
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

- West Sussex County Council, in collaboration with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, have been successful in bidding to VisitEngland to form a [Local Visitor Economy Partnership \(LEVP\)](#) to support and boost the region’s visitor economy. The new LVEP will develop a Strategy for Growth for the visitor economy for Sussex, and open-up opportunities to access expert advice, resources and support from Visit England. A pan-Sussex collaborative approach will be key to success.
- Senior leaders from the County Council, Chichester District Council (who attended to provide a district and borough council perspective), Southern Water, Environment Agency and Water Resources South East held a [water summit on 8 February](#) to start developing a strategic plan to tackle the present and future challenges facing West Sussex in terms of water supply, water quality, flooding and pollution. The Summit acknowledged that working groups already exist in district and borough councils as well as community groups and Operation Watershed funding has assisted in tackling operational issues. Strategic collaboration through the water summit will support these working groups. An initial focus will be on sustainable drainage solutions, schemes for householders to reduce water run-off from roofs and working with river catchment partnerships to reduce flooding and also improve biodiversity.

Adults Services – Amanda Jupp

- Adults Services invited the Association of Directors of Adults Social Services (ADASS) to carry out an external review of the Adult Social Care’s [self-assessment report](#) which prepares for the forthcoming [Care Quality Commission](#) Assurance Visit. Feedback provided areas to be proud of as well as suggested improvements which will be reflected in the next iteration of the self-assessment report. The County Council’s Adult Social Care annual report for residents; [Working Together: Your local account of adult social care performance in West Sussex 2022/23](#) has also now been published. The Local Account details work undertaken during the year demonstrating achievements, priorities and areas for improvement. It explains how the service’s budget was spent, outlines current activities and programmes of work and sets out plans for the future. Any enquiries can be directed to: localaccount@westsussex.gov.uk.
- The County Council has agreed the [provision of Domestic Abuse Housing Support Services in West Sussex](#) which will provide support and accommodation to those fleeing Domestic Abuse in the local area. The accommodation is provided in dispersed units rather than a traditional refuge style, is accessible to those with older children and supports victims with additional needs such as mental or physical health issues, larger families and men experiencing domestic abuse. This contract will support the Council to meet the aims of the [Sussex Domestic Abuse Accommodation and Support Strategy](#). The County Council’s [Worth Services](#) (domestic abuse support

service) has reached its [20-year anniversary](#) supporting victim-survivors of domestic abuse in West Sussex with 25,000 adults and young people receiving help since the service opened. Forty-three members of specialist frontline staff offer support across local area teams, including the Family Safeguarding Team, Housing Options and Acute Hospital Sites. To report domestic abuse call Worth's central duty phoneline between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday on 0330 222 8181 or Email: DomesticAbuseServicesCentral@westsussex.gov.uk.

- The County Council, in partnership with East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, will shortly receive funding of £1,201,750 following the submission of an expression of interest for funding from the [Accelerating Reform Fund](#). The fund supports innovation in adult social care across England making person-centred care and support a reality for people who use these services. The Sussex allocation will be used to fund projects to digitalise the carers pathway and increase the use of mainstream technology for carers, as well as support expansion of the provision of shared lives carers schemes over the next two financial years.
- [Carers Support West Sussex](#) will continue the provision of a [county-wide information, advice, assessment and support service](#) for family and friend carers following the award of a new five-year contract. This service will help provide vital information, advice and a range of services to the carer population of West Sussex. Carers Support offers a range of support from counselling, access to relaxation therapies, a Carer Wellbeing fund, Support Groups and Carer Response Line Tel: 0300 028 8888, Email: info@carerssupport.org.uk.

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

- The [report \(PDF, 268KB\)](#) detailing the findings of the [Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) inspection of the West Sussex Local Area Partnership](#) has been published. Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission gave the Partnership the middle rating for delivery, planning and commissioning of services for children with SEND, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement in the report. The detailed SEND improvement plan, co-produced with partners, is being implemented at pace to deliver the necessary improvements.
- Secondary school places have been offered to all pupils who made an application for starting secondary school this September following [National Offer Day](#). The County Council welcomes the additional places offered by some schools which has contributed to an increased number of pupils receiving one of their three preferences. 97.8% per cent of all applicants will be offered one of their three preferences, which is up on last year's figure of 96.1%.

Community Support, Fire and Rescue – Duncan Crow

- **West Sussex Library Service** is highlighting the ways that libraries can support wellbeing during its annual [Wellbeing Month](#) in March. Key themes are [Reading Well for Mental Health](#) with a [list of books that boost the mood](#), and regular [wellbeing events](#) which bring people together, helping to reduce social isolation. This year, the service is hosting drop-ins with a range of organisations, including Age UK; Alzheimer's Society; Fire and Rescue; HILS (West Sussex Meals on Wheels); Oral Health Promotion Team; Social

Prescribers; West Sussex Mind and some of the Wellbeing Hubs, all of whom will be highlighting their services supporting wellbeing to customers.

- Students have successfully completed one of the [Targeted Education Team Early Intervention Youth Projects offered by the West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service](#). The latest [IGNITE programme](#), this time, held at [Bognor Regis Fire Station](#) was attended by young people, in further education, aged 16 and over. The programme promotes personal resilience, increases positive wellbeing, strengthens relationships and builds stronger communities.

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

- [Operation Watershed](#) celebrates the tenth anniversary of helping to reduce the risk of flooding. Over the last ten years, the County Council has successfully supported local communities with £5m of funding for more than 500 projects which include improving riparian ditch networks and constructing new drainage infrastructure in public highway and private land. Parish and town councils and constituted community and volunteer groups in West Sussex can [apply for funding for projects](#) they can deliver themselves.
- The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs released their annual [results](#) for local authority collected waste in January. The County Council, as one of 29 English disposal authorities remains in **4th position with a 53.7% recycling rate**; the same as the previous year. All of the top three authorities collect food waste separately but have seen their recycling rate fall. The paint re-use trial at the Westhampnett recycling centre in Chichester continues to perform well, reusing over one tonne of paint between September and December 2023; the aim is to roll out this scheme to five more recycling centres by June.
- The final solar PV and battery installations are being completed under the third round of [Solar Together Sussex](#), which the County Council delivers with councils across Sussex. Residents and local small/medium sized businesses can have high quality solar panels, domestic battery systems and EV chargers installed at a competitive price. Over 900 systems have been installed for residents under the current round and over 2,500 since the scheme started in 2020. This equates to 10.8MW clean energy generation capacity installed.

Finance and Property – Jeremy Hunt

- The Cabinet Member continues to monitor the issue of the backlog of **publication of audited accounts** of local bodies in England. The delay in audit completions is due to various factors including limited resources in the external audit sector (with the focus being on prioritising the audits for those councils where there are opinions outstanding before 2022/23) and increased reporting and audit requirements, particularly in relation to valuations over recent years. The 2022/23 audit of the West Sussex Pension Fund Accounts has been completed and the Auditors Annual Report, including the Value for Money opinion was reported to Council's [Regulation Audit and Accounts Committee \(RAAC\) on 11 March](#). However, the audit of the 2022/23 County Council accounts remains outstanding. RAAC also considered a plan to produce the draft 2023/24 accounts for both the County Council and Pension Fund by the statutory deadline of 31 May 2024.

Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis

- As part of the budget agreed at full Council on 16 February, the County Council provided an [additional £4m of revenue funding to support highway maintenance](#) across the county. The budget will be used to enhance the repair of highway defects, provide more resources to tackle drainage and flooding issues and support better responses to enquiries. The budget will support the County Council's [Better Roads Programme](#).
- An **additional £10m capital funding has been allocated to road resurfacing** in 2024/25; this results in one of the largest ever resurfacing programme the county has ever undertaken and will see more roads resurfaced.
- The County Council has been awarded and is spending £2,204,800 of additional revenue funding to help [support the delivery of essential bus services](#) across West Sussex. This money will allow more services to remain in operation, providing a lifeline to and between local communities.

Public Health and Wellbeing – Bob Lanzer

- The County Council has [undertaken an important survey](#) about health and wellbeing in West Sussex. The results of the **'Your Health Matters – West Sussex Community Health and Wellbeing Survey 2024'** will help the Council plan services and take action to support the health and wellbeing of its residents in the future following the COVID-19 pandemic. A postal survey was sent out to a number of residents at the end of January, asking questions about their lifestyle and health, and the survey was open to all residents who could complete it online between 14 February and 8 March.
- West Sussex Public Health is undertaking an all-age **Public Mental Health Needs Assessment (PMHNA)**, as part of the [West Sussex Joint Strategic Needs Assessment](#), the evidence base that underpins strategic public health decision making in the county by the County Council and its partners. A priority area for the Council, the PMHNA will include reviewing the latest data and engaging with residents to develop a clearer picture and understanding of the level of need in the population, informing the Council's work and helping to shape priority areas to support our residents and communities.

Support Services and Economic Development – Steve Waight

- BDUK (Building Digital UK, the government department responsible for broadband policy) has recently announced that [CityFibre has been appointed as the supplier](#) to deliver **Project Gigabit in West Sussex**, providing improved broadband services to tens of thousands of rural homes and businesses. The delivery of Project Gigabit will be managed centrally by BDUK and the County Council will have a key role in facilitating and enabling CityFibre when it undertakes its works on the public highway and will seek to minimise disruption on the highway network. Residents can access more information and points of contact for the project (BDUK and CityFibre) at [Gigabit-capable broadband - West Sussex County Council](#).

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Background papers: None