

---

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

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

### Leader – Paul Marshall

- The Leader attended a [Business Hothouse: end of programme celebration](#), hosted by the University of Chichester, at the Butlins conference centre on the 27 April. The programme ran from 2020 to 2023 providing extensive support across the county for those considering starting a business and for existing businesses looking to adapt, innovate, or grow. The programme was funded through £5.5m of European Regional Development Funds allocated to the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership geography, with match funding from West Sussex local authorities. The total programme value was just under £10.9m. The event highlighted the challenges arising from the pandemic, lessons learnt, and successes. The programme had more than 750 West Sussex beneficiaries, including around 500 businesses and 250 people considering starting a business. Grants were given to more than 100 West Sussex businesses, totalling just under £1.3m. The programme overall is estimated to have had a £144m economic impact.
- The County Council achieved Gold Award status in August 2020 on the [South East Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association \(SERFCA\) Employer Award Programme](#). On 21 March, the Leader attended a **Gold Leadership Luncheon for South East Gold Award holders** at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. The event included presentations on army and private sector approaches to leadership, networking and idea sharing with other attendees, discussions and Q&A sessions in pursuit of employer support for defence. Attendance at events such as these ensure that the Council continues to provide a consistent, high-quality service for the armed forces family as part of the commitments in the [West Sussex Armed Forces Covenant \(PDF, 1.1MB\)](#).
- The Leader, in consultation with his Cabinet, has established a cross-cutting **Executive Task and Finish Group (TFG) on Careers and Skills**. The purpose of the TFG is to provide feedback on the opportunities for the Council as an employer to reset its role on careers and skills in West Sussex. The TFG will consider the role of apprenticeships and internships in providing career pathways. The TFG will also consider opportunities for vulnerable adults to be further supported into meaningful employment. The considerations will fully comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the protected characteristics therein. The TFG will report back to the Leader at the end of June.
- Following the **recent local elections, the Leader will meet district and borough council leaders** to build on the strong foundations already in place, hear about new and renewed ambitions; to discuss shared priorities and areas of mutual challenge. These conversations will continue the ongoing collaborative working between the councils as we work together to serve the same residents, communities and businesses.

---

## Adults Services - Amanda Jupp

- The County Council has commissioned [Carers Short Breaks](#) to help deliver the Adult Social Care Policy priorities to support independence and assist residents to remain in their own home. Over 1,000 **family and friend carers** were consulted in the development of the current [West Sussex Carer Strategy](#). A key message was that more affordable day respite was needed. As a result, contracts have been awarded for the provision of respite care to commence from April. Services will focus on providing family and friend carers with much needed short breaks.
- As co-chairman, the Cabinet Member regularly attends the [Learning Disability Partnership Board](#) which works to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities and their families in West Sussex. People with learning disabilities attend the Board, as equal partners, helping to lead the work. The other co-chairman to the Board is elected from the Self Advocacy Groups. Each board has a theme and the most recent meeting (9 February) focus was 'on doing things differently'. This included a presentation on Individual Service Funds feasibility (ISF) work and a chance for Board members to feedback. An ISF is where the customer chooses the support provider, having a say over how support money is spent.
- Adults' Services recently held a **Staff Conference themed, 'Working Together'** which recognising staff achievements with a focus on wellbeing and resilience. The Cabinet Member and the Director of Adults and Health introduced the day that saw around 250 staff attend. Workshops were provided on Putting People at the Centre of Care, Equality, Inclusion and Belonging, Working with Health, and Working in Co-production and a key note speaker, [Kev House](#), spoke on flourishing in an ever demanding world. Presentations were filmed, as well as the question-and-answer session so the content of the day can be shared with all adults services staff following the event. Due to its success, a further conference will be planned for next year to be held in the north of the county, reaching out to those staff unable to attend this year.
- Drafted in partnership with care providers, the County Council has published its ['Market Sustainability Plan' \(MSP\)](#), which focuses on addressing sustainability issues across care markets and confirms its intention to target resources at areas requiring development such as, complex care, extra care, supported living and enabling people to remain living in the community. Strengthening the care workforce and supporting providers to improve the quality of care is also a key focus of the MSP, which will build on the existing work. The County Council has been involved in partnership with **West Sussex Partners in Care (WSPiC)**, to shape the training offer that is provided to external care providers, as well as to continually advise and influence to achieve care for all. WSPiC recently celebrated this year's excellence achieved by individuals working in social care at the '[West Sussex Care Accolades](#)'. Twenty-one finalists were invited to a celebratory evening ceremony at the Chichester Park Hotel.

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

- All five of the **County Council's open Children's Homes continue to be rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted** following the outcome of the most

---

recent inspections. [Bright Star](#), a home which provides permanent accommodation and short breaks for children with complex physical and learning needs, has maintained a rating of 'Outstanding'. [Breakwater](#), a home that supports children who have social, emotional and mental health needs, has been rated 'Good'. Both homes have benefited from the investment programme to refurbish and renovate the County Council's in-house residential provision to ensure a range of accommodation and support can be offered to meet the varying needs of children across the county.

- The County Council has [published a new Education and Learning Strategy 2023-25](#) that aims to broaden the skills, ambitions and opportunities for all children, young people and the most vulnerable adults. The Strategy is underpinned by seven key themes, developed following input from partners and stakeholders, that contribute towards achieving the education and learning goals and ambitions for the next three years and set the foundations to meet the national education policy ambitions for 2030.
- A **new school for children with special educational needs and disabilities** (SEND) will be built following the [County Council's successful bid to the government's free school building programme](#). The new school will provide 130 places for children aged from four to 18 who have autism spectrum and social emotional and mental health needs. These additional places will contribute to meeting a key priority for the Council that all children have the opportunity to fulfil their potential regardless of their needs.

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

- [West Sussex Trading Standards](#) has been undertaking test purchasing exercises with child volunteers across the county to uncover businesses selling age restricted products to children. West Sussex Trading Standards has a 'zero tolerance' approach to the sale of alcohol to children. Alcohol Licence Reviews will be requested for anyone found to have [broken the law](#) and during January to March five businesses saw their licence suspended or even withdrawn entirely. Anyone who believes a shop is selling alcohol, tobacco, vapes or knives to under 18s is asked to [report it online to West Sussex Trading Standards](#).
- The Cabinet Member opened the [Crawley Library - Business and Intellectual Property Centre](#) on 25 January which offers valuable support to the county's many entrepreneurs with help and advice to make sure their businesses have the best chance of success. The **Section 106 West Sussex Library Improvement Project** has also been ongoing with the aim to improve services by the end of March. Various works have been undertaken at local libraries in Crawley, Horsham, Hassocks, Durrington, Chichester, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath, Shoreham and Littlehampton. Projects have included the installation of meeting pods, refitted children's areas, retail areas and reconfiguration of space for community support groups such as Citizens Advice, also tourist information, reshelving and flexible furniture, whole library upgrade and installation of study spaces.
- **Fire stations in Burgess Hill, East Grinstead, Haywards Heath and Shoreham** will now provide an immediate wholetime firefighter response capability from 7 am until 7 pm, seven days a week. Outside of these times the stations will continue to be served by retained (on-call) firefighters, who will

---

provide cover between 7 pm to 7 am, seven days a week. The changes will provide greater flexibility and capacity for completing vital prevention and protection work, such as carrying out [Safe and Well Visits](#), delivering community safety events, and working with businesses to support their fire safety responsibilities. The enhancement will also improve the service's emergency response times by 13 seconds to all incidents across West Sussex which delivers on the second strategic priority as set out in our [Community Risk Management Plan 2022–26](#).

- From 1 April West Sussex and Brighton & Hove Coroner's jurisdictions merged to form one jurisdiction known as **West Sussex, Brighton & Hove Coroner Service**. The Coroner's Office now formally sits with West Sussex County Council (the obligation under the Coroners and Justice Act is that each local authority still has the responsibility to supply the service). Physical offices remain in both Horsham, Chichester and Woodvale, Brighton and the Senior Coroner remains appointed by West Sussex County Council. The coroner's officers have also moved over to the County Council in an agreement by both local authorities. Amalgamating the systems will greatly improve the efficiency of how deaths are reported, recorded, and managed. The comments of the public using both services have been very positive. The West Sussex Senior Coroner, Coroner's Officers and the Administrative Support Teams will continue to give careful consideration and attention to meeting the specific needs of residents throughout the area.

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

- The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has published final annual results for local authority collected waste for 2021/22 which demonstrates the County Council's [increased recycling rate and that the County Council has risen to fourth position](#) out of 29 disposal authorities in England. Landfill is reported at 7% for West Sussex, the lowest on record.
- [Re-Energise Manor Royal](#) is a new local energy community (LEC) working on behalf of businesses to attract investment into Manor Royal in Crawley and deliver new clean energy projects for the business district, such as roof-mounted solar panels and batteries to store clean electricity. The County Council played a leading role with the Manor Royal Business Improvement District in creating the county's first business led LEC, which launched in March. In addition, the LEC, which has already approved its first new solar PV system, has been shortlisted for a national award by the Association of Decentralised Energy.
- [Solar Together Sussex](#) enables small and medium sized businesses to sign up for high quality and competitively priced solar panels, battery storage and electric vehicle charging points. The '**Let's Go! Net Zero**' programme has been launched by the County Council and the district and borough councils to support businesses who are at the very early stages of their low carbon journey or who are unsure how to start. Six Green Business Champions will support the programme and showcase exemplar green businesses through a series of demonstrator events. Further details as well as information about other carbon cutting stories is on the [Business West Sussex Low Carbon and Green Business Support](#) page, where you can also sign up to receive the Green Business Matters newsletter.

---

## Finance and Property – Jeremy Hunt

- In February the County Council approved its [Council Plan, revenue budget and capital programme for 2023/24](#). Work is already underway on planning the 2024/25 budget, as well as looking at how the County Council will balance its books over the medium term. In [December 2022 the Government published a policy paper](#) which included its funding expectation for 2024/25. However, there remains a high level of uncertainty from 2025 onwards. Over the next few months officers will be reviewing their economic assumptions and spending pressures, as well as assessing any financial risks and how these will be managed. An update on the medium-term financial position will be presented to members at the Member Development Session on 19 July. The commencement of the full budget reporting process, including scrutiny, will begin in the autumn.
- Both the [West Sussex County Council accounts for 2021/22](#) and the [West Sussex Pension Fund accounts for 2021/22 \(PDF, 4MB\)](#) were signed off with an 'unqualified opinion' on 28 February. The County Council remains one of the few authorities which has published its 2021/22 accounts. The delay was due to a national issue relating to the accounting treatment of infrastructure assets. Following publication of the updated Code by CIPFA and a temporary change in accounting treatment from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, both in December 2022, the County Council was able to satisfy the audit requirements. Work has now commenced on producing the draft annual statement of the 2022/23 accounts for both the County Council and the West Sussex Pension Fund. These are expected to be published by the statutory deadline of 31 May. Following the usual audit process, final accounts and the External Auditor's report will be presented to the Council's Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee.

## Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis

- The [Highway and Transport Delivery Programmes](#) identify capital highways infrastructure maintenance and transport improvement schemes for delivery during 2023/24 and beyond. In terms of scale and value, these are probably the most significant the authority has undertaken; capital funding required for delivery is £36.484m (not including major road projects). The funding is predominantly received from the Government for roads maintenance and transport improvements, and this is supported by additional County Council funding and developer contributions. Scheme delivery has already started.
- The County Council has been awarded further funding to deliver more [Electric Vehicle \(EV\) chargepoints across the county](#) for residents, both on-street and within car parks. This brings the total funding achieved to £6.9m and will enable the installation of more than one thousand chargepoints. Residents and other stakeholders will soon be invited to provide feedback on proposals for the next phase of proposed sites.
- School Streets trials are to be undertaken at three schools with a planned start in September. A '**School Street**' is a timed road closure where traffic is restricted (applies to school and through traffic) at school drop-off and pick-up times. The aim is to create a safe, healthy and pleasant environment which has cleaner air and less traffic congestion and to encourage families to walk, scoot and cycle to school.

- 
- Signs have been placed on **School Keep Clear** markings ('zig zags') outside of six schools on a trial basis with the aim of discouraging parking. The signs have an emotive caricature design of a child with the message 'Please Don't Stop Here'. Communication to raise awareness of the trials will be undertaken by the schools and will remind parents and carers not to park or stop on the zig zags when dropping off or collecting children.

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

- **National No Smoking Day** took place on 8 March. This year's campaign focused on brain health and the link between smoking and dementia, with the message that stopping smoking improves brain health and reduces the risk of dementia. The national campaign encouraged smokers to 'Never give up giving up' and signposted them to the [NHS Better health Quit Smoking website](#). The County Council supported the campaign locally in West Sussex, with public health and communications teams working together to share key messages with residents and communities via social media and local networks, raising awareness of free support from [local stop smoking services](#), including tailored advice from trained advisors in local Wellbeing teams, GP surgeries and pharmacies. A [short video](#) has also been produced featuring a case study of 'Andy' who successfully gave up smoking with the help of the West Sussex Wellbeing Service.
- The County Council's Public Health Directorate is funding access to the '[Gro health' app](#) in response to increasing numbers of people who are overweight or obese, in addition to a range of existing funded weight management services available via [West Sussex Wellbeing](#) and the NHS. Gro Health will offer an additional local programme for those wanting access to free digital support who are not eligible for the NHS digital weight management offer ([eligibility criteria](#) available). It is the first time that people in West Sussex have been offered free access to such an innovative digital service for weight management without a GP referral. The number of adults who are overweight or obese in West Sussex has increased from 61.6% in 2019/20 to 63.8% in 2020/21 and 23.3% were classified as being obese. Gro health provides tailored support for individuals for 12 months and is available in 19 different languages. It can be accessed online using a phone, tablet or computer, without the need to download any special software, and can be accessed via free apps available for both iPhone and Android for those who wish to download them.
- Part of the [West Sussex Wellbeing Programme](#), funded by West Sussex Public Health, **Crawley Wellbeing**, based at [K2 Crawley](#), offers a free, friendly and impartial service to support people who live or work in West Sussex, to make positive improvements to their physical and emotional health and wellbeing. On 2 March, the service launched a new [Wellbeing Mobile Unit](#), enabling it to be more accessible than ever before, visiting local neighbourhoods throughout Crawley. Individual appointments and information are available for a range of health and wellbeing issues, including help to stop smoking, drink less alcohol, and advice on how to lose weight, as well as how to get more active, and eligible residents will be able to have an NHS Health Check. It will also promote health and wellbeing campaigns be able to visit workplaces as part of a workplace health programme and appear at community events. The new mobile unit has been jointly funded by Crawley Borough Council in partnership with the County Council as part of the West Sussex Wellbeing Programme.

---

## Support Services and Economic Development – Steve Waight

- The County Council is committed to leading West Sussex initiatives to improve digital connectivity, as set down in [Our Council Plan \(2021-25\)](#) and [Economy Plan \(2021-24\)](#) and will soon be publishing its **Digital Infrastructure Strategy**. This will detail plans to ensure connectivity is future-ready and capable of underpinning a strong and vibrant economy that attracts businesses and people to visit, live and work in West Sussex. The Strategy will highlight this exciting journey into the digital future and also serve to invite partners to work creatively with the council to drive digital connectivity forward at scale and pace.
- As part of work to inform the Council’s move toward **Smarter Ways of Working** the Cabinet Member recently visited Bridge House, Durrington to see how the two floors of office space, refurbished at the taking of the lease in 2021, are functioning to support the council’s new ways of working. The office spaces have been specifically designed to support team collaboration and face to face meetings, including with the public, and also include modern equipment for virtual and hybrid meetings. Staff feedback on the working environment has been mostly positive and will inform future office refurbishments undertaken by the council.

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

### Background papers

None