

West Sussex County Council – Agenda Item No. 8 – Written Questions

19 October 2018

- 1.** Written question from **Mrs Mullins** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Adults and Health**

Question

The Cabinet Member may recall that at the February County Council meeting this year, the budget papers referred to an announcement in the provisional local government finance settlement, allowing local authorities to increase council tax from 2% to 3%, before a referendum was needed. As a result a core rise in council tax of 2.95% was included in the 2018/19 revenue budget presented (alongside an additional 2% for adult social care). That budget report went on to describe a number of one off investments for 2018/19 totalling £2.5m, to be paid for out of additional money raised through council tax.

Among those one-off investments was an allocation of £0.6m, to work with district and borough councils, to develop options to provide increased temporary accommodation in the county and reduce the growing level of homelessness being experienced across West Sussex.

Can the Cabinet Member please provide:

- (a) A breakdown per district and borough, of how many additional places were delivered for homeless people, as a result of that £0.6m funding allocation, so far this year; and
- (b) Information on how many of those additional places might be impacted by the cuts in housing related support which she is proposing to make in next year's budget.

Answer

The County Council does not have a statutory role in addressing homelessness as this legal duty sits with the district tier of local government.

However, the authority recognises that there is a significant interdependence between support for vulnerable people and access to accommodation and is already playing an active part in supporting those residents affected by homelessness who are central to the County Council's statutory duties – including 16 and 17-year-olds, Care Leavers and households identified as Intentionally Homeless.

- (a) Current work to consult partners and providers on the future funding of the 'Housing Related Support contracts' includes remodelling future service provision to focus on the most vulnerable and to identify potential use of County Council assets to support additional units of accommodation.

This one-off funding is thus supporting work to quantify demand pressures and consider opportunities for shared accommodation initiatives with the district and borough councils and has identified the following additional units of accommodation to date;

- Eight properties across the county that will be leased to the local district council on a peppercorn basis, which will manage them on the County Council's behalf, and the capacity shared by both authorities to accommodate homeless households to whom a statutory duty is owed.

The first two of these properties are expected to go live with Crawley Borough Council in December 2018 following completion of some refurbishment works.

- Seven units based in Chichester for young people, which will provide two emergency access bed spaces for homeless 16 and 17-year-olds and Care Leavers and will provide five units of longer-term supported accommodation for this client group.

This project is scheduled to come on line on 17 December 2018.

- Exploration of the transfer of a surplus County Council site within Adur District to the local council to support the development of additional units of accommodation in exchange for County Council nomination rights for those threatened with homelessness.

Further work to review additional asset opportunities is being developed alongside the work to remodel service provision with partners.

In addition, £50,000 has been utilised as a one-off uplift to increase the number of units and level of support provided to rough sleepers in the south of the county through additional funding to support the opening of the new 24/7 Bognor Hostel, run by StonePillow. The long-term provision of these services is part of the remodelling of the Housing Related Support contracts, as above.

- (b) As no decision has yet been made and the consultation with stakeholders is still ongoing, it is not possible to provide this information.

2. Written question from Mr Oxlade for reply by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Question

I have a number of questions relating to Beechfield secure children's home in Copthorne, West Sussex which closed in 2016 following an inadequate Ofsted inspection. I understand the home required major building work which was subsequently undertaken and signed off at the end of 2017 but that the unit remains closed at present.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me:

- (a) Whether the County Council is or has been paying for any West Sussex children being accommodated in similar facilities within other local authorities since the facility closed in 2016;
- (b) Whether any operating licences/registration has to be in place and if so, when any current licences are due to expire/have expired;
- (c) How much the refurbishment has cost and to what extent this has improved the facilities available previously (e.g. any additional beds or equipment for more therapeutic services);
- (d) For each of the three years prior to the closure of the facility confirm the extent to which the operating costs exceeded the income generated through other local authority placements;
- (e) How much the facility is costing on average per month whilst sitting empty (in terms of insurance/security/re-deploying staff in alternative roles); and finally
- (f) Summarise the nature of any discussions he or officers have had with the Department for Education and/or Ofsted regarding the future of this facility and confirm when he anticipates a decision will be taken as to whether to re-open it or not.

Answer

- (a) A total of four children (five placements) have been placed in Secure Accommodation at a cost of £454,000 since the closure in October 2016.
- (b) Beechfield’s license is due to expire on 31 March 2019.
- (c) There has been a total spend of £729,000 spent on the refurbishment of Beechfield, all of which has been Department for Education (DfE) Grant Funded.
- (d) Including corporate spend and overheads, the expenditure exceeded the income in the following years:

Year	Cost
2013/14	£49,000
2014/15	£167,000
2015/16	£386,000

- (e) The majority of staff have now been redeployed into other vacant posts already budgeted for in the directorate. For those staff that remain ‘over establishment’, the cost to the budget from 1 April to 30 September has been c£150,000. The cost for the remainder of the financial year is anticipated to be around £15,000 per month. However, this may reduce further still through Beechfield leavers or through other posts becoming vacant that these staff can then be redeployed into.

Rates	£17,500
Grounds maintenance	£8,013
Utilities	£19,554
Mechanical and electrical maintenance	£37,619
Facilities Management visits	£5,000
Security	£10,000
Total budget per annum	£97,686

- (f) Officers have been involved in ongoing discussions with the DfE and Ofsted about the future options for the facility. In September 2018 the DfE undertook a site visit. The Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education is now leading on these discussions and we are hopeful that a final decision regarding the future of Beechfield will be confirmed in coming months.

3. Written question from Dr Walsh for reply by the Cabinet Member for Corporate Relations

Question

I understand that Performance Related Pay (PRP) is being introduced for Hay management grades across the County Council.

- (a) Who took this decision and when?
- (b) Was any consultation carried out with staff organisations, and if so, which?
- (c) Was a full analysis of the risks and benefits carried out and is it available?
- (d) What is the financial provision for the scheme?
- (e) How many employees are eligible for the scheme, and at what grades?
- (f) What percentage of basic pay do the PRP payments represent at each grade?
- (g) Is PRP a one off payment, or an addition to basic salary?
- (h) Why was this not presented to the Performance and Finance Select Committee for scrutiny?

Answer

(a), (b), (c) and (h):

The Council's Pay Policy was agreed by the County Council on 16 February 2018 and amended by the County Council on 20 July 2018. The following paragraphs are for particular note:

'5.1 Staff on NJC and Hay grades are eligible for annual incremental

increases to base pay until they reach the top of the grade for their role. There is no further base pay progression once the employee reaches the maximum of the grade, with the exception of a small number of staff who retain an entitlement to an additional long service increment, in accordance with the rules of a scheme which is no longer current.

- 5.2 Incremental progression is subject to 'satisfactory' performance and this will be defined within the Council's Performance Management Policy/Procedure.
 - 6.5 The pay awards for staff on Hay pay grades are determined locally and are approved by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change; and following consultation with the staff concerned and UNISON.
 - 6.6 The total sum available for any pay increase for staff on SMG or Hay grading arrangements is decided annually by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Director of Finance, Performance and Procurement (S151 Officer) and Director of Human Resources and Organisational Change. This is based on consideration of appropriate market and other relevant information, including the performance of the County Council and affordability.
 - 6.7 In exceptional circumstances; and as approved by the Leader in the case of SMG Tier 1; and as approved by the Chief Executive in the case of SMG Tier 2 to 4 and Hay grades - an unconsolidated additional payment may be made to recognise exceptional performance.'
- (d) Please see paragraph 6.6 of the Pay Policy. The financial provision is agreed as part of the budget setting process.
 - (e) There are 404 Hay graded staff – all paid according to the provisions of the Pay Policy.
 - (f) Not applicable.
 - (g) The only reference within the Pay Policy to an unconsolidated payment provision is in paragraph 6.7.

4. Written question from Mr Jones for reply by the Cabinet Member for Environment

Question

The Cabinet Member will no doubt be aware of the concerns raised by organisations like the British Lung Foundation, and campaigns such as #noidling and Doctors against Diesel, highlighting the impact of air pollution on children.

A recent report by Unicef UK and Queen Mary University of London has

demonstrated that while youngsters only spend 40 per cent of their time on the school run and at school, they receive 60 per cent of their exposure to tiny particles of black carbon during that time. Moreover, research by Greenpeace in 2017 indicates that more than 2,000 schools and nurseries across the country are located close to roads with illegal levels of pollution, underlining the seriousness of the problem.

I am aware of the county-wide action plan for tackling air quality published earlier this year which makes reference to funding provided by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) to deliver a targeted intervention with 13 schools within the air quality management areas (AQMA) in West Sussex aimed at reducing idling during school drop-offs and pick-ups, increasing walking and cycling rates and to measures the changes.

Can the Cabinet Member please:

- (a) Confirm which schools will be involved in this intervention and when she anticipates the findings being available;
- (b) Outline what other action with schools is planned to highlight and address this issue; and
- (c) In light of the above question, will she encourage headteachers in schools across West Sussex to comply with the guidance, in as far as they are not doing this already, from the National Education Union (NEU) and the British Lung Foundation, key elements which include:
 - Encouraging schools to create action plans to protect pupils' health. This includes installing air pollution monitors to show when toxic air is worst, in order to help make decisions about outside PE lessons and monitor vulnerable pupils with underlying health conditions.
 - Recommending the introduction of travel plans to reduce the danger of air pollution around schools. This could include car sharing, safe walking routes away from main roads, making sure there is sufficient parking for scooters and bikes, discouraging car parking outside the school gates and asking parents arriving in cars to turn off their engines.
 - Reminding parents that children in buggies are at greater risk, due to their proximity to vehicle exhaust pipes; and
 - Linking air pollution and its impact to the national curriculum in Science, PHSE, English and Geography.

Answer

- (a) Following the award of £105,900 from Defra to target interventions, as described in the question above, with schools within or very close to air quality management areas across Sussex, Sustrans and Living Streets have been appointed as delivery partners.

26 schools have been approached to fill 13 spaces for West Sussex. A

number have agreed to take part and a few have declined. Activities with the schools will be arranged to fit around their own particular timetables, so final results will not be available until the end of the project next September. However, we will know how the messages around anti-idling etc. have been received from the regular reports from the delivery partners.

The schools approached are:

Adur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buckingham Park Primary • Eastbrook Primary • Glebe Primary Academy • St Nicholas & St Mary Primary • St Peter's Primary • Swiss Gardens Primary
Chichester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central School • Lancastrian • Parklands Community Primary School • Portfield Primary • St Richard's
Crawley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazelwick School • Milton Mount Primary • Northgate Primary School • Pound Hill Infant Academy • Pound Hill Junior Academy • Three Bridges Primary School
Horsham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Peter's, Cowfold • Storrington Primary • Thakeham Primary
Mid Sussex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hassocks • Windmills
Worthing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bramber • Broadwater • Downsbrook Primary • Thomas A Becket Infant School • Thomas A Becket Junior School

- (b) The lessons learnt from the Defra grant project will be shared with all schools including any who were not able to participate in the project initially. We also continue to work with the EYE Project (Eco Young Engaged) to bring environmental messages to schools and we arranged for an air quality stand at the Chichester event on 5 October 2018. Sustrans and Living Streets were also represented. This will be repeated at future events in other areas across the county.
- (c) I will work with the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Director for Public Health to agree the best way to encourage more involvement in schools. Work with schools on School Travel Plans and safer routes to school will continue to be carried out by the Local Transport Improvement Officers.

5. Written question from Mr Jones for reply by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Question

The Adur Planning Committee recently approved a hybrid planning application that could see 600 new houses and an Ikea store built in Lancing.

I understand that the 2ha site that the County Council was seeking for a primary school has been included with the planning permission but that the £4.35m in Section 106 funding to meet the costs of primary, secondary and further education provision in the local area arising from the additional housing allocation, was not. Furthermore, that same development essentially depends upon a 'land swap' with the developer of land owned by the County Council, although the terms for the proposed land transfer are not, as yet, agreed.

Can the Cabinet Member(s) please:

- (a) Assure me, given the serious impact the entire New Monks Farm development will have on the surrounding towns and parishes, that although this Council has yet to directly seek the views of the residents of those surrounding towns and parishes, it will now engage fully with them in respect of whether to proceed, and that these views will be taken into account prior to a decision approving any such 'land swap' being made;
- (b) Advise me (in confidence outside this meeting if needs be) of the value of the existing land owned by the Council known as Withy Patch;
- (c) Confirm whether the 'land swap' of the land owned by the Council at Withy Patch would be a key decision, and when it is anticipated this might be taken;
- (d) With regard to the provision of developer contributions towards education as a result of additional housing on this development, can the Cabinet Member please confirm:
 - (i) How significant a problem is the failure of the County Council to secure the requested £4.35m;
 - (ii) What level of contribution in s106 funding towards education provision he anticipates the County Council will receive; and
 - (iii) Comment on the extent to which the taxpayer will end up having to fund additional school places as a result of this development.

Answer

- (a) As part of the planning application process, and in accordance with planning legislation, there has already been full consultation with the public and an opportunity for all those residents affected to make representations. The County Council does not propose to undertake an additional consultation with residents. In the event that the County

Council proposes to proceed with the relocation of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) site, there will be full consultation with the individual residents at the site.

- (b) The value of the existing GRT site at Withy Patch remains dependent on a number of factors which are yet to be agreed. Discussions are ongoing with the developers and it would prejudice those discussions for any sum to be disclosed.
- (c) It is anticipated that any land transfer arrangements related to the relocation of the Withy Patch site would require a key decision. The preparation of a report is dependent on provisional agreement of terms.
- (d)
 - (i) The County Council still expects to receive some S106 contributions towards the new primary school project costs and will consider how best to deliver the new school from available funding;
 - (ii) At this stage the County Council cannot confirm the level of S106 contributions that will be received from developers; and
 - (iii) The County Council always seeks to ensure developers fully mitigate the impact of their development to minimise the costs to the County Council. However, if the full value of a new school cannot be secured by S106 contributions, the County Council would look to address any shortfall by the use of either Basic Need grant from central government or the possibility of a Department for Education-funded Free School.

6. Written question from Mrs Mullins for reply by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Question

In July 2011, the then Cabinet Member for Education and Schools, declared the former Court Meadow site surplus to operational requirements, from September 2012. At that time he stated the site would be sold, with the capital receipt used towards the cost of the Woodlands Meed project.

Since then the site was leased for a period of time to the Building Heroes Education Foundation, but I believe has largely remained vacant.

I understand that the former school site was marketed over the summer, with several offers having been received. However, Cuckfield Parish Council has submitted an application to declare the property an asset of community value, which the County Council has objected to. I believe a decision by Mid Sussex District Council on the outcome is awaited and presumably the Cabinet Member will either take a decision to formally declare the land surplus to requirements, or engage with the Parish Council regarding their proposals.

Can the Cabinet Member please tell me:

- (a) Given that the land ceased to be used for education purposes in September 2012, why it has taken more than six years to market the site for re-sale;
- (b) What has the former school site been used for since September 2012 and for how long;
- (c) Whether the land is being marketed with planning permission for housing;
- (d) What liaison has taken place with the adjacent travellers site and Orchard House Respite Care Home, regarding the proposed future use of the site;
- (e) Whether he will commit to ensuring the proceeds achieved from the sale be 'ring fenced' for Woodlands Meed, or special needs in general; and
- (f) How much it has cost to transport pupils, from the former Court Meadow school site, to alternative education facilities, including escort costs, over the past six years.

Answer

- (a) It was not considered prudent to market this site following the school closure in 2012. The potential proceeds from a sale at that time would have generated an insignificant capital sum. The subsequent housing allocation (for 10 dwellings) within the Cuckfield Neighbourhood Plan, improved market conditions and certainty around the need to retain the adjoining property led to the more recent decision to offer the site for sale.
- (b) The Court Meadow buildings were occupied by Building Heroes from 2014 to July 2015. The property has remained vacant since that time, apart from a classroom on the site which is currently used by Orchard House on a temporary basis.
- (c) The site has not been marketed with the benefit of a planning permission for housing. Any proposed sale would be conditional upon the purchaser securing planning approval for a form of development acceptable to the County Council and sensitive to the location of Orchard House and the Lodge.
- (d) There has been full consultation with Children's Services and the management at Orchard House concerning the proposed disposal. There has been no direct engagement with the families occupying the nearby County Council-owned travellers site.
- (e) Current practice for the sale of assets is to put the capital receipts into the County Council's Capital Programme. Their use is then strategically considered against the corporate priorities of the West Sussex Plan which, of course, includes access to education that meets the needs of our community.
- (f) County Council records show that 39 pupils were provided with transport

to Court Meadow school in the school year before closure (2011/12). In most cases pupils were transferred to Woodlands Meed school and provided with transport to get to Woodlands Meed. In some cases there was a change of placement, either immediately or in subsequent years, that was not connected to the new school being built. The County Council does not have records for the costs in the ensuing years of each individual's transport to Woodlands Meed (or the new placements) who were previously at Court Meadow.

7. Written question from Mrs Dennis for reply by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Question

The Burgess Hill Northern Arc will deliver 3,500 new houses in the land to the north of Burgess Hill, most of which is in the parish ward of Ansty, together with a substantial upgrade of the A2300 - the east/west link from the A23 into Burgess Hill through the parish wards of Twineham and Hurstpierpoint. The project has yet to be subjected to planning examination, although this is imminent. The planning vision promises to deliver 'the best of town and country to offer vibrant local centres' and a development with a 'sense of place' but mentions nothing about protecting the surrounding villages from the impact of the 20,000 plus additional daily traffic movements this will generate.

What practical steps does the County Council propose to take to preserve and enhance the sense of place in the villages that will be most affected by this huge development?

Answer

The development of the Northern Arc is a priority for both the County Council and Mid Sussex District Council, identified in the Burgess Hill Growth Deal agreed by the Leaders and Chief Executives of both authorities. County Council officers worked with Homes England and Mid Sussex District Council in the development of the Masterplan and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which were approved by the Mid Sussex District Council Cabinet in September 2018.

The Masterplan and IDP identify a clear phasing and investment strategy that will ensure the required infrastructure is provided to support growth including a new secondary school, two new primary schools, delivery of an east/west internal link road, full funding of the link road junction with the A2300 and sustainable transport links between Northern Arc and key destinations. Overall, the projects will deliver infrastructure with a value in excess of £162m.

The Masterplan and IDP set a number of key principles in terms of the form and phasing of development. However, it is important to recognise that a further level of detail will be required to support planning applications which will be subject to approval by Mid Sussex District Council in consultation with the County Council.

Transport Assessments and traffic modelling accompanying the planning

applications will detail the precise extent and design of proposed highways and transport improvements.

The traffic modelling will include an assessment of impacts and mitigation on the local villages and the local road network, including the B2036. The requirement to identify the impacts and deliver appropriate mitigation is highlighted in both the Masterplan and the IDP and is emphasised in the County Council's consultation response to Mid Sussex District Council in relation to both documents.

County Council officers continue to work closely with Mid Sussex District Council and Homes England and will provide quarterly updates on progress in relation to this significant development opportunity being delivered in our county.

8. Written question from Mr Quinn for reply by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure

Question

The Cabinet Member may recall that at February Council this year the budget papers referred to an announcement in the provisional local government finance settlement allowing local authorities to increase council tax from 2% to 3% before a referendum was needed. As a result a core rise in council tax of 2.95% was included in the 2018/19 revenue budget presented (alongside an additional 2% for adult social care). That budget report went on to describe a number of one off investments for 2018/19 totalling £2.5m to be paid for out of additional money raised through council tax.

- (a) Among those one-off investments was an allocation of £0.5m for a programme of works relating to white lines and signage to improve the safety of the County's roads. As I drive around the county I still see roads without clearly marked white lines and signage obscured by overgrown vegetation. Can the Cabinet Member please let me have a breakdown per District and Borough of how much of this £0.5m funding was spent on: (i) white lines, and (ii) signage, and which roads were dealt with? Can he also advise what money remains available in this year's budget to tackle this issue.
- (b) Furthermore, on my travels I am noticing a considerable increase in kerbside vegetation growth which, if not addressed in a timely way, can lead to cracked pavements and road surfaces. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm in respect of each Borough and District how often spraying to tackle this issue is planned and at what intervals, and whether this commitment has or will be met this year.

Answer

- (a) Please find below details showing all sign/ line jobs either completed or due to be completed by end of this financial year.

We have identified over £440,000 worth of work with a further £60,000 work expected to be identified in the next month.

Town	Road	Work Type	Forecast Cost	Km of lines
Worthing	Broadwater Road	Lines	£15,000.00	1.6
Crawley	a264 SW bypass	signs	£13,129.00	
Crawley	a2220	signs	£2,978.00	
County	A286 Chi to Midhurst (raised as	Lines	£35,000.00	16
County	A281 Lining	Lines	£19,500.00	12
Slaugham	Warminglid Lane Slaugham (2.9km)	Lines	£8,897.00	2.9
Burgess Hill	Leylands Road Burgess Hill (1.3km)	Lines	£6,803.00	1.3
Burgess Hill	London Road Burgess Hill (1.3km)	Lines	£7,002.00	1.3
New timber	Saddlescombe Road Newtimber (Priority	Lines	£5,022.09	3
Henfield	Henfield Road Poynings (Priority	Lines	£4,715.29	3.8
New timber	Muddleswood Road Newtimber (Priority	Lines	£1,954.16	1.5
New timber	Brighton Road Newtimber (Priority	Lines	£3,899.67	2.2
Albourne & Sayers Common	London Road Albourne & Sayers Common (Priority	Lines	£5,639.40	3.3
Crawley	Crawley Avenue A224	lines	£45,923	5
slinfold	a264	lines	£15,363.00	5
Crawley	A 264 SW bypass	studs	£7,396.00	11
Lyminster	Lyminster Road	lines	£3,187.00	1.3
Crawley	a264 SW bypass	lines	£10,048.00	4
County	A24	Signs	£85,000.00	
County	A24	Signs	£0.00	
County	A24	Signs	£0.00	
Worthing	Chapel Road	Signs	£6,000.00	
Haywards Heath	Boardhill lane	lines	£10,506.00	2
County	A272 Hampshire to	Lines	£70,000.00	32
Worthing	Longfurlong	lines	£2,063.00	0.5
Scaynes Hill	Lewes Road	Signs	£3,127.00	
Bolney	Cowfold Road	Signs	£4,295.00	
Bognor	A29	lines	£6,076.00	3
Stedham	A272	lines	£2,274.00	0.7
Pagham	Lower Bognor Road	lines	£7,892.00	2.2
Westbourne	Emsworth common	lines	£7,979.00	3
Broadbridge Heath	Farthings Hill	lines	£4,280.00	1
Henfield	A281	lines	£5,079.00	1
Hurstpierpoint	A281	lines	£2,587.00	1.7
Haywards Heath	Sussex Sq	lines	£4,217.00	1
Shoreham	A281 Lining	lines	£6,655.00	0.75
Crawley	Manor Royal	lines	£3,490.00	0.6
			£442,976.61	125

- (b) With regard to weed spraying highways carry out up to two complete sprays throughout the county each year. Depending on weed growth and available budget, some areas are treated a third time if budget allows. Weed Spraying is carried out during May to June and again August to September. The weed spraying programme is due to finish next week.