

Good evening, to highlight everything that West Sussex County Council have done over the last year would make an extremely long report! Hopefully my regular updates at your PC meetings have covered some of the key things we are doing that impact on local residents. If there are any particular issues that you wish to raise with me, or there is anything related to the many services we provide that you feel I might be able to help you with, then please get in touch. My contact details are at the end of this report.

In the meantime I have just highlighted a few key areas of our work that I hope will interest you.

The Revised Council Plan and Budget 24/25. I'm pleased to say that West Sussex finances are in a sound position. Yes, there are ongoing challenges, especially with the ever escalating costs of social care. That is across all age groups where we care for around 900 children, as well as supporting families with young children, right up to looking after our elderly residents. Our spending on adult social care alone accounts for nearly 35% of our overall net revenue budget. Of course, that includes not just the elderly, but about 50% of our ASC budget goes to looking after the many working age adults that need our care and support.

And just for your interest WSCC, in this current financial year, will be investing the following sums across the County supporting all the residents, especially those who, for whatever reason, need a helping hand. We are proposing to invest:

£961m - managing schools and education

£507m caring for adults (both elderly and working age) & keeping people healthy

£204m children's social care and supporting young people

£91m protecting the environment, recycling and waste disposal

£83m maintaining our highways

£38m running the F&RS

£22m supporting local communities

£3m supporting the local economy

That is total spend of just over £2bn in 2024/25 - the cost of running all the services we provide in order to support all our residents.

Highways. The condition of our roads continues to be a concern, not only to many residents, but also to the County Council. This is not only a concern to us here in West Sussex, but it is a concern right across the country. In their 2024 Annual Local Authority Road Maintenance Survey Report (<https://www.asphaltuk.org/wp-content/uploads/ALARM-survey-report-2024-FINAL.pdf>) the Asphalt Industry Alliance predict that the one-time repair costs across England and Wales would now cost £16.3 billion and would take a decade to complete. To address highway maintenance Local Authorities (LA's) do receive annual maintenance grants from the government. Additionally, the government announced last Autumn that LA's would receive an extra £8bn for highway maintenance from the funding that was reprioritised following the cancellation of the northern part of the HS2 rail project. The West Sussex share will be £67m. However, welcome as this is, the payment will be spread over the next 11 years. So, to try and address the current state of our roads the County Council, over and above the government funding, are investing an additional £10m in

revenue spending on highway maintenance, as well as a further £20m of capital into our road improvement programme. That is in addition to the extra £20m we have already invested over the last two years. So altogether, over and above the normal grant funding we receive from the Government, WSSC will be investing an additional £50m of our money into the counties roads over a four year period. So just to give you an update, between October 2023 and February 2024, we had more rain in 5 months that we would normally have in a whole year. March didn't show much improvement, and in fact in some West Sussex areas we saw 3 times the rain we normally expect. In these conditions potholes can form as water seeps under the road surface and saturating the substrate which leads to a hydraulic fracturing effect as vehicles pass over. At this moment, our teams are working over-time and our contractor's gangs are working twilight shifts, as well as Saturdays, to try and manage the increased number of safety repairs. In addition, we have 'find and fix' gangs who are predominately operating in urban areas and, now that the weather is improving, we have three Jet Patchers working in more rural areas. Although we still have to carry out the odd emergency repair where we just fill the hole on safety grounds, we continue to focus on quality 'Sides Sawn and Sealed' repairs. Although these repairs take longer, they should last longer. Inevitably, with the amount of water we have on the network some repairs may fail. Please don't forget to report any highways issues on our website @ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/make-an-enquiry-or-report-a-problem-with-a-road-or-pavement/>

Drainage. In terms of drainage, in our normal cleansing programme we have cleansed 90,000 gullies this year. In addition, we have 4 gully suckers operating across the network carrying reactive work to alleviate flooding issues. They have tackled over 600 jobs on our highest priority sites. I would add that due to the amount of rain - and the very high ground water levels over the winter - many gullies that appeared blocked were in fact just full up, with nowhere for the water to go. However, please report any blocked gullies, potholes or other highways issues on our website @ <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/maintaining-roads-verges-and-pavements/road-maintenance/flooding-drainage-and-gullies/>

And just by way of a final update:

In March 2024 our Highways Teams...



Received 9600 enquiries from the public, of those 6000 related to potholes



Delivered 4300 safety repairs, of these 3200 were for potholes.



Completed 320 find and fix jobs
(this is a proactive approach to roads with multiple potholes)



Repaired 810 safety potholes by the Velocity Jet Patcher which equated to around 460sqm

Carers Support. WSSC is reinforcing its ongoing support for people who care for family members, friends, and neighbours with a new five-year contract to offer them information, guidance, and

emotional help. The contract, which began on 1 April, has been awarded to [Carers Support West Sussex](#), a local charity with expertise and specialist knowledge in supporting unpaid carers. The county-wide service will provide a dedicated Carers' Helpline, carer support groups and a dedicated specialist service to young adult carers aged 18 to 25. It will offer access to Carer Wellbeing Workers who can provide information, help and guidance and enable carers to be identified as early as possible in their caring journey. Carers will also be able to receive support from Carer Assessors and Welfare Benefits' Advisors over the telephone or at seven local hubs, at five acute hospital and eight community hospital sites in West Sussex and at East Surrey Hospital, which is managed by Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. Visit the [Carers Support West Sussex Carers Hub](#) to find out about the help you can access if you are a carer who provides unpaid support to someone who couldn't manage without your help because of old age, a disability, an illness, mental health problems or an addiction. You can register as a carer by visiting the [Carers Support West Sussex website](#) or by calling 0300 028 8888.

Are you SCAM savvy? In West Sussex, during the last three months of 2023, a total of £3.5 million was lost to fraudsters, with 53% of victims being over the age of 75. In the same time frame the top three fraud types were courier/impersonator fraud, dating and romance scams, and sextortion which is classed as a form of blackmail. To support residents from becoming victims of fraud, West Sussex County Council's Digital Safety Team has organised another round of their popular 'Are you scam savvy?' online and in-person sessions, which were launched last year. These free 1.5-hour sessions are open to anyone who wants to keep themselves, or friends and family, from falling victim to different types of scams, both online and offline.

The remaining dates available for the online only sessions are:

- Wednesday 22 May: 1pm - 2.30pm
- Friday 5 July: 11am - 12.30pm.

In-person 'Are you scam savvy?' sessions will also be taking place in three West Sussex Libraries across the county. Unfortunately most have already taken place, but there is one session left.

- Monday 17 June at Shoreham Library: 10am - 11.30am .

If you can't attend the library events in person, there is also the opportunity to view these online. Booking is essential to attend any of the in-person or online sessions and free tickets can be ordered through www.eventbrite.co.uk by searching for 'Are you scam savvy?'.

If you can't attend any of the sessions, you can still visit www.westsussex.gov.uk/staying-safe-online where you can find more information on how the Digital Safety Team can support you, your family or business to keep safe online.

Local Issues:

Communities Highways Road Safety Scheme. I was delighted to support this scheme right from the first 'walk through' we had a couple of years ago. Cllr Marshall and others have worked tirelessly on this scheme, together with the support of our Highways officers, and it was finally approved earlier this year. It is currently in the build programme for the current financial year, and I have been advised that subject to any other highway pressures delaying our teams, it is likely to be very late 2024 or early 2025.

Charlton 20mph Scheme. Currently there is ongoing dialogue between Cllr Marshall, myself and our highways team about the scope of this scheme. If I have any news before the Annual Meeting I will update you then.

The Leys Car Park. After discussing this project with the PC over many years, and with many hours of work by your Clerk and the support of WSSC Highways officers, I am delighted that the car park was finally brought to fruition, last year. I was delighted to give this project my full support.

Halnaker Windmill. I know this is not actually in your parish, but as a local landmark I thought you might appreciate an update. As you are no doubt aware, we had to remove the sweeps a couple of years ago on safety grounds, due to a failed spar. Last September, following an extensive report from the Millwrighting and conservation officer for Kent County Council and a subject expert from the Society for Protection of Ancient Buildings, the County Council approved the funding to carry out the necessary repairs to the windmill, including the restoration of the sweeps. We were hoping to carry out the restoration work this summer but, unfortunately, a single roosting bat was spotted by our ecologist during a visit earlier this year. Hopefully, we will be able to complete the work next summer.

WSSC Residents News Letter. Lastly, every month we issue a Residents News Letter which is sent to all residents who subscribe to our free email service. Signing up for our email alerts means you don't need to check our website to find out the latest information. Instead, it will be delivered free, straight to your inbox. Some of our topics include:

- Emergencies - extreme weather alerts and school closures
- Your Council - County Council meeting dates, agenda and minutes
- Service eNewsletters such as:
- WSSC newsletter, a general update about the council and its services
- West Sussex recycles
- Staying safe online
- Environment and climate change
- Highways, transport and planning.

To subscribe please go to: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSSC/subscriber/new>

I also note that very helpfully a link to this newsletter is provided on the village website.

Finally, please don't forget to keep an eye on our website, especially our news and campaigns page where you can keep up to date with all our latest news. <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/news-and-campaigns/>

Jeremy Hunt – West Sussex County Council Member for Chichester North

c/o Cabinet Office, County Hall, West Street, Chichester, PO19 1RQ

E-mail: jeremy.hunt@westsussex.gov.uk Tel: 0330222419536