
West Sussex County Council – Ordinary Meeting

15 December 2023

At the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 am on Friday, 15 December 2023, at County Hall, Chichester PO19 1RQ, the members present being:

Cllr Bradbury (Chairman)

Cllr Wickremaratchi (Vice-Chairman)	Cllr Kenyon
Cllr Albury	Cllr Kerry-Bedell
Cllr Ali	Cllr Lanzer
Cllr Atkins, RD	Cllr Lord
Cllr Baldwin	Cllr Marshall
Cllr Baxter	Cllr McDonald
Cllr Boram	Cllr McGregor
Cllr Britton	Cllr Mercer
Cllr Burgess	Cllr Milne
Cllr Burrett	Cllr Montyn
Cllr Cherry	Cllr Nagel
Cllr Chowdhury	Cllr Oakley
Cllr Condie	Cllr O'Kelly
Cllr Cooper	Cllr Oppler
Cllr Cornell	Cllr Oxlade
Cllr Crow	Cllr Payne
Cllr Dabell	Cllr Pendleton
Cllr J Dennis	Cllr Pudaloff
Cllr N Dennis	Cllr Quinn
Cllr Duncton	Cllr Russell
Cllr Elkins	Cllr Smith
Cllr Gibson	Cllr Sparkes
Cllr Greenway	Cllr Turley
Cllr Hillier	Cllr Urquhart
Cllr Hunt	Cllr Waight
Cllr Johnson	Cllr Wall
Cllr Joy	Cllr Walsh, KStJ, RD
Cllr A Jupp	Cllr Wild
Cllr N Jupp	

41 Death of Mr Alan Chaplin

41.1 The Chairman reported the death of a former member of the County Council, Mr Alan Chaplin, who had represented Chichester South from 2005 to 2009.

41.2 Members held a minute's silence.

42 Apologies for Absence

42.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Bence, Cllr Dunn, Cllr Evans, Cllr Forbes, Cllr Hall, Cllr Linehan, Cllr McKnight, Cllr Mitchell, Cllr Patel, Cllr Richardson and Cllr Sharp.

42.2 Cllr Britton, Cllr Burgess and Cllr Joy arrived at 10.40 am.

42.3 Cllr Markwell was absent.

43 Members' Interests

43.1 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

44 Minutes

44.1 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 13 October 2023 (pages 5 to 24) be approved as a correct record.

45 Appointments

45.1 The Council approved appointments as set out below.

Committee	Change
Communities, Highways and Environment Scrutiny Committee	Cllr N Jupp in place of Cllr Ali
Planning and Rights of Way Committee	Cllr N Jupp in place of Cllr Ali

46 Governance Committee: Minor revisions to the Constitution

46.1 The Council considered 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 (pages 25 to 30).

46.2 Resolved

- (1) That changes to Parts 2 and 3 so that in future amendments to 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
- (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.

47 Cllr Sarah Sharp

47.1 The Council resolved 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.

48 Report of Urgent Action

48.1 The report of urgent action taken under regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 (pages 31 and 32) was noted.

49 Question Time

49.1 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 33 to 38) and a supplementary report (supplement page 7) and written questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 2.38 (set out at Appendix 2).

50 Motion on Funding

50.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Lord and seconded by Cllr O'Kelly.

'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.'

50.2 An amendment was proposed by Cllr Wall which was accepted by the proposer.

'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 **from** 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 Educational Needs (SEND) support than can be processed each month, and continually rising costs in home to school transport. **It is currently projected that** Children's services **will** accounts for £22.8m of WSCC's predicted £26.5m overspend **on portfolio budgets** this year.

This Council has consistently lobbied the Government for increased funding for all of the services referenced above, especially recognising the need for a considerable increase in

the funds needed to provide appropriate levels of services for vulnerable people, alongside adequate funding for those services used by all residents, such as Highways and Library services.

Despite ***In view of the challenges being faced and the continued*** lobbying of government by the County Councils Network and the LGA and of our MPs by this Council, ***the Council is disappointed that*** the Government provided ***little or no*** protection for ***council services*** ~~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 ***remains*** in the ***likely*** ~~invidious~~ position of having to ***propose an*** increase ***in*** council tax by the maximum available during a ***difficult financial time for our residents*** ~~cost-of-living-crisis~~ whilst also having to find savings ***through efficiencies*** 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 ***strongly supports*** ~~calls on~~ the ***efforts of the Leader and Cabinet*** to:

- (1) ***Continue to support*** ~~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 ***Parliament*** government;
- (2) ***Continue to 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) ***Continue to back*** the County Councils Network calls for emergency funding for children's services this year and next;
- (4) ***Continue to back*** the LGA's calls for a long term plan for adequate council funding from government; and
- (5) Write once again 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 ***set out*** ~~guarantee~~ adequately increased funding ~~out~~ to at least 2026/27 to allow for certainty in planning.'

50.3 The amended motion, as set out below, was carried.

'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 from 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 Educational Needs (SEND) support than can be processed each month, and continually rising costs in home to school transport. It is currently projected that Children's services will account for £22.8m of WSCC's predicted £26.5m overspend on portfolio budgets this year.

This Council has consistently lobbied the Government for increased funding for all of the services referenced above, especially recognising the need for a considerable increase in the funds needed to provide appropriate levels of services for vulnerable people, alongside adequate funding for those services used by all residents, such as Highways and Library services.

In view of the challenges being faced and the continued lobbying of government by the County Councils Network and the LGA and of our MPs by this Council, the Council is disappointed that the Government provided little or no protection for council services in the Autumn Statement and there was no increased funding in children's and adults' services.

Alongside other county councils, West Sussex County Council remains in the likely position of having to propose an increase in council tax by the maximum available during a difficult financial time for our residents whilst also having to find savings through efficiencies 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 to 2026/27 of £51.1m and of £91.8m to 2028/29.

Therefore, this Council strongly supports the efforts of the Leader and Cabinet to:

- (1) Continue to support our MPs to make the cause of adequate funding for West Sussex County Council their top priority in the final year of this Parliament;
- (2) Continue to 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) Continue to back the County Councils Network calls for emergency funding for children's services this year and next;
- (4) Continue to back the LGA's calls for a long term plan for adequate council funding from government; and

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- (5) Write once again 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 set out adequately increased funding to at least 2026/27 to allow for certainty in planning.'

51 Motion on Food Security

- 51.1 The following motion was moved by Cllr Duncton and seconded by Cllr Ali.

'This Council notes the importance of farming, growers, fisheries and agriculture to the West Sussex economy, and recognises that many West Sussex residents rely on these industries 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 and fishing industries 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.'

- 51.2 An amendment was proposed by Cllr Lord which was accepted by the proposer.

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

The Council is concerned that initiatives to limit the availability of non-plant based foods, supported by **some** other local authorities, **could** ~~would~~ have a serious detrimental effect on **some parts of** the farming and fishing industries in West Sussex, and **may** ~~would~~ impact on the livelihoods of **some of** our residents as a result, as well as **potentially** limiting choice for ~~these~~ **some** 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, ***preferably using West Sussex produce***, 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.'

51.3 The amended motion, as set out below, was carried.

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

The Council is concerned that initiatives to limit the availability of non-plant based foods, supported by some local authorities, could have a detrimental effect on some parts of the farming and fishing industries in West Sussex, and may impact on the livelihoods of some of our residents as a result, as well as potentially limiting choice for some 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, preferably using West Sussex produce, 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.'

Chairman

The Council rose at 3.23 pm