

## West Sussex County Council – Written Questions

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**21 March 2025**

1. Written question from **Cllr Gibson** for reply by the **Leader**

### Question

2025 is the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology, marking 100 years since the initial development of Quantum Mechanics. Quantum computers are becoming a reality and the Government has recently established the National Quantum Computing Centre (NQCC) at the Rutherford Laboratory in Oxfordshire. In West Sussex, the University of Sussex has hosted a Centre of Excellence in Quantum Technologies since 2023 and Haywards Heath based Universal Quantum is developing a trapped ion qubit architecture capable of scaling to meet the demand for processors capable of a million high-quality qubits.

- (a) What events is the Council planning to celebrate the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology?
- (b) What is the Council doing to promote the important economic opportunity that quantum computing represents?
- (c) How will the Council ensure that companies and individuals in West Sussex have the skills necessary to exploit the innovations that quantum technologies offer?

### Answer

The County Council welcomes developments in quantum and the opportunities it offers to West Sussex in the growth of high value industries.

The United Nations General Assembly declared 2025 International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. The County Council will share news on [events and activities](#) to celebrate, including through [Business West Sussex](#).

The new West Sussex Economic Strategy 2025-35, to be overseen by the West Sussex Economic Growth Board, will see business, local authorities, education and other stakeholders working to maximise opportunities for economic growth.

The strategy includes an ambition to 'Boost productivity growth, investment and innovation' with a strategic priority to grow high value sectors and distinctive clusters aligned to [Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#). Quantum computing opportunities will feature because of the presence of Universal Quantum and the work of the National Quantum Technologies Programme.

The [Careers Hub](#) covering West Sussex is part of the Careers & Enterprise Company's national network of Hubs and is supported by the County Council and the West Sussex district and borough councils.

The Careers Hub profiles new and emerging careers opportunities to West Sussex students. The Hub works with Universal Quantum who have exhibited at the [TeenTech Sussex Festival](#) promoting the range of opportunities across digital, science and technology. Universal Quantum have also participated in Teacher Encounters,

providing local teachers with the opportunity to see and learn about career pathways to enrich curriculum teaching. The Careers Hub promotes and signposts to careers pathways, including through the [Sussex and Surrey Institute of Technology](#).

**2. Written question from Cllr Kerry-Bedell for reply by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**

**Question**

How do the current West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Council strategies and policies compare for future integration and planning of Sussex green energy production, storage and distribution, such as:

- Future green energy production priorities
- Council electric and hydrogen vehicle fleets
- Onshore and offshore wind projects
- Hydrogen production and storage
- Battery storage systems
- New solar farms
- National grid upgrades

**Answer**

The County Council's work on energy is already very comparable to that of East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove Council.

All councils have been highly active participants in corporate energy management and decarbonisation and shared best practice for a number of years – drawing down grant funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme to support their efforts.

For its part, the County Council has led on a pan-Sussex group purchasing scheme for domestic solar and battery storage, Solar Together Sussex, for four years and aims to continue in this role on behalf of all Sussex authorities with a new contract later this summer. It has also shared knowledge regarding the potential use of council-owned brownfield sites and closed landfills for the generation (and storage) of solar electricity, so that this type of project can be replicated elsewhere across Sussex.

Besides these examples, all authorities are represented on the Government-backed Regional Advisory Board for the Greater SE Net Zero Hub as well as the 'Hydrogen Sussex' working group that seeks to establish the business case for joint working on the nascent hydrogen infrastructure.

Officers continue to explore opportunities for closer joint working with East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove Council and the respective district and borough councils on initiatives to strengthen links between us (under the 'Sussex Energy' banner). This aims to develop greater consistency across Sussex, improved economies of scale and more opportunities for officers to specialise in particular subject matter areas (such as heat networks or EV charging).

The West Sussex Joint Climate Change Board oversees the various councils' responses to climate change in West Sussex. Officers also maintain links with neighbouring authorities to identify and explore opportunities for alignment and collaboration.

**3. Written question from Cllr Wild for reply by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change**

**Question**

- (a) What are the timings of the household Food Waste idea within the Waste and Recycling Strategy and when will this take place with Biffa?
- (b) Will each household be supplied with a bin or will they have to buy a bin?
- (c) What colour will the bin be?
- (d) Could I have more information on this plan?

**Answer**

The Government published the updated [Simpler Recycling in England policy](#) on 29 November 2024, the main change for West Sussex being the Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) will be required to collect food waste separately from household waste across England by March 2026.

Under earlier legislation, it falls to the County Council as Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) to arrange for the disposal of the food waste collected in its area by the WCAs.

Each district or borough council in West Sussex is a WCA and they are currently reviewing their waste services to ensure they are providing best value for money in line with local need whilst planning for the introduction of weekly food waste collections.

The County Council is supporting the West Sussex Waste Partnership\* with communications about these changes, holding regular meetings with key officers to design and deliver joint Simpler Recycling branding for all communication material to ensure clear and consistent messaging across West Sussex.

Residents will be provided with an internal silver food kitchen caddy and an external green, orange lidded, external food bin.

\*Mid Sussex District Council has opted out of joint branding and bin colours.

**4. Written question from Cllr Cornell for reply by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Question**

In 2024/25, Labour Group members called in the Highways Delivery Programme decision for reasons including insufficient information for members to assess how equitably funding was to be spent across the county.

The Cabinet Member recently approved the 2025/26 programme (value £42.753m). The allocation is based primarily on technical need, but residents will be interested to learn the distribution and value of the proposed schemes (from 2016 population figures and financial data in the report):

- Chichester 16% - £58 per head
- Horsham 13% - £40 per head

- Mid Sussex 13% - £39 per head
- Crawley 11% - £41 per head
- Arun 10% - £27 per head
- Adur 3% - £20 per head
- Worthing 2% - £8 per head

Can the Cabinet Member justify the:

- level of consultation?
- inequity in funding distribution?
- delegation of a decision of this size (£42.753m) rather than taking it to Cabinet, for consideration by a geographically broader base of members?

### **Answer**

The majority of works within the Highways, Transport and Planning Delivery Programme are prioritised in accordance with Asset Management principles as promoted by the Department for Transport.

The Asset Management Policy and Strategy have recently been reviewed, revised, approved and published on the County Council's website.

There is also a statutory obligation under Section 41 of the Highways Act to ensure that the highway network is safe and fit for purpose.

To meet this obligation, it is necessary to undertake a number of highway condition surveys. The results from these surveys are used extensively within Highways, Transport and Planning, for carrying out further analysis and investigation. This helps in prioritising future scheme-based programmes within the budget available for each financial year. For example, the scoring applied to carriageways following the engineering assessment gives the roads priority based against all other roads that have the same classification across the county.

Overall, the programme for planned maintenance is developed on a needs basis where geographical boundaries are not an influence. Delivery of a safe and well-maintained highway network relies on good evidence and sound engineering experience.

This work does not require consultation, officers have the skills, experience and tools to manage the prioritisation of works within the budgets available. It is worth noting there is always more work than we have budget or resource for.

For other works such as the Community Highway Schemes (CHS) initiative there is a clear process of evaluation. The CHS relies on community groups to come forward, with the support of the local member, to identify a scheme. The County Council does not allocate funding on a geographic basis.

In addition to the Annual Delivery Programme there is also a significant ongoing capital programme of major works, including Bus Service Improvement Programme, Active Travel Fund and large-scale infrastructure improvements such as Lyminster Bypass. Information can be found on the County Council's website.

**5. Written question from Cllr Gibson for reply by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

**Question**

Once again there have been significant traffic jams and delays at the A264/A22 junction in Felbridge, due in part to a failure by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and Surrey County Council (SCC) Highways to co-ordinate road works within the same half-mile of the A22. In addition to the immediate adverse impacts on air quality and public health, these delays result in lost short- and long-term economic growth due to lost productive hours and reluctance to invest in the area.

- (a) Why is the County Council unable to work effectively with SCC Highways to avoid conflicting sets of road works on the A264 and A22?
- (b) Why have two sets of road works at the Imberhorne Lane junction with London Road been necessary and what inspection did the Council conduct to ensure that the contractors work was satisfactory on the first set?
- (c) What options for increasing the capacity of the Felbridge junction has the joint SCC/WSSCC A264/A22 Corridor Study identified?

**Answer**

- (a) The WSSCC Highway Network Management team utilises one.network when co-ordinating works on the Highway. One.network provides full visibility of all planned works – including those on neighbouring networks. If works are likely to have a significant impact on a neighbouring network, WSSCC will engage further with the neighbouring authority to discuss the works and review ways of reducing disruption.
- (b) WSSCC are aware of recent works in and around the Imberhorne Lane area. Unfortunately, WSSCC received emergency works on top of works that had already been planned on the network. Emergency works are challenging as utilities have up to two hours after commencing works to inform the Highway Authority. Whilst these emergency works were not inspected whilst in progress, the Authority can check the reinstatement at any point during the guarantee period (two to three years) and where the reinstatement is found not to meet the required specifications, the utility will be required to return and make good. WSSCC is currently looking to increase its inspection resource to ensure more works are inspected whilst in progress, with a particular focus on emergency works.
- (c) The A22/A264 Corridor Feasibility Study is exploring a number of options to facilitate movement on the A22/A264 corridor. Land, environmental and financial constraints are likely to limit the options for improvements to those that focus on making best use of the existing corridor; for example, by encouraging more bus use instead of travelling by private car. The options currently being considered include bus priority, small scale capacity improvements, 'Worth Way' improvements, road safety, and crossing and bus stop improvements. During stage 2 of the study, options will be designed up to feasibility stage and discussed with key stakeholders, including county councillors; this is likely to be in spring/summer 2025. A consultant is currently

being procured by Surrey County Council to support the project team to take this work forward.