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## Cabinet Report: Delivering Our West Sussex 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

- In response to **Afghan nationals arriving in to the UK** on rescue flights from Afghanistan during August as the situation escalated, the County Council has been actively supporting the Government's '[Operation Warm Welcome](#)'. This commitment seeks to ensure that Afghan arrivals get the health, education, employment and accommodation support they need to fully integrate into their new communities. Council officers have worked in partnership over a number of weeks to deliver vital practical support, including clothing, shoes, toiletries, baby care items and other essential supplies to individuals and families during their required quarantine period as many were unable to bring any luggage or personal items with them. Officers are now working with district and borough councils, voluntary and community organisations and other key partners to assist following the conclusion of quarantine stays with the transition to bridging arrangements and the identifying of suitable self-contained, longer-term accommodation options within the county. Further details can be found on the Council's [website](#), including information on the resettlement programme, volunteering opportunities and how you can assist.

### Adults Services – Amanda Jupp

- A joint bid from West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council was one of 15 out of 100 bids to be **successfully awarded funding from the [Changing Futures initiative](#)**. The £4.425m awarded funds will enable local partners to deliver a programme that protects vulnerable residents from crisis by improving access to essential support such as help with homelessness, substance misuse, poor mental health, domestic abuse and contact with the criminal justice system.
- The County Council's Adults Services are asking residents to help **[shape the future of adult social care in West Sussex](#)**. During the past 18 months the Council's adult social care staff have worked resiliently through the difficult conditions presented by COVID-19. The service will now seek to explore how to best meet residents' needs for long-term future demand with a series of engagement events and workshops, visiting different settings across the county and running a survey, until 8 November, to capture everyone's views.

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

- In recognition of the **impact of the pandemic on children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health** a further £1.283m has recently been committed by the Government to fund additional support. The [support offer](#) is being delivered in conjunction with partners including the NHS, other local authorities and community groups and encompasses both in person and online resources. This includes providing mental health first aid in schools and online courses to support parents and carers develop tools to help children manage their feelings and mental health.

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- The wisdom and experience of Roger and Pauline Fitter, [a West Sussex couple who have fostered more than 600 children over 56 years](#), is offering inspiration to those who are considering becoming foster carers. There is a growing need for more carers and the **County Council is looking for new and experienced foster carers** who wish to help a child have a better future. Full training is provided along with a competitive financial allowances package and ongoing support, with extra help given to new carers during their first year of fostering.

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

- The County Council's **Back to School** webpage provided parents, carers and pupils all the information they needed to know to ensure a safe return to learning at the start of the new school year. This included explaining what COVID-19 measures were in place at schools and how schools will manage outbreaks, a section to advise young people on keeping themselves and others safe and still enjoy life, and advice and guidance on mental health and wellbeing.
- The proposal to open a new all-through school in Burgess Hill has moved onto the next stage with a **free school competition undertaken to seek a Multi-Academy Trust** (MAT), with a proven track record of improving educational attainment, to become the provider. The school will deliver additional pupil places to assist in meeting the demand created by housing development in and around the Burgess Hill area. The proposals submitted by the MATs will be assessed against set criteria after which the Cabinet Member will make a recommendation to the Secretary of State for Education as to who the preferred provider should be.

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

- **The West Sussex Record Office has been awarded a grant** of £427,809 from the Wellcome Trust to conserve and increase accessibility to important post-war planning and building documents relating to Crawley, identified as a suitable New Town site in January 1947. The [Crawley New Town Development Corporation Archive](#) comprise records that include minutes, departmental filing, plans and photographs. The archive will be catalogued and fragile items, that could otherwise be lost forever, will be conserved.
- In partnership with [The Reading Agency](#), the County Council's Library Service held its 2021 annual **Summer Reading Challenge**, themed on Wild World Heroes. More than 8,000 children signed up to the challenge and over 70,000 books, eBooks and audio books were loaned to children and their families. As a result of the challenge over 1,000 children have [joined the library](#).
- To keep West Sussex residents 'Safe Against Scams' the West Sussex Community Safety & Wellbeing Team, alongside Trading Standards, have been running [free monthly scams awareness webinars](#) for residents to attend. The Council, in partnership with [Get Safe Online](#), has also started a search for volunteers to become part of a new group of '[Digital Ambassadors](#)' to help educate and support their local communities to become safer online.
- In recognition of the contribution all emergency service personnel make, the Cabinet Member attended the West Sussex County Council's Fire and Rescue

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Service [Emergency Services Day](#) on 9 September with a Fire and Rescue Service-led activity at County Hall, Chichester and at Crawley Fire Station. The County Council also marked the day by flying the Emergency Services Day official flag at County Hall, Chichester.

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

- Registrations for the latest round of [Solar Together Sussex](#) opened in August. The group buying scheme, which is run by iChoosr and co-ordinated by the County Council on behalf of local authorities across Sussex, helps residents to install high quality solar panels and battery systems to reduce their impact on the environment. More than 6,600 residents have registered their interest in this latest round and will receive a recommendation from an accredited installer in the autumn which they can choose to accept.
- The County Council, in partnership with district and borough councils, has awarded a contract to electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure specialists Connected Kerb to fund, install, market and operate **EV chargepoints** across the county to encourage take up of EVs by residents. Installations are expected to start in spring 2022, initially in public car parks, and later will include on-street and other community parking areas. Plans for the network will be sent to members as soon as possible.

### **Finance and Property – Jeremy Hunt**

- The Cabinet at its [meeting](#) on 19 October will be considering the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for endorsement. The report presents an update to the key assumptions made in the [February Budget report](#) (PDF, 2MB). It also provides an update on the Council Plan as well as a summary of the national and local policies, including reference to the proposed Comprehensive Spending Review due later this month and the Fairer Funding Review and Business Rate Retention Scheme which are both delayed. The provisional Local Government Settlement expected in December will be key to determining how the budget gap for 2022/23 can be addressed.

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

- The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA), in partnership with the County Council, started a pilot project this year to explore how highway verges in the Park could be more sensitively managed to improve biodiversity and improve/introduce wildlife corridors. The [Cut and Collect](#) pilot will run for three years and if, when evaluated, is shown to be successful, may be rolled out more widely in West Sussex. The 11 pilot sites were chosen by the SDNPA due to the presence of [Notable Road Verges](#).
- The [Highways Major Projects programme](#) continues at pace with £105m value of schemes; £52m of which are in the construction phase including the A2300 corridor improvement scheme and the Littlehampton to Ferring A259 widening scheme. The A24 Robin Hood Roundabout was completed in September and the A2300 scheme will be completed in late autumn. An additional four major highways projects or packages are being progressed across the county facilitating economic growth, housing and easing traffic congestion and are funded from a number of sources including developer contributions, Local

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Enterprise Partnership and the Department for Transport as well as the County Council.

- Ash Dieback is a disease that is likely to kill 95% of the county's ash trees over the next 10 to 20 years and this will have a major impact on the landscape and wildlife. It will also pose a significant risk to people, property, and the delivery of services. An [Ash Dieback Action Plan](#) (PDF, 1.9MB) is in place and the [procurement process](#) for a specialist contractor to deliver the tree removal phase of the plan is underway.

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

- Throughout October, the organisations in the [Smoke Free West Sussex partnership](#) (PDF, 1MB), led by the County Council, are supporting the Stoptober campaign - an annual Public Health England stop smoking challenge, encouraging and supporting smokers to make a quit attempt during October. Stoptober celebrates its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and during that time an estimated two million smokers have used the campaign as an opportunity to make a quit attempt. In addition to stop smoking support tools available on the [Better Health website](#), including an enhanced version of the [Stoptober app](#), those living and working in West Sussex can access support to stop smoking from [West Sussex Wellbeing](#).
- **[West Sussex Wellbeing celebrates 10 years](#)** this year. Delivered in partnership by West Sussex Public Health with all district and borough councils across the county, the adult-focused prevention programme is targeted to reduce health inequalities by supporting people with a range of programmes. These include those that help people to become more active, lose weight, stop smoking, reduce their alcohol use and avoid falls. The programme works with adults who live and/or work in West Sussex; helping them to set their own goals, it supports and motivates them to make changes. The first Wellbeing Programme started in 2009 and a full countywide programme came into place by 2011.
- West Sussex Public Health has recently been engaged with a pilot event in Phase 3 of the [Government's Events Research Programme](#). In collaboration with the Goodwood Estate and key partners including Chichester District Council Environmental Health, Public Health England and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, Public Health contributed to arrangements for the Goodwood Festival of Speed (8 to 11 July). The Goodwood Estate has continued to implement many of the good practice measures used as part of the pilot event in the planning and delivery of their subsequent events such as Glorious Goodwood and Goodwood Revival.
- The NHS in Sussex (Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP)) continues to lead the [Sussex COVID-19 Vaccination Programme](#), and has started delivering the [safe and effective annual flu vaccination programme](#). This year, the flu vaccination is more important than ever as it is expected that this will be the first winter when COVID-19 will co-circulate alongside the seasonal influenza virus and people who get infected with the flu and COVID-19 virus at the same time are more likely to be seriously ill. The flu vaccine is available for free at GP surgeries or local pharmacies for people in [eligible groups](#). West Sussex Public Health is working in partnership with the SHCP to increase

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uptake of both vaccines; this work includes a focus on reducing health inequalities in the local population.

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

- On 9 September Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) launched its [12-week public consultation](#) concerning **plans to bring Gatwick Northern Runway into routine use**. The consultation will run until 1 December with all materials available on [GAL's website](#). As a consultee, the County Council will be drawing up a response for agreement by the Cabinet at its meeting on 16 November, prior to submission to GAL.
- In December 2020 a proposal was approved via decision [ECR04\(20/21\)](#), to **insource and recommission, through new contracts, the services currently provided by Capita** under the Information Technology Outsource contract (ITO). Work has progressed well and the ITO contract was concluded on 30 September. The IT service has been reshaped to include the staff returned to the County Council and is now focusing on enabling services to have the right infrastructure and digital capabilities to deliver efficient and effective outcomes for residents.

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### **Background papers**

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