

**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

## **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

**13 October 2023**

At the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 am on Friday, 13 October 2023, at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ, the members present being:

Cllr Bradbury (Chairman)

Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Lanzer
Cllr Albury	Cllr Linehan
Cllr Ali	Cllr Lord
Cllr Atkins, RD	Cllr Markwell
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Marshall
Cllr Baxter	Cllr McDonald
Cllr Bence	Cllr McGregor
Cllr Boram	Cllr McKnight
Cllr Britton	Cllr Mercer
Cllr Burrett	Cllr Milne
Cllr Cherry	Cllr Mitchell
Cllr Chowdhury	Cllr Montyn
Cllr Condie	Cllr Nagel
Cllr Cooper	Cllr Oakley
Cllr Cornell	Cllr Oppler
Cllr Dabell	Cllr Oxlade
Cllr J Dennis	Cllr Patel
Cllr N Dennis	Cllr Pendleton
Cllr Duncton	Cllr Pudaloff
Cllr Dunn	Cllr Quinn
Cllr Elkins	Cllr Richardson
Cllr Evans	Cllr Russell
Cllr Forbes	Cllr Smith
Cllr Gibson	Cllr Sparkes
Cllr Greenway	Cllr Turley
Cllr Hillier	Cllr Urquhart
Cllr Hunt	Cllr Waight
Cllr Joy	Cllr Wall
Cllr A Jupp	Cllr Walsh, KStJ, RD
Cllr N Jupp	Cllr Wild
Cllr Kerry-Bedell	

### **30 Apologies for Absence**

- 30.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Burgess, Cllr Crow, Cllr Hall, Cllr Johnson, Cllr Kenyon, Cllr O’Kelly, Cllr Payne and Cllr Sharp.
- 30.2 Apologies for the morning session were received from Cllr Chowdhury who arrived 2.30pm. Apologies for the afternoon session were received from Cllr Ali, Cllr Evans, Cllr Gibson, Cllr Joy, Cllr Mercer and Cllr Richardson.

30.3 Cllr Markwell left at 3.27 p.m.

**31 Members' Interests**

31.1 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

**32 Minutes**

32.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 17 July 2023 (pages 7 to 26) be approved as a correct record.

**33 Appointments**

33.1 The Council approved appointments as set out below.

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Change</b>
Planning and Rights of Way Committee	Cllr Mercer to fill vacancy
Member Development Group	Cllr Oppler to fill vacancy

**34 Governance Committee: Changes to the Constitution**

34.1 The Council considered a number of minor changes to the Constitution including changing Standing Orders to limit other business at the annual budget meeting and changes to the terms of reference of the Corporate Parenting Panel and the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, in the light of a report by the Governance Committee (pages 27 to 40).

34.2 Resolved –

- (1) That Standing Orders be amended to limit non-urgent business at the annual budget meeting, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report;
- (2) That the current arrangements where the Chairman manages the meeting using his discretion to direct speakers to avoid overly lengthy, repetitive speeches and ensure content is relevant to the debate, be maintained;
- (3) That the revised terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel, as set out in the Constitution, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be approved; and
- (4) That the proposed changes to the terms of reference of the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, as set out at Appendix 3 to the report, be approved.

**35 Corporate Parenting Report for the Children We Care For and Care Leavers: September 2023**

35.1 The Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel introduced the report of the recent work of the Panel (pages 41 to 84).

35.2 Angel Confiac, the County Council's Voice and Participation Support Worker who was also a care leaver, addressed members.

35.3 Resolved -

That the Corporate Parenting Report for the Children We Care For and Care Leavers: September 2023, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

**36 West Sussex County Council's Armed Forces Covenant 2022/23**

36.1 The Council considered the Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report 2022/23 (pages 85 to 88).

36.2 Resolved -

That the report be noted.

**37 Report of Urgent Action**

37.1 The report of urgent action taken under regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (pages 89 and 90) was noted.

**38 Question Time**

38.1 Members asked questions of members of the Cabinet on matters relevant to their portfolios, as set out at Appendix 3. This included questions on those matters contained within the Cabinet report (pages 91 to 96) and a supplementary report (supplement page 7) and written questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 2).

**39 Motion on impact of the London Ultra-Low Emission Zone on West Sussex**

39.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Burrett and seconded by Cllr Duncton.

'This Council values economic growth, and supporting our communities and small businesses in all their endeavours to grow.

This Council values the aspirations of the vulnerable in our communities to thrive, and places great store in its commitment to support them wherever it can.

This Council therefore deplores the action taken recently by the Mayor of London to extend the London Ultra-Low Emission Zone without regard to its adverse impact on the communities and small businesses of this county.

In particular it notes that:

- The London Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) was extended by the Mayor of London on 29 August 2023 to cover all London Boroughs.
- Many small businesses and traders rely on travel, especially from communities in the north of the county, into parts of London now covered by ULEZ.
- Many West Sussex residents have a need to travel by car to outer London Boroughs for a variety of reasons, including work and specialist hospital appointments.
- Residents on lower incomes are more likely to own older vehicles and to be unable to afford to replace them.

This Council is concerned that:

- (1) No assessment has been produced by Transport for London of the volume of people living outside Greater London who are likely to be impacted by the ULEZ expansion.
- (2) People directly affected but living in West Sussex will not benefit from the mitigation package, and have no access to the diesel scrappage scheme for those on low incomes.
- (3) There will be a clear disproportionate impact on West Sussex small businesses, traders, and residents on low incomes who need to travel into Greater London, particularly at a time when cost-of-living pressures are already having an effect on them.
- (4) The ULEZ expansion could push congestion out of Greater London, making air quality worse in surrounding areas, including West Sussex.

In view of the above concerns, this Council resolves to ask the Cabinet to support the position taken by Surrey County Council and other affected local authorities in maintaining opposition to the ULEZ expansion, and asks the Leader to write to the Mayor of London, in the strongest terms, to ask him to reconsider his decision to expand the ULEZ zone in the light of the serious detrimental effects the expansion is now having on residents and businesses across the South East, including those in West Sussex, and especially those on low incomes.'



39.2 An amendment was moved by Cllr Oxlade and seconded by Cllr Quinn.

'This Council values economic growth, and supporting our communities and small businesses in all their endeavours to grow.

This Council values the aspirations of the vulnerable in our communities to thrive, and places great store in its commitment to support them wherever it can.

This Council therefore ~~deplores~~ **notes** the action taken recently by the Mayor of London to extend the London Ultra-Low Emission Zone without regard to its adverse impact on the communities and small businesses of this county.

In particular it notes that:

- The London Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) was extended by the Mayor of London on 29 August 2023 to cover all London Boroughs **and the aims of the ULEZ are to improve air quality, reduce pollution and improve health.**
- Many small businesses and traders rely on travel, especially from communities in the north of the county, into parts of London now covered by ULEZ.
- Many West Sussex residents (**including an estimated 6% of Crawley residents**) have a need to travel by car to outer London Boroughs for a variety of reasons, including work and specialist hospital appointments.
- Residents on lower incomes are more likely to own older vehicles and to be unable to afford to replace them.

This Council is concerned that:

- (1) No assessment has been produced by Transport for London of the volume of people living outside Greater London who are likely to be impacted by the ULEZ expansion.
- (2) People directly affected but living in West Sussex will not benefit from the mitigation package, and have no access to the diesel scrappage scheme for those on low incomes.
- (3) There will be a clear disproportionate impact on West Sussex small businesses, traders, and residents on low incomes who need to travel into Greater London, particularly at a time when cost-of-living pressures are already having an effect on them.
- (4) The ULEZ expansion could push congestion out of Greater London, making air quality worse in surrounding areas, including West Sussex.

In view of the above concerns, this Council resolves to ~~ask the Cabinet to support the position taken by Surrey County Council and other affected local authorities in maintaining opposition to the ULEZ expansion,~~ and asks the Leader to write to the Mayor of London, ~~in the strongest terms,~~ to ask him to reconsider his decision to expand the ULEZ zone in the light of the **potential** serious detrimental effects the expansion is now having on residents and businesses across the South East, including those in West Sussex, and especially those on low incomes, ***until modelling has been produced by TFL to evidence the anticipated scheme impacts on traffic flows, emissions and pollution levels outside Greater London.***

39.3 The amendment was lost.

39.4 The motion was carried.

#### **40 Motion on Support for Care Leavers**

40.1 The following revised motion was moved by Cllr Linehan and seconded by Cllr Dabell.

'The Independent Review of Children's Social Care headed by Josh **MacAlister** published in May 2022 had a final report and recommendations that included:

"Government should make care experience a protected characteristic" and "New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations."

The Care Leavers service in West Sussex supports our young people to grow and develop into young adults successfully as they move towards independence and operates under a clear legislative framework provided by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

As corporate parents to the children and young people in our care, and care leavers, we in West Sussex take those responsibilities extremely seriously, as any good parents should.

But as West Sussex county councillors, we should go further and support the aspirations of Care Leavers, making sure that no Care Leaver is discriminated against, and that they have every opportunity to live fulfilling and successful lives without barriers.

This Council therefore recognises:

- That care leavers and those children who have been cared for are a group who are likely to face discrimination.

- That councils have a duty to put the needs of disadvantaged people at the heart of decision-making through co-production and collaboration with them and all our local partnerships.
- That any future decision with respect to services and policies by the County Council assessed through Equality Impact Assessments should also consider the likely impact on people with care experience.
- To formally call upon all other bodies and partners, locally and pan-Sussex to treat care experience in the same way as they do a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of Care Leavers when developing new policies based on their views.

This Council therefore calls upon the Leader and Cabinet to ensure the Council treats care experience as if it were a protected characteristic, to provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced young people. ***The Council also calls on the Leader and Cabinet to inform West Sussex MPs and the Department of Education of the action taken.***

40.2 An amendment put forward by Cllr Oxlade and set out below was accepted by Cllr Linehan and became the substantive motion.

'The Independent Review of Children's Social Care headed by Josh MacAlister published in May 2022 had a final report and recommendations that included:

"Government should make care experience a protected characteristic" and "New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations."

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- That any future decision with respect to services and policies by the County Council assessed through Equality Impact Assessments should also consider the likely impact on people with care experience.
- To formally call upon all other bodies and partners, locally and pan-Sussex to treat care experience in the same way as they do a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of Care Leavers when developing new policies based on their views.

This Council therefore calls upon the Leader and Cabinet to:

- (1) **Ensure the Council treats care experience as if it were a protected characteristic, to provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced young people. The Council also calls on the Leader and Cabinet to inform West Sussex MPs and the Department of Education of the action taken;**  
**and**
- (2) **Lobby the Government to bring about the change in legislation recommended by the MacAlister report.'**

40.3 The motion, as set out below, was carried.

'The Independent Review of Children's Social Care headed by Josh MacAlister published in May 2022 had a final report and recommendations that included:

"Government should make care experience a protected characteristic" and "New legislation should be passed which broadens corporate parenting responsibilities across a wider set of public bodies and organisations."

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- That any future decision with respect to services and policies by the County Council assessed through Equality Impact Assessments should also consider the likely impact on people with care experience.
- To formally call upon all other bodies and partners, locally and pan-Sussex to treat care experience in the same way as they do a protected characteristic until such time as it may be introduced by legislation.
- For the Council to continue to proactively seek out and listen to the voices of Care Leavers when developing new policies based on their views.

This Council therefore calls upon the Leader and Cabinet to:

- (1) Ensure the Council treats care experience as if it were a protected characteristic, to provide greater authority to employers, businesses, public services, and policy makers to put in place policies and programmes which promote better outcomes for care experienced young people. The Council also calls on the Leader and Cabinet to inform West Sussex MPs and the Department of Education of the action taken; and
- (2) Lobby the Government to bring about the change in legislation recommended by the MacAlister report.'

## Agenda Item 3

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Chairman

The Council rose at 3.50 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>
8 – Armed Forces Covenant	Cllr Atkins	Member of and Armed Forces Champion for Worthing Borough Council
8 – Armed Forces Covenant	Cllr Bradbury	Chairman of Building Heroes Charity
10 – Question Time	Cllr Ali	Member of Crawley Borough Council
10 – Question Time	Cllr Atkins	Paragraph on Beach Project as Member of Worthing Borough Council
10 – Question Time	Cllr Burrett	Paragraph relating to the audit by external auditors of the Pension Fund accounts, as a deferred member of the Local Government Pension Scheme
10 – Question Time	Cllr Condie	Member of Burgess Hill Town Council
10 – Question Time	Cllr Cooper	Member of Arun District Council
10 – Question Time	Cllr Waight	Member of Worthing Borough Council
11(a) – Notice of Motion on ULEZ	Cllr Ali	Member of Crawley Borough Council
11(a) – Notice of Motion on ULEZ	Cllr Condie	Member of Burgess Hill Town Council
11(a) – Notice of Motion on ULEZ	Cllr Lanzer	Member of Crawley Borough Council

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## Written Questions: 13 October 2023

### 1. Written question from **Clr Cornell** for reply by **Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills**

#### Question

West Sussex is one of 55 local authorities signed up to the Government's 'Delivering Better Value' contract with Newton Europe, which includes the delivery against target of a 20% reduction in Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) issued. The Council's current situation is that it is achieving only 1% of EHCP assessments within the statutory timeframe. EHCP applications on the waiting list are assessed by a professional Educational Psychologist. Can the Cabinet Member confirm:

- (a) How this Newton Europe reduction target will be achieved, is it the right priority and, if achieved, how will it help overall to improve our support to this vulnerable group?
- (b) That in delivering the target, there will be no 'moving of goal posts' or 'watering down' of needs assessments; and
- (c) That the current criteria for awarding an EHCP, and the professional judgement of the Educational Psychologist will both be fully respected and maintained.

#### Answer

- (a) Delivering Better Value (DBV) is a programme working to identify and implement local and national opportunities to improve the outcomes for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). It is delivered by Newton Europe who were commissioned by the Department for Education (DfE) and looks at how savings can be made by improving outcomes in terms of children accessing the right support at the right time.

The targets identified for West Sussex focused on the three areas below:

- Increasing Inclusion in Mainstream Settings
- Reducing Reliance on the Independent Sector
- Enabling a Stronger Multi-Disciplinary Response

There is no target to reduce EHCPs by 20%

- (b) Any reduction in requests for EHCPs will come from earlier effective intervention and support enabling children to access learning and make progress without an EHCP. Any children requiring the additional support required through an EHCP will continue to be assessed in the usual way.
- (c) The current criteria for issuing an EHCP is defined within the SEND Code of Practice and the advice from an Educational Psychologist is a statutory requirement.

**2. Written question from Cllr Joy for reply by Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills**

**Question**

My question regards Reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC). I would like to pose a question to the County Council Cabinet. On the first day of term, West Sussex County Council sent out a message indicating that no schools in the county had any RAAC-related issues, even though a school in Horsham had been prominently mentioned in the press. It is worth noting that this particular school was originally a local authority school when it was constructed but has since become an academy. It appears that there may have been some reliance on technicalities in their response.

Currently, there seems to be a heightened sense of concern, as evidenced by the numerous surveys being conducted. Therefore, I would like to pose a straightforward and inquisitive question: How many schools in West Sussex can provide concrete evidence that they are genuinely RAAC-free?

**Answer**

There are no records indicating RAAC in any County Council maintained schools; however building records did not always detail the construction methods used. There are 114 maintained schools that have parts of the site that were constructed or modified during the period that RAAC was in use as a building material. Visual inspections were required at all of these schools, using the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines for RAAC identification. As a consequence of these inspections, one school did identify material that looked very much like RAAC but, after detailed survey investigation, has proved not to be. A further four schools have subsequently identified areas within the school that they have flagged as potential RAAC and detailed investigations are being arranged.

However, the County Council is aware that visual inspections alone cannot always entirely eliminate the possibility of RAAC being present. This is because there will be occasions where the structure has been obscured by panelling for example or requires void areas to be accessed and in some circumstances asbestos management is needed. To this end a programme of comprehensive building surveys by RAAC experienced professionals has been commissioned for all of the schools potentially containing the material.

The only school in West Sussex that has had RAAC positively identified remains Greenway Junior School near Horsham which is an academy. The Academy Trust is working with the DfE to resolve the issue. In the meantime the school remains open having reconfigured the teaching arrangements to avoid the area of concern.

**3. Written question from Cllr O'Kelly for reply by Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills**

**Question**

Current contract arrangements for primary school meals are due to run until July 2026. The provision is based on the Steamplicity model with meals prepared off-site and micro-steamed on-site.

Can the Cabinet Member please:

- (a) Advise whether he is aware of an alternative to the Steamplicity system that could provide the scale of school meals required without full kitchen facilities in schools?
- (b) Advise whether any action is yet underway to explore alternative catering options ahead of July 2026?
- (c) Confirm the level of capital investment that would be required to deliver what would be required for an alternative to the Steamplicity.
- (d) Advise if a school is unhappy with the current arrangements there is provision for them to exit the contract?
- (e) Provide a summary of satisfaction levels based on the annual surveys for the duration of the contract arrangements.

### **Answer**

- (a) Yes. There was a full market consultation undertaken in 2015/16 prior to the school meal contract procurement and at that time several potential alternatives presented and were explored by officers as part of the market consultation process. As is standard with a contract of this size, alternative models will be explored with potential Service Providers as part of the preparation for tendering for replacement school meal contracts.
- (b) Officers will commence market scoping in 2024/25, this will include stakeholder and Provider engagement.
- (c) Unknown as it would depend on what alternative models were presented. Full feasibility projects would need to be undertaken on each school currently operating a Steamplicity service, circa 190 schools. Not all these schools are maintained by the County Council.
- (d) Yes, there is provision for early contract exit, the conditions for this are set out in the annual Service Level Agreement that schools enter in to with the County Council.
- (e) The Service Provider carries out annual customer satisfaction surveys. These are constantly reviewed and improvements in the service applied, according to the feedback received.

### **4. Written question from Cllr Smith for reply by Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills**

#### **Question**

Can you please provide the following data in relation to all children with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCP) in full time educational placements, both as a percentage and an actual number, broken down by maintained, non-maintained, special, mainstream, academies, free schools or independent schools?

- (a) Children in full time school placements
- (b) Children currently on reduced timetables

- (c) Children currently receiving full time (Education Other Than At School) EOTAS support, including in-person tutoring or virtual support?
- (d) Children currently receiving part time or reduced EOTAS support?
- (e) What is the percentage of all children, and how many children in total with an EHCP are currently on waiting lists for a school placement? This includes children whose current placement is no longer meeting their needs, children who have been excluded from school and children missing education altogether as they are off role due to being de-registered?

**Answer**

- (a) We know which children are on roll in which type of provision at present; however, data on full-time, and part-time arrangements is not currently held. Mainstream covers providers of universal services who accommodate all needs within their setting.
  - 2,436 (35%) mainstream (including maintained, academies, free schools, and independents)
  - 2,807 (41%) Special or alternative provision
  - 1,389 (20%) Nursery or FE college (pre and post school age)
  - 278 (4%) other, such as apprenticeship, EOTAS, Elective Home Education, awaiting provision
- (b) This is not currently captured in a way that can be reported upon. A new working group has been established to explore future ways of working more closely with schools to communicate when changes to a child's full-time attendance in education is altered. This group is called Not in Receipt of Fulltime Education (NIRFE) and will include all children across the county, not SEND alone.
- (c) As at the start of September there were 104 children with EHCPs aged 0 to 25 that were recorded as EOTAS. This is 1.5% of all children with EHCPs for which West Sussex are responsible for. 60 of the 104 that are EOTAS are Elected Home Educated (0.9% of all children with EHCPs).

For children of compulsory school age (4 to 16 or Year R to 11) 71 children (1.3%) are recorded as EOTAS. 51 of these are Electively Home Educated (0.9%).
- (d) Any EOTAS provision for a child is their full-time provision in that it is their only provision. This may not be 'full-time' in the traditional sense of full-time education (i.e. 25 hours per week), but it is their only provision and what is deemed as appropriate for that child. Any child that is on a school roll would not be classed as EOTAS.
- (e) 61 (0.88%) of children with EHCPs are currently recorded with a SEN placement of Awaiting Provision/Awaiting Provision – in an education setting or another setting (age 5 to 15)/Awaiting Provision – not in education setting awaiting placement (age 5 to 15)/Awaiting Provision (16 or over).

Four children with EHCPs have been permanently excluded, however they are none of those shown as awaiting provision.

**5. Written question from Cllr Joy for reply by Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue**

**Question**

How is West Sussex County Council supporting Ukrainians in their efforts to secure private rental accommodation? A staff member attempting to transition into private rental housing has encountered obstacles, with letting agents unwilling to consider them as tenants.

Although it required the involvement of two English-speaking staff members to uncover this information, it appears that the County Council is aware of the issue and willing to intervene with landlords.

How are they addressing this situation to ensure that individuals who wish to avoid becoming a burden are not trapped within the system?

**Answer**

In response to the launch of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the County Council has established a Ukraine Support Team to deliver the practical support requirements placed on local authorities as set out in the national guidance. This support includes assisting guests following the end of their hosting arrangements to find suitable accommodation and assistance with independent living.

The Ukraine Support Team has staff dedicated to delivering the locally designed Accommodation Pathway Scheme offering end-to-end assistance from initial thoughts of living independently through to the point of moving into a property. This approach was designed to support Ukrainians wishing to live independently following the end of their hosted placement with a Sponsor or where private rented arrangements best suit their specific individual or family circumstances.

Staff working within the Accommodation Pathway Scheme (APS) proactively engage with Lettings Agents and Property Owners to increase understanding of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, providing clarity on rights/status and entitlement under 'right to rent' as well as assisting with any practicalities regarding translation/interpretation. The scheme is widely promoted to guests, but it is acknowledged that many individuals/families are keen to be entirely independent opting to engage directly with Letting Agents and Property Owners but when faced with unfamiliar processes or unexpected obstacles may then reach out for assistance.

Engagement with individuals/families is on a 1:2:1 basis to tailor an appropriate package of support following an affordability assessment to ensure that any tenancy can be independently sustained for the duration. Support offered includes; assistance with the search for properties, engagement with Letting Agents and Property Owners to assist with the practical elements of viewing property and the subsequent steps for completion of a tenancy agreement and move-in. Circumstances will vary and a tailored package of support could include financial assistance with an initial security deposit (to take property off the market), rent deposit and/or a rent guarantee.

So far this year 66 individuals/families have moved into independently rented accommodation with support provided by the Accommodation Pathway Scheme with a further 130 individuals/families currently engaged in the process.

Support extends to ensure a smooth transition into the privately rented property with the Homes for Ukraine Team able to assist in the navigation of processes including help setting up council tax and utility accounts, and practical advice for matters such as recycling.

Once guests have settled into their independent accommodation, they are still able to access the wider support offer included under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme regarding access to language training, employment support etc.

The housing market in West Sussex is one of the most challenging in the Southeast with all statutory agencies struggling to obtain a regular supply of private rented accommodation despite offering incentives and support for landlords. The package of rent guarantees, rent and security deposits has proved a necessary measure to provide Landlords operating in a highly competitive marketplace with the assurance needed to support our guests.

In all cases officers seek to find suitable and appropriate accommodation, irrespective of whether the guest is a WSCC staff member or otherwise. The circumstances of each case remain confidential, but all cases are regularly reviewed whilst actively seeking rental accommodation and contact maintained with those who have successfully moved into independent accommodation.

It must be noted that irrespective of the support described above, the Homes for Ukraine Scheme remains a programme which primarily matches guests to local hosts and most hosted guests remain in their host arrangements for more than a year.

### **Question Time: 13 October 2023**

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:

Local Enterprise Partnership from Cllr Duncton, Cllr Elkins, Cllr Kerry-Bedell and Cllr Mercer.

In relation to a question from Cllr Cornell about Home Office data (Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2022 to 2023), why the percentage of reported crime was so low and what representations the Council had made to the Police and Crime Commissioner on this subject, the Leader undertook to refer this matter to the Cabinet Member for Community Support, Fire and Rescue and ask him to respond.

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

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Market Sustainability Improvement Fund from Cllr Albury and Cllr Pudaloff.

CQC Assurance self-assessment from Cllr Wall.

#### **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Learning and Skills**

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

School Place Planning from Cllr Gibson.

Woodlands Meed School from Cllr Hillier and Cllr Lord.

Bedelands Academy from Cllr Cherry and Cllr Lord.

Secondary school places in Adur from Cllr Baxter, Cllr Boram and Cllr Smith.

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

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Think Before You Throw recycling videos from Cllr Greenway, Cllr Patel and Cllr Pudaloff.

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

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Medium Term Financial Strategy from Cllr Baxter, Cllr Burrett and Cllr Kerry-Bedell.

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

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following matters:

Carriageway dressing, from Cllr Lord.

In response to a request Lord for when repair work would be undertaken to a road in her division (Keymer Road, Hassocks) and an explanation for the poor condition following resurfacing, the Cabinet Member agreed to look into the matter and provide an explanation for the specific problem and how it would be avoided in future.

School Streets Trials, from Cllrs Boram and Greenway.

Active travel, from Cllr Condie, Cllr Kerry-Bedell, Cllr Oakley, Cllr Quinn and Cllr Walsh.

In response to a question from Cllr Walsh about overgrown vegetation on cycle ways and footpaths, the Cabinet Member agreed to advise him what measures would be taken in relation to Council-owned or controlled land, before next summer.

The Cabinet Member also agreed to respond to Cllr Oakley about the County Council's management of hedges abutting the highway.

Southern Rail's West Coastway consultation, from Cllr N Dennis and Cllr Oakley.

In response to a request from Cllr Dennis, the Cabinet Member undertook to include the County Council's consultation response in the members' Bulletin.

EV Chargepoints, from Cllr Forbes, Cllr N Jupp, Cllr Kerry-Bedell, Cllr McKnight and Cllr Walsh.

Highways winter maintenance, from Cllr Greenway and Cllr McKnight.

In relation to winter maintenance in response to a request from Cllr McKnight about the resurfacing of Tarring Road, Worthing, the Cabinet Member agreed to advise him about the timescale for the works.

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

The Cabinet Member answered questions smoking cessation, from Cllr McGregor and Cllr McKnight

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

The Cabinet Member answered a question about the BEACH project, from Cllr Atkins.



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## **Governance Committee: Minor revisions to the Constitution**

### **Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee**

#### **Background**

- 1** Part 2 of the Constitution contains a brief introduction to the main areas of political governance at the Council. It summarises who has authority to make changes to different parts of the Constitution.
- 2** Approval to change most parts of the Constitution is reserved to the County Council itself, on the recommendation of the Governance or Standards Committees. The Director of Law and Assurance has authority to revise certain parts of the Constitution.
- 3** Part 4, Section 2 (Risk Management Procedures), Part 4, Section 3 (Financial Regulations), Part 4, Section 4 (Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts) are currently approved by the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee (RAAC) but on the recommendation of the Governance Committee. This duplication between committees appears to be an anomaly as these functions clearly fall within the remit of RAAC rather than the Governance Committee.

#### **Proposal**

- 4** It is therefore proposed that, to be consistent with the rest of the Constitution, approval of changes to Part 4, Sections 2 to 4 should be the responsibility of the County Council itself, on the recommendation of RAAC. The changes to Part 2 of the Constitution to bring this into effect **are set out at Appendix 1**.

#### **Recommended**

- (1)** That changes to Part 2 so that in future amendments Part 4, Sections 2 to 4 be made by the County Council on the recommendation of the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee, be approved; and

## **Pension Advisory Board: Process of appointment of Independent Chairman**

#### **Background**

- 5** The initial appointment of the Independent Chairman for the Pension Advisory Board, when the role was established in 2015, followed advertisement and shortlisting by officers and an interview by a panel of three members from the Governance Committee. A further process was carried out in 2020 and the Chairman was reappointed for a further four years. The current appointment expires on 31 May 2024 and the Chairman has indicated that he will not be planning on applying for the position again due to retirement.

#### **Proposal**

- 6** The Governance Committee is recommending changes to the process for the appointment of the Independent Chairman. It is proposed that the Director of Finance and Support Services and Director of Law and Assurance advertise for an Independent Chairman in the relevant pension publications and websites and on the Council webpages. It is proposed that, in place of the member interview panel, the two senior officers will shortlist and interview prospective candidates

and make an appointment after consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Governance Committee who would also be kept fully advised of the progress of the recruitment and the approach to the selection of candidates via a review meeting before the interview process to review applications.

- 7** In relation to the proposal for interviews to be carried out by officers rather than elected members it is considered that, as the role has a technical and advisory role within an area of specialism, it would be more appropriate for the interviews to be carried out by the two officers with responsibility for the administration of the pension fund. Elected members will be consulted and advised of the reasons for the proposed appointment before it is confirmed. This change in process requires a change to the Board's terms of reference as **set out at Appendix 1**.

### **Recommended**

- (2) That the change to the process for the appointment of the Independent Chairman of the Pension Advisory Board be approved, as out at Appendix 1.

### **Pete Bradbury**

Chairman of Governance Committee

**Contact Officer:** Charles Gauntlett, Senior Advisor, Democratic Services, 033022 22524, [charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:charles.gauntlett@westsussex.gov.uk)

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Proposed changes to the Constitution

### **Background papers**

None

## Proposed changes to the Constitution

(Proposed changes are in bold, italic text with deletions struck through)

### Part 2 – Description of the Constitution

#### Changes to the Constitution

1.08 Sections of the Constitution can be changed as set out in the table below:

<b>Section of Constitution</b>	<b>Authority to Change</b>
Part 1	Director of Law and Assurance
Part 2	Director of Law and Assurance
Part 3, First Section	Director of Law and Assurance
Part 3, Appendices 1 and 2 (Executive functions and delegations to cabinet members)	Director of Law and Assurance following notification in the Bulletin of amendments to the Executive from the Leader.
Part 3, Appendix 3 (Officer Scheme of Delegation)	The Governance Committee may change the Scheme of Delegations to Directors.  The Chief Executive may change the allocation of delegations to individual officers within the Scheme. All members must be notified of such changes via the Bulletin.
Part 3, Appendices 4 to 23 (delegation codes of practice, delegations to non-Executive committees, scrutiny committees and other panels, boards and joint committees)	The County Council, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee.
Part 4, Section 1 (Standing Orders)	The County Council, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee.
Part 4, Section 2 (Risk Management Procedures)  Part 4, Section 3 (Financial Regulations)  Part 4, Section 4 (Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts)	<b><i>The County Council, on the recommendation of the Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee</i></b> <del>on the recommendation of the Governance Committee.</del>

<b>Section of Constitution</b>	<b>Authority to Change</b>
Part 5, Section 1 (Code of Conduct)  Part 5, Section 2 (Member Officer Relations Protocol)  Part 5, Section 3 (Code of Practice on Probity in Planning and Rights of Way)	The County Council, on the recommendation of the Standards Committee.
Part 5, Section 4 (Code of Practice on Publicity)	The County Council, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee.
Part 6	The County Council, on the recommendation of the Governance Committee.

### **Part 3 – Scheme of Delegation**

#### **Appendix 5 – Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee**

12. To **advise the County Council on proposed** agree revisions to the County Council’s Standing Orders on Procurement and Contracts, Financial Regulations and Risk Management Procedures.

#### **Appendix 19 – Pension Advisory Board of the West Sussex Pension Fund**

##### **Chairman**

22. The Chairman will be **an** the independent member appointed for an initial term of 2 years by the Governance Committee, from a short list of nominees drawn up by the Director of Finance and Support Services and the Director of Law and Assurance. A job description approved by the **Governance** Committee will be used to identify the candidate best suited to the role. The independent Chairman cannot vote, in accordance with the regulations. The following provisions will apply:
- the term of office for the Independent Chairman is for four years;
  - subject to agreement of the Governance Committee, on advice from the Director of Finance and Support Services and the Director of Law and Assurance, the Independent Chairman will be able to serve a maximum of two consecutive terms before the opportunity is re-advertised.
  - future appointments will be by a panel of three members from the Governance Committee, supported by appropriate technical advice, and shall be made from a short list of nominees drawn up by the Director of Finance and Support Services and the Director of Law and Assurance following suitable advertisement of the opportunity. **They will make an appointment following consultation with the Chairman and Vice-**

***Chairman of the Governance Committee who shall be kept advised of progress with the recruitment. This will include a meeting prior to the interviews.*** The incumbent Chairman would be eligible for consideration for the post.

- amendments to the Independent Chairman's job description will be approved by the Governance Committee.
- the appointment of the Independent Chairman is phased with other members of the Board to ensure continuity of experience on the Board.

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**Report of Urgent Action: Regulation 19**

- 1** Under regulation 19 of the The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 the County Council is required to receive a report from the Leader on any decisions taken under regulation 11. These are key decisions which were not in the Forward Plan and which needed to be taken with less than five clear days' notice. Such urgent decisions can only be taken with the agreement of the relevant scrutiny committee chairman or, in his or her absence, the Chairman of the County Council.
- 2** Such action is avoided wherever possible as it circumvents the normal mechanism for publication of decisions for ensuring that members have the opportunity to comment before decisions are taken.
- 3** However, on occasion this is not possible and the County Council is asked to note the following decision which has been taken by the appropriate decision-maker, in consultation with the relevant members.

**Contingency Accommodation Arrangements**

- 4** Since November 2021, the County Council has been responsible for providing support for refugees and family groups in the county under the British government resettlement scheme.
- 5** In March 2023, the UK Government announced plans to permanently end the use of bridging accommodation. Previously-used bridging hotel accommodation was served closure notices by the Home Office and, in accordance with government requirements, the hotels closed on 31 August 2023. Home Office contingency accommodation remains available until 31 December 2023. After this point no further Home Office accommodation is available. The County Council is therefore charged with securing accommodation for the remaining refugee families otherwise at risk of homelessness.
- 6** Securing accommodation is within a commercial rental market and therefore the ability to present a quick decision is frequently required. All accommodation is financed using Home Office grant monies at no cost to the County Council.
- 7** The Assistant Director (Communities), with the agreement of the Director of Law and Assurance and the Chairman of the Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee, has therefore approved the entering into of a nominations agreement for up to 11 new homes in the West Sussex area for a term of three years, from December 2023 to December 2026, with a commercial property provider.
- 8** Notice of the decision did not feature in the County Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions because the matter needed to be determined as soon as possible to comply with the Government's requirements and conditions. The decision was published on 30 November 2023.

**Paul Marshall**

Leader

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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, Chief Executive, Cabinet Member for Adult Services, Cabinet Member for Finance and Property, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change and Director for Children, Young People and Learning attended **the County Councils Network annual conference** in Marlow, Buckinghamshire. The conference provided an opportunity to build relationships with colleagues and explore the key challenges faced by county councils across the country, including sustainable funding, devolution, LEP transition, children's social care pressures, adult social care reform, highway investment and net zero.
- On 26 October, the Leader published a decision on [Future Visitor Economy Arrangements](#). The visitor economy is important for the County Council and for the wider West Sussex economy, with over 37,000 jobs supported by the sector and a pre-pandemic value of £2bn. The decision confirms and develops the pan-Sussex approach to the visitor economy that began during the pandemic between West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council. A key feature of the arrangements is to ensure Sussex benefits from national opportunities. An application has been submitted to Visit England to seek accreditation for an 'East Sussex, Brighton and Hove and West Sussex [Local Visitor Economy Partnership](#)'.
- The West Sussex local authorities have published a [West Sussex economic collaboration report](#) setting out the opportunities and challenges for the county's economy. The report identifies four themes to frame future collaboration between the County Council and the district and boroughs: skills, recruitment and retention; boosting productivity growth, investment and innovation; enhancing natural capital and transitioning to net zero; and improving connectivity. The Leader has hosted roundtables on all four themes for businesses and key stakeholders which have taken place over the autumn. The work will also inform planning for the transition of Local Enterprise Partnership functions to the County Council from 1 April 2024, following a government announcement. Detailed government guidance is expected in January.
- As announced in the members' Bulletin in October, officers are in contact with the Environment Agency and the Water Companies about holding a **Water Summit**, which builds on the spirit of cooperation demonstrated at the 'Water' Members' Development Session on 6 September. The summit would provide a forum for high-level dialogue between senior members/representatives of each organisation about key issues and priorities under the three themes in the national policy for water, '[Our integrated plan for delivering clean and plentiful water \(PDF, 4.3MB\)](#)', which are: transforming management of the whole water system; delivering a clean water environment for nature and people; and securing a plentiful supply of water (with protecting the environment and climate change being an underlying theme across all three).

## **Adults Services – Amanda Jupp**

- The County Council and service provider [Health & Independent Living Support \(HILS\)](#) were one of four joint winners of the **Meals on Wheels Service of the Year** prize at the National Association of Care Catering Awards. The award recognises the 365-day caring service providing vital preventative work, supporting hundreds of local residents to stay healthy, happy, and independent. For more information about the meals on wheels service, or to sign up to receive meals in West Sussex contact by phone: 0330 2000 103 or email [westsussex@hils-uk.org](mailto:westsussex@hils-uk.org).
- In line with the [Joint Carer Strategy 2021-26](#), the Cabinet Member has given the go ahead to a [Carer Information, Advice Assessment and Support Service](#) which will re-focus provision on the growing carer population in West Sussex and the different needs of these carers across the county. Following consultation with carers the top three challenges identified were; feelings of stress, managing their own physical/mental health and missing out on socialisation because of caring. This service will have an emphasis on achieving 'communities around carers' at a localised level, and building carer resilience, to enable people to live well and ensure West Sussex is a county that values all carers.
- On 24 November **the Cabinet Member joined the Leader and representatives from adult social care providers across West Sussex, to meet with West Sussex MPs** to discuss a number of issues in relation to adult social care in the county. Discussions included an overview of workforce challenges, as set out in a recent Skills for Care report, the current demand for adult social care and the positive outcomes for residents that social care services enable. Adult social care funding and the limitations of short-term funding was also presented and a call for a minimum national care wage which would be the real living wage, as well as uplifts to support to keep people who have skills/knowledge/experience in the sector.

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

- **Two West Sussex Children's Homes have been rated 'good' by Ofsted** following the latest inspections. This was the first inspection for [Blue Cove](#) in Worthing since reopening in April, with the report highlighting the dedication and commitment of the staff team. [High Trees](#) in Crawley was praised for being welcoming and homely with children being actively involved in their current care and plans for their future. These outcomes mean that all the County Council's Children's Homes continue to have a 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted rating.
- [Approval has been given](#) for **insourcing the Child and Adolescent Multi-Disciplinary Service (CHAMPS)**, which works with the children and families being supported by Children's Social Care through providing psychology informed assessments and interventions. In changing the service to direct delivery by the County Council, the needs of existing service users will continue to be met as well as offering the opportunity to redesign and improve CHAMPS for the future.

- An [\*\*additional 70 secondary school places will be made available at Sir Robert Woodard Academy\*\*](#) for those starting secondary school in September 2024. The extra places are being delivered following positive negotiations between the County Council and the Academy and will assist with significantly reducing the pressure on secondary school places in the Shoreham area next year.

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

- The Cabinet Member attended the **West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service Recognition and Achievement Awards Ceremony** on 16 November which celebrated the achievements of staff. Thirty-two long service and good conduct medals were presented to members of staff that have served within the fire and rescue service for 20, 30 and 40 years. Fifteen Commendation Awards were presented by the Chief Fire Officer to those who have been recognised for providing exceptional public service. This annual ceremony is an opportunity to formally recognise the dedication and commitment of Fire and Rescue staff who have gone over and above in contributing to keeping communities in West Sussex safe and well.
- **West Sussex Fire & Rescue Service** is encouraging people to sign up for a [\*\*free life-saving Biker Down workshop\*\*](#) to help them stay safe on the road this winter. Workshops will include training on scene management following a collision involving a motorbike, first aid, including helmet removal, and how to best be seen on the road. The first Biker Down workshop took place in November and further workshops have been scheduled on the following dates; [Shoreham Fire Station: 25 January, 6pm – 10pm](#), [County Hall North, Horsham: 22 February, 6pm – 10pm](#) and [County Hall, Chichester: 14 March, 6pm – 10pm](#). For more information on Biker Down workshops, please email [FRSFirebike@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:FRSFirebike@westsussex.gov.uk).
- [\*\*The County Council has launched an initiative between Trading Standards and Public Health\*\*](#), aiming to combat the sale of illegal vapes, and illicit tobacco products. With the support of two newly appointed, Public Health funded, enforcement officers Trading Standards was recently able to seize over 1,400 illegal vapes, and illicit tobacco products in a single day of operations. Working in conjunction with alcohol licencing authorities, the Council's Trading Standards officers will also seek a review of any business's licence if caught selling age-restricted products to children. The Council urges the public to report any shops involved in selling illegal non-compliant vapes or sales to children via the official [online reporting tool](#) to directly inform Trading Standards.
- Mims Davies, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Work and Pensions, and MP for Mid Sussex, recently visited East Grinstead and Littlehampton libraries to meet the County Council teams responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of the [\*\*Household Support Fund \(HSF\)\*\*](#). The County Council has been allocated approximately £9.7m by the Department for Work and Pensions to provide HSF assistance up to 31 March 2024. Teams responsible for the co-ordination and delivery of the fund have worked with partners including the Council's Library Service, Citizens Advice, Carers Support West Sussex, food banks, fuel banks, community-based organisations and all seven West Sussex district and borough councils, to reach West Sussex residents in most need. [The County Council's Community Hub](#) is open 9 am to

5 pm seven days a week and offers advice and guidance regarding what support is available, along with administering the application-based element of the HSF scheme.

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

- The County Council, in partnership with UKHarvest and Biffa, has won a coveted [National Recycling Award](#) for the Community Food Waste Prevention and Rescue programme. The results of the National Recycling Awards were revealed on 16 November and the event to recognise and celebrate the sector's achievements saw more than 500 attendees from the recycling industry. The partnership won the Food Waste Initiative category and was praised by the expert judging panel, who are drawn from across the recycling sector.
- A [new, simpler approach to recycling](#) announced by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in October means that people across England will be able to recycle the same materials, whether at home, work or school, putting an end to confusion over what can and cannot be recycled in different parts of the country. Weekly collections of food waste will also be introduced for most households across England by 2026 and the Government is proposing new exemptions to make sure that waste collectors will be able to collect a core set of dry recyclables together. The West Sussex Waste Partnership will work together to implement the Government's Simpler Recycling Policy to ensure compliance with the Environment Act 2021.
- The County Council has an ambitious target to be a carbon neutral organisation by 2030. The [Tackling Climate Change Progress Report \(PDF, 4.1MB\)](#) shows the breadth of work undertaken in the last two financial years towards achieving this target. Highlights include reducing operational carbon emissions by 10% compared to 2020/21 and taking meaningful steps towards delivering significant carbon reductions within corporate buildings. Renewable energy schemes have been expanded, the development of a network of electric vehicle chargepoints is underway, and local businesses have been helped to prepare for the future through the ['Let's Go! Net Zero'](#) campaign.
- An initial **Natural Capital Feasibility Assessment** of 45 sites within the Council estate has been completed. The study will help inform the County Council's pledge to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030 and considers the carbon sequestration and biodiversity net gain potential of some Council-owned land, together with any nature-based solutions that could be provided by conservation work and associated revenue potential for the Council. The desk-top study was completed by Adonis Blue Environmental Consultants (formerly Kent Wildlife Trust) and the next stage of work will be to survey a selection of sites to further inform feasibility and costs for nature-based interventions.
- Exceptionally wet weather (300% above annual averages) in late October resulted in flooding occurring in a number of places across Arun, and businesses and homes were affected in Bognor Regis, Shripney and beyond. The County Council's resources were stretched in response and all staff are thanked for their rapid response and hard work which helped to alleviate the immediate impacts. The County Council is **continuing to liaise with the Environment Agency and Southern Water** to work on ways to minimise the impact of these weather events in the future.

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## Finance and Property – Jeremy Hunt

- On 22 November the Chancellor of the Exchequer delivered his [2023 Autumn Statement](#). It was pleasing to see the additional support put in place for those on lower incomes, including the increase in the National Living Wage to £11.44, the increase in working age benefits by 6.7%, increase in Local Housing Allowance and support to pensioners with an increase in state pensions of 8.5% from April 2024. The independent Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecast that the headline rate of inflation will fall to 2.8% by the end of 2024 and to the Bank of England's 2% target rate in 2025. If these trends materialise, it will help in reducing County Council costs in future years. The OBR also expects the economy to grow by 0.6% this year and 0.7% next year, rising to 1.4% in 2025; then an average of 1.9% between 2026 and 2028. Although additional funding was announced for councils with housing and planning responsibilities, it was disappointing that there was no reference to additional funding for county councils. The County Council will now have to wait for the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2024/25, which is expected to be published in the week commencing 18 December, to find out if there is going to be any additional funding. However, based on the lack of any detail in the Autumn Statement, the assumption is that this is unlikely.

## Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis

- Local highway authorities in the South East, including in Surrey, Kent, Hampshire, East and West Sussex, will each receive a [share of £734m](#) recently announced by the Government which they can use to identify which local roads are in most need of repair and deliver immediate improvements for communities and residents. This amounts to £2.161m for this year and next with a total of £67.684m over 11 years for West Sussex.
- From October this year, young people have been able to benefit from [new discounted bus fares](#) if their journey starts or finishes anywhere within West Sussex. The '16 to 20 Bus Saver' means young people can travel at reduced child rate fares offered by their local bus operator. The scheme is being funded by central government grant.

## Public Health and Wellbeing – Bob Lanzer

- Following the [notice of motion](#) moved and backed by county councillors at the County Council meeting on 26 May regarding defibrillators, several cross-portfolio actions have taken place to increase county-wide coverage and accessibility of the devices. This includes a [press release](#) highlighting the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC's) £1m Community [Automated External Defibrillators \(AEDs\) Fund](#). The Cabinet Member and the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Learning and Skills have also written to West Sussex schools encouraging them to register their devices on [The Circuit](#), the national defibrillator network available to the emergency services, to consider allowing community access, and a reminder of training requirements. Defibrillators maintained by the County Council's Facilities Management team are now all registered on The Circuit, three have been moved to external cabinets (Chichester, Horsham and Crawley) enabling 24-hour community access, and devices in Worthing are accessible during office hours. The Cabinet Member has also written to all town and parish councils in West Sussex sharing a letter from Will Quince MP, Minister of State for Health, encouraging them to

register AEDs on The Circuit and highlighting the DHSC's £1 million community AED fund.

- Following the publication of the Government's public health policy paper, ['Stopping the start: our new plan to create a smokefree generation' \(PDF, 4.2MB\)](#), which sets out a route to prevent addiction to smoking before it starts, to support smokers to quit, and to stop marketing of vapes to children, the Government launched an [eight-week, UK-wide consultation](#) (which closed on 6 December) on proposals to make it an offence for anyone born on or after 1 January 2009 to be sold tobacco products. MPs will also get a free vote in Parliament on proposals. The Cabinet Member and Director of Public Health have issued a [press release](#) urging people to get involved in these national proposals to create a smokefree generation, taking this unique opportunity to have their say on ideas put forward by the government to raise the legal age for buying tobacco products, as well as tougher regulation aimed at making vaping less accessible and attractive to children and young people. Vaping can be an effective tool to help existing adult smokers to quit tobacco. However, vapes are not risk free; the message is simple – 'if you don't smoke, don't vape'.
- Building on communications messages over the last year, a County Council **all-age mental health communications campaign** will continue until March 2024 aiming to raise community awareness of mental health, signpost to sources of information and support, and to challenge the persistent stigma of mental illness. As part of this approach, a dedicated campaign page ['Your mental health – West Sussex'](#) on the Council's website has been developed to enable residents to find the information they need to help their emotional wellbeing and mental health. Additionally, there will be regular social media messaging and residents' e-newsletter articles, ongoing promotion of [Your Mind Matters](#), ['Don't brush it under the carpet'](#), the ['Warning Signs'](#) initiative, and more. An ongoing evaluation approach, including analytics and feedback from support services, will guide and inform future communications.

### **Support Services and Economic Development – Steve Waight**

- The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology has confirmed that the County Council has been successful in its bid to become [one of ten UK 'Innovation Regions'](#) and received £3.8m in funding designed to drive forward innovation and unlock opportunities for economic growth through making use of world-class digital infrastructure. The County Council will work with food and drink agricultural sectors across Sussex to improve economic performance by co-developing, alongside telecoms and technology partners, education centres and commercial producers, foundational technology such as 5G networks and Artificial Intelligence applications.

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### **Background papers**

None