect the site to the electricity grid is underway and scheduled for completion in autumn 2022, by which point it is expected that a contractor will have been procured to install the batteries. Once complete, it is expected that there will be an opportunity to expand the site with some additional power generation.

The potential for additional solar and battery storage at other sites owned around the county is also being explored and some specialist consultancy advice (from industry experts Roadnight Taylor) has been brought in to ensure viable projects are identified and taken through feasibility and governance as quickly as possible.

Also being supported is the integration of renewable energy in local industrial estates through the LECSea project which is currently focused on the Manor Royal business district, but the model could be applied to other areas in the future. The project will drive investment in renewable energy and smart, local management to deliver low-cost energy to the business community there.

6. Written question from Cllr Atkins for reply by Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

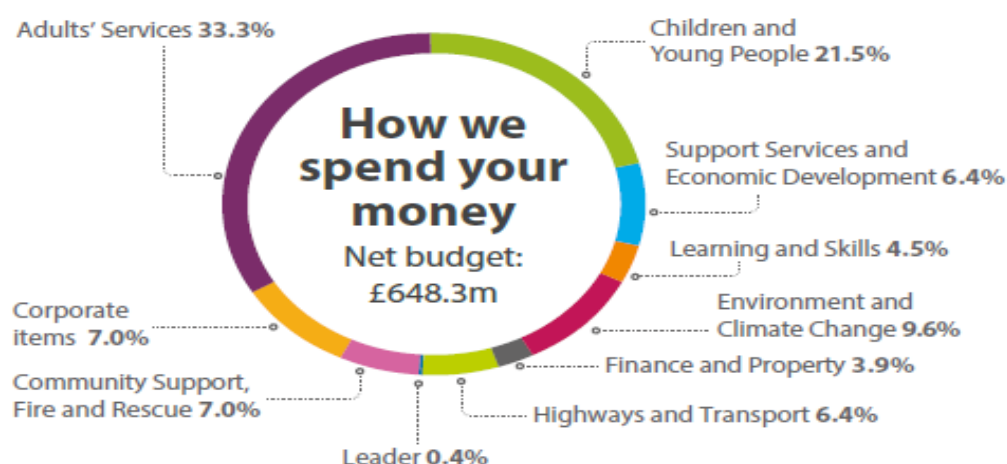
Question

The council tax increase sent out to the Worthing residents did not show the split from West Sussex County Council, only the total of £1,555.74.

Please could I have a breakdown of the split between West Sussex County Council services?

Answer

Although West Sussex County Council produces a tax leaflet this has, for some years, only been available online. However, a hard copy is available on request. Council Tax bills are sent out to residents by their district or borough council and these bills contain a web-link which will take you directly to the West Sussex leaflet - Your Council Tax Bill 2022/23. The [leaflet](#) (PDF, 458KB) contains a full breakdown of our Council tax spending for 2022/23 Our budget for 2022/23 is set out on page 3 of the leaflet, including a chart showing how we spend your money, as set out below.



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

Question

At the beginning of this year around 30 of 43 West Sussex Children and Family Centres closed. The Council withdrew its services from these sites permanently. Many of these sites were shared with other services offering family support, such as midwifery.

Before the Council withdrawal from these sites, strong hopes were expressed that other community service suppliers would continue to operate from these locations.

Compared with last year, how many of these other community service providers are still operating from the places which they once shared with a now closed Children and Family Centre?

To put this question into context it would be helpful to know:

- How many of the now-closed Children and Family Centres operated from a site shared with another community service provider, prior to this year?
- How many of the now-closed Children and Family Centres operated from public libraries run by the Council?

Answer

(a) 30

(b) Three: Angmering Library, Findon Valley Library and East Grinstead Library.

The County Council's Property and Assets team has been working on the Early Help Asset plan since the consultation on the future of Early Help went live in March 2021. Extensive work was done in supporting organisations that were impacted by the closures. The Assets team registered all expressions of interest in the centres and were in discussion with interested parties throughout this time. Each local member has been kept up to date with the proposals regarding assets in their division.

Once the formal decision to re-design the service and declare a number of the assets surplus to requirements was taken in July 2021, (decision CAB2(21/22) refers) the Asset team carried out an appraisal and due diligence on all the options for the properties affected by the decision.

During the consultation period, Public Health identified that nine of the 30 centres due to close were in locations needed to continue to provide the Healthy Child Programme, commissioned from Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT). These nine centres were reserved for that purpose and negotiations have been underway since to secure the properties.

Currently three of the nine centres are now in use by SCFT and the County Council continues to negotiate with SCFT to lease or agree shared use at a further six centres, subject to agreement of terms and in some cases, agreement of the Freeholders or other parties where premises are shared.

In addition to these nine centres, one further centre is now occupied by the Midwives Service.

Additionally, local hiring arrangements have been agreed at a number of the County Council's Libraries offering space to community service providers who were previously operating from the now closed Children and Family Centres.

Of the 12 Children and Family Centres retained following the decision to re-design the Early Help Service, all include space currently being used by other community service partners.

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

Question

Regarding grass verges in West Sussex, can the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport confirm:

- (a) How many miles of verge are part of the highways grass cutting contract;
- (b) How many miles of verge are classified as Community Road Verges;
- (c) How many miles of verge are in the trial of removing arisings that is being carried out in conjunction with the South Downs National Park Authority;

- (d) Whether the results of the pilot scheme to remove arisings will be available before the next five-year grass cutting contract is written and put out to tender; and
- (e) How will the Council make the right decision on the issue of removing arisings in the contract if the full results are not available by this time?

Answer

- (a) There are approximately 12 million square metres of highway verge throughout the county, split between rural and urban classification. Currently, the urban grass is cut five times per year in the growing season and rural grass is cut three times (1st cut visibility splays only, 2nd cut visibility splays and one-metre sideways swathe and 3rd cut the whole verge). Arisings from cutting are currently left on site, due to the prohibitive costs of collection and disposal.
- (b) There are 20 participating Community Road Verge locations consisting of 54 individual verges across the county, although they are not measured in miles. They range in size from small individual verges to large expanses of verge, and an estimation in terms of linear mileage would be less than two miles in total.
- (c) The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) pilot includes both urban and rural sites in the Park and runs for a period of three years (ends March 2024). There are 11 rural trial sites linked closely with existing Notable Road Verges and will involve a combination of less cutting and the removal of arisings. A baseline ecological survey has been completed by the SDNPA who will be monitoring the impact of the pilot on each site annually. The urban sites consist of all verges within the Midhurst Town area and involves collecting the arisings after each of the five cuts. There are approximately 30,000 sqm of grass included within the Midhurst area.
- (d) Officers are monitoring the volume of arisings after each cut, with the data feeding into future discussions around the service level provided. Similar pilots in other local authority areas have indicated that removing the arisings reduces the fertility of the soil and hence the grass grows less vigorously (measured by the volume of grass arising taken after each cut). This in turn has enabled both a reduction in the number of cuts required, and the opportunity for some wildflower species to flourish as soil fertility reduces.
- (e) The most significant barrier to a wholesale move to cut and collect throughout the county, is the disposal of arisings. Officers are working with colleagues in Waste Services to dispose of arisings associated with the current pilots, although this skip and compost-based method used would not be sustainable on a countywide basis.

Officers are already in contact with partners around the use of biodigesters, and these discussions continue. The ideal solution would be to feed arisings into digesters and use the fuel generated (bioethanol) to power the grass cutting fleet. It is likely that a combination of capital and grant funding will be required to progress a project of this scale.

The collective data captured for these pilots and ongoing discussions with partners will be used to inform options around what the future operating model could look like. Whilst pilot timings might not align exactly with contract

renewal dates, there is confidence that there will be enough information available at the time to understand the pros/cons of all options.

9. Written question from Cllr Quinn for reply by Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

Question

I hope the Cabinet Member agrees with me that ensuring the safety of our roads should be a priority. I previously highlighted a number of road signs around the County that were defective or obscured and understood that a programme to address these was to take place. On my recent travels around the County, I am still seeing defective road signs.

The following were announced in August 2021:

- Replacing all faded and damaged signs;
- Replacing corroded signposts;
- Replacing damaged bollards;
- Replacing worn out coloured surfacing;
- With the extra £6m pounds added to this year's budget,

Can the Cabinet Member update me on the programme of works that was carried out and plans to address those signs that remain defective including those damaged in the recent storms?

Answer

There are approximately 60,000 road signs across the county.

The revenue budget for road sign maintenance in 2022/23 is £300,000. This provides the resource of a two-person-gang who will deliver approximately 1,500 jobs per annum. There may be scope to deliver more works than this, by providing short term additional resource, but it is dependent on the material costs within the financial year.

For 2022/23, there is an additional budget of £45,000 that will be used solely on sign cleaning and localised vegetation cut back immediately around identified signs. Traffic Engineers have identified 30 routes to be programmed for the start of the new financial year. Members are encouraged to send through suggested sites for dirty and obscured signs for consideration and future programming to the members' highways email address.

Some of the additional revenue funding secured for vegetation clearance will also be used to cut back vegetation around safety signs.

The list of bullet points referenced in the question above are associated with the Public Realm Project. This work stream has used capital funding to deliver road sign and road marking improvements on selected routes over the last two years. The sites have been a mixture of routes identified by the Road Safety Team, as well as key routes selected by each of the three Area Highway Teams.

In 2020/21, expenditure was approx. £1.5m and 113km of the highway network was treated.

In 2021/22, the treatment of 120km of highway network has been completed and the forecast is £1.4m of expenditure.

For 2022/23, there is a budget of approx. £1.1m and 30 roads are already identified which are currently with the County Council's contractor for assessment and pricing.

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

Question

I am aware that plans to increase our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) capacity within mainstream schools are in place and underway with an important objective being to minimise our need for expensive out-of-county and/or independent placements. Can the Cabinet Member please tell me:

- (a) When he anticipates this authority will have adequate in-house provision to meet the needs of the vast majority of West Sussex students with an EHCP;
- (b) How he believes we found ourselves in a position of such under capacity and what assessment has been made of this to ensure we prevent the situation recurring;
- (c) What long term plans he has to increasing in-house provision for those students with complex needs; and
- (d) What assessment has been made of the impact this has had on our mainstream schools (in terms of capacity and workload) and special schools (in terms of space)?

Answer

- (a) The needs of the vast majority of children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are already adequately provided for by in-house provision.
- (b) See answer to (a) above. In addition, we are currently progressing a programme of works to further increase County Council provision by expanding existing schools or exploring opportunities for new special schools.
- (c) There are plans for increasing capacity include the building of two new special schools to create 300 additional places and to utilise any suitable buildings to expand our current special schools, the majority of which have a 'Good' or 'Outstanding' Ofsted judgement. We are also creating additional Specialist Support Centre places attached to mainstream schools for children with social communication needs who require a higher level of support.
- (d) West Sussex has a lower proportion of pupils with EHCPs in mainstream schools than nationally and a higher proportion in specialist placements, including independent and non-maintained special schools. This indicates that there has been very limited impact on our mainstream schools.

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Question Time: 1 April 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.

All members of the Cabinet

Allocation of funding locally, from Cllr Albury and Cllr Baxter.

Leader

The Leader answered questions on the following matters:

Crawley Growth Programme, from Cllr Ali.

Recover and Rise programme, from Cllr Kerry-Bedell and Cllr Hillier.

Cabinet Member for Adults Services

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Informal, unpaid carers, from Cllr Johnson.

In response to a query from Cllr Johnson about whether the Council uses establishments requiring improvement by the Care Quality Commission for respite care, the Cabinet Member said she would find out and respond to her.

Domestic abuse, from Cllr A Cooper and Cllr Burgess.

Impact of rising costs of social care, from Cllr Wall.

Written question 2, from Cllr Pudaloff.

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the Your Mind Matters campaign, from Cllr Greenway, Cllr Mercer and Cllr Walsh.

In relation to the 'Your Mind Matters' website, Cllr Walsh asked the Cabinet Member, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing and the NHS, to ensure that statistics on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services are reported to the next meeting of the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

In response to a request from Cllr Mercer, the Cabinet Member said she would see if a recent confidential briefing for members of the Children and Young People's Services Scrutiny Committee on the mental health of young people could be made more widely available to members of other local authorities in the county.

Cabinet Member for Learning and Skills

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the Education and Skills Strategy, from Cllr Kenyon and Cllr Mercer.

In relation to the recently published Green Paper on Special Educational Needs, the Cabinet Member agreed to provide a hard copy of the Planning School Places document to Cllr Mercer.

Cabinet Member for Communities, Fire and Rescue

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Wellbeing Month at libraries, from Cllr Nagel and Cllr Wall.

System performance at the joint fire control room, from Cllr Walsh.

Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

National Park review and AONBs, from Cllr Montyn.

Consultation on 2021 Environment Act Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations, from Cllr Oakley.

Storm sewage overflows, from Cllr Kerry-Bedell.

Recycling newsletter, from Cllr Quinn.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Property

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Current position of Centenary House Durrington, from Cllr McDonald.

Woodlands Meed build project and ground source heat pumps, from Cllr Cherry.

In response to a question from Cllr Cherry about why ground source heat pumps had not been included as part of the design of the new Woodlands Meed school, the Cabinet Member said he would find out and respond.

Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Active Travel and issues with potholes and pavements, from Cllr Baxter.

Road repair prioritisation to support Active Travel, from Cllr Albury, Cllr Condie and Cllr Quinn.

#WestSussBus engagement, from Cllr N Dennis, Cllr Oakley and Cllr Sharp.

In response to a request from Cllr Dennis for bus stops and timetable information to be updated and stops that are no longer in use to be removed, the Cabinet Member said she would raise the matter with bus operators and with officers.

In response to a question from Cllr Oakley about whether bus companies consult the Council when they plan to remove bus stops, the Cabinet Member said she would find out and ensure that members are consulted in future.

Cabinet Member for Public Health and Wellbeing

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Wellbeing Service, from Cllr Boram and Cllr Oakley.

In relation to the 10th anniversary of the Wellbeing service, in response to a request from Cllr Boram, the Cabinet Member agreed to make representations to the NHS about the need for statistics on the number of preventable diseases they deal with.

In response to a question from Cllr Oakley as to whether there is evidence that campaigns to reduce smoking are having an impact on sales, the Cabinet Member said he would see if he could get some statistics.

End of free lateral flow tests, from Cllr Smith.

In response to a question from Cllr Smith about the end of free lateral flow tests and their availability for special school staff and families, the Cabinet Member agreed to make representations to the Government.

Vaccination programme, from Cllr McGregor.

Cabinet Member for Support Services and Economic Development

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Kickstart job programme, from Cllr Burrett and Cllr Hillier.

Oracle Fusion project for Council service support, from Cllr Atkins and Cllr Kerry-Bedell.

In response to a question from Cllr Kerry-Bedell about the Council's new business management system, Oracle Fusion, and whether it would be capable of being integrated by a management digital dashboard, the Cabinet Member agreed to find out and respond.

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