

To all Members of the County Council

An ordinary meeting of the County Council will be held at **10.30 am** on **Friday, 15 December 2023** 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 - 24)

The Council is asked to confirm the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the County Council held on 13 October 2023.

4. **Appointments**

To consider any proposed changes to appointments. Any proposals will be circulated and changes will take effect from the end of the meeting.

5. **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.

6. **Governance Committee: Minor revisions to the Constitution**
(Pages 25 - 30)

The Council is asked to consider minor changes to the Constitution in relation to the approval, by the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, of sections of the Constitution and an update to the procedure for the appointment of the Independent Chairman of the Pension Advisory Board, in the light of a report by the Governance Committee.

7. **Cllr Sarah Sharp**

The Council is asked to resolve that, in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, Cllr Sharp's current circumstances should be approved as a reason for absence.

8. **Report of Urgent Action** (Pages 31 - 32)

To note urgent action taken under regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

9. **Question Time** (Pages 33 - 38)

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 and relevant to the County Council. The report covers portfolio-related business since the meeting of the Council on 13 October 2023. 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.)

10. **Notices of Motion**

(a) **Motion on Funding**

To debate the following motion, submitted by Cllr Lord, notice of which was given on 28 November 2023.

'For 2024/25 and beyond, councils are experiencing budget pressures greater than those experienced at any time before. The Local Government Association (LGA) reports that councils have experienced a 27% real terms cut in core funding central government since 2010. Meanwhile, cost and demand pressures will have added 29% to the cost of delivering council services between 2021/22 and 2024/25.

Cost pressures are particularly acute in adult and children's services for all councils including West Sussex County Council. These include but are not limited to the cost of increasingly complex care alongside the increasing difficulty of finding appropriate provision within the care market, more requests for Special Education Needs (SEND) support than can be processed each month, and continually rising costs in home to school transport. Children's services accounts for £22.8m of WSCC's predicted £26.5m overspend this year.

Despite lobbying of government by the County Councils Network and the LGA and of our MPs by this Council, the Government provided no protection for councils from real terms cuts in the Autumn Statement and there was no increased funding in children's and adults' services.

Alongside other county councils, West Sussex County Council is in the invidious position of having to increase council tax by the maximum available during a cost of living crisis whilst also having to find savings from the services it offers to

residents. Even with this there is currently a predicted shortfall of £4.4 m in the council's budget for 2024/25 with a cumulative budget gap out to 2026/27 of £51.1m and of £91.8m out to 2028/29.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Leader to:

- (1) Call upon our MPs to make the cause of adequate funding for West Sussex County Council their top priority in the final year of this government;
- (2) Call upon the Government to urgently address the acute financial challenges affecting councils in order to protect the local services our communities rely on;
- (3) Back the County Councils Network calls for emergency funding for children's services this year and next;
- (4) Back the LGA's calls for a long term plan for adequate council funding from government; and
- (5) Write to the Secretary of State and our MPs to lobby for an urgent injection of funding before our budget needs to be set in February 2024 and for the local government financial settlement to guarantee adequately increased funding out to at least 2026/27 to allow for certainty in planning.'

(b) **Motion on Food Security**

To debate the following motion, submitted by Cllr Duncton, notice of which was given on 28 November 2023.

'This Council notes the importance of farming, growers and agriculture to the West Sussex economy, and recognises that many West Sussex residents rely on the industry for their livelihoods.

The Council is concerned that initiatives to limit the availability of non-plant based foods, supported by other local authorities, would have a serious detrimental effect on the farming industry in West Sussex, and would impact on the livelihoods of our residents as a result, as well as limiting choice for those residents who eat meals at Council-run establishments.

The Council therefore resolves to ask the Leader and Cabinet to ensure that all commissioned meals served in West Sussex schools, care homes and other establishments where food is provided for users of our services continue to offer the full range of meat, fish, dairy, vegetarian and vegan options, so as to enable the full range of choice and balanced diets to be available to all those residents who use the Council's services.'

County Council concludes

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

Director of Law and Assurance
6 December 2023

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