
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

- Jointly funded with district and borough councils, the County Council is leading an initiative to support businesses and employers on their sustainability journey. The **Low Carbon and Green Business Support Programme** will launch in March and engage enterprises who are at the very early stages of their sustainability journey, or yet to act. The programme will feature green business champions who will share their green journey and encourage others to act, events for businesses to learn from others who have acted, and news and information to businesses about the benefits of becoming greener and how to make a change. For the news on the programme visit [Business West Sussex](#) and sign up for the Green Business Matters newsletter.
- A new initiative has launched to boost digital careers in West Sussex. [Digital Futures West Sussex](#) will connect local businesses with talented job seekers, promote digital jobs and careers for residents across the county and help to meet the rapidly growing employer demands for digital skills. The County Council is leading the initiative which is jointly funded with the West Sussex district and borough councils. Digital Futures West Sussex will feature free drop-in hubs and roadshows across the county throughout the year. The initiative is being supported by three Digital Futures ambassadors from local businesses.

Adults Services - Amanda Jupp

- The Cabinet Member recently accompanied [Health and Independent Living Support \(HILS\)](#), a charitable, not-for-profit social enterprise, delivering [meals on wheels](#) and saw first-hand how the service helps people to stay happy, healthy, and independent at home. Meals on Wheels' customers across the county receive award-winning food made and supplied by apetito, which is now being delivered by HILS West Sussex. HILS also provides caring services, ensuring customers are healthy and safe, operating 365 days a year across West Sussex (since October 2022). For more information about the Meals on Wheels service, or to sign up to receive meals in West Sussex residents are asked to call 0330 2000 103 or visit www.hils-uk.org for details.

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

- A recent engagement event offered the opportunity for County Councillors to meet with members of the [Youth Cabinet](#). The Youth Cabinet presented an update on the four key campaigns from their manifesto – racial equality, health and wellbeing, the environment and youth safety – as well as providing an insight into the impact on young people of the Cost of Living Crisis.

Learning and Skills – Nigel Jupp

- The project to **build a new secondary school at the Brookleigh development near Burgess Hill is moving forward** after [receiving planning permission](#) and the contractor [Willmott Dixon being selected](#) to fully develop the scheme. The school will offer a high-quality education for local children and is due to open to the first students in September 2025. The [Passivhaus](#)-accredited building will be highly energy efficient and run with a significant proportion of electricity generated on site, without the use of any fossil fuels, contributing to the commitments within the County Council's [Climate Change Strategy](#).

Community Support, Fire and Rescue – Duncan Crow

- [New Fire Safety \(England\) Regulations 2022](#) have been introduced from 23 January, designed to keep the residents of multi-occupied residential buildings safe from the risk of fire. The regulations meet the recommendations set out as part of the first phase of the Grenfell Tower Inquiry, which was established following the Grenfell Tower Fire in 2017. The regulations apply to all residential buildings that are made up of two or more domestic premises and include mixed-use buildings, such as flats above business premises. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service is responsible for [enforcement of the regulations](#) and asks responsible persons to familiarise themselves with the [guidance](#) from the Home Office about when and how to share and report the required information.
- The Cabinet Member recently visited the **West Sussex Record Office** to view the launch of free access to the county's electoral registers through the [Ancestry website](#). The registers include more than 8.2 million West Sussex records from 1832 to 1963 and follow on from the launch of the Sussex parish registers which went live in May 2022. To use any of the facilities at West Sussex Record Office, including access to the Ancestry website, residents need a [free Archives Card](#). Alongside free Ancestry access, from January [coffee time workshops](#) are back, for a small fee, on the first Wednesday of each month to learn from the experts on a number of different subjects such as how to start a family tree.

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

- The UK Government has published Chris Skidmore MP's independent [review](#) of its **strategy for achieving net-zero by 2050**. The findings of 'Mission Zero' and the range of recommendations to support the decarbonisation of our homes, buildings, communities, and cities are broadly welcomed by the County Council. The UK's fight against climate change is the focus of this review, which also aims to ensure investment continues to boost economic growth and create jobs, as well as increasing energy security and affordability for consumers and businesses.
- The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs has published its [response \(PDF, 319KB\)](#) to the introduction of a **Deposit Return Scheme**. From October 2025, all single-use drinks containers made from plastic and steel/aluminium cans (50ml to 3 litres) will see consumers charged a (yet to be decided) deposit when purchasing. Retailers who sell containers in store will have to host a return point where consumers can return the empties and

receive their deposit refund. Evidence indicates this will increase national recycling levels, reduce littering, and promote a circular economy. It is expected to have an impact on kerbside recycling services as a high proportion of such containers may be removed from the household recycling stream. The County Council has previously expressed concern about the projected costs of a Deposita Response Scheme to consumers versus the marginal additional benefits in a high recycling area like West Sussex. The implications on processing at the Ford Materials Recycling Facility are being evaluated.

Highways and Transport – Joy Dennis

- [A net carbon-negative model for green infrastructure management](#) is a joint project between the County Council and South Gloucestershire Council that has been selected for the Department for Transport Live Labs 2 programme. The project will collect plant material cut from road verges and research technologies to produce zero carbon heat and power. The aim is to reduce the cost and emissions from verge management while increasing biodiversity and it is hoped that transport fuels and road materials can be made from verge biomass. The County Council will be supported by local partners throughout the programme which starts in April and will run for three years.
- The Department for Transport has confirmed that the County Council has been awarded c. £17.4m to deliver some of the ambitions in its [Bus Services Improvement Plan](#). The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport recently [confirmed](#) that the funding would be allocated to a variety of capital and revenue projects including the introduction of a bus fare discount scheme for young people (16 to 21-year-olds) across the county, funding towards bus infrastructure improvements in Crawley including a new multi-modal interchange in the town centre improving access to bus and train services in the station gateway, and a programme to improve signalling to give buses priority on at least 20 junctions on main bus routes across the county.

Public Health and Wellbeing – Bob Lanzer

- Developed by the Council's Public Health and Communications teams, the Council ran a ['New Year, Healthy You'](#) communications campaign in January through to early February, including a health and wellbeing special edition residents' e-newsletter and social media posts. Gathering practical ways to help local residents get a healthy kick start to 2023, it sign-posted to free information, resources, services and support available, including [West Sussex Wellbeing](#). Topics covered included NHS health checks, Dry January, keeping physically active, weight management support, trying something new, mental health support, tips for taking time out for you, COVID-19 booster and flu vaccines, and more. In addition, the Council's library service supported the Dry January campaign through social media posts, a January customer newsletter, and promotion of books on alcohol reduction.
- Commissioned locally by the County Council as part of the [Healthy Child Programme](#), the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP), a national programme, comprises of a team of Specialist Community Public Health Nurses to support young parents through pregnancy and the first two years of their child's life. On 1 December 2022, the Cabinet Member and a range of key stakeholders attended an annual FNP event at County Hall, Chichester, where the partnership's annual report 2021/22 was presented. They were also joined by

two young clients and their babies who had contributed to the event. Data highlighted in the report shows positive outcomes for clients and infants within the programme, including consistently higher developmental Ages and Stages scores and the numbers of mothers initiating breastfeeding in comparison to the national average, which is testament to clients' commitment to give their children the best possible start in life.

Support Services and Economic Development – Steve Waight

- The County Council's [Growth Deal partnerships](#) agreed in 2017 have delivered some landmark projects across the county, for example the Eastern Gateway scheme in Crawley. Partnership collaboration is now continuing to refresh each of the deals with new opportunities and consolidation of existing schemes. The Chichester Growth Deal will be the first refreshed deal to publish later this year and will focus on maximising opportunities for attracting investment and improving the quality of life for residents and visitors.

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Background papers

None