

West Sussex County Council – Ordinary Meeting

16 December 2011

At an Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held at 10.30 a.m. on Friday, 16 December 2011, at County Hall, Chichester, the members present being:

Mr M W G Coleman (Chairman)

Mr W E Acraman	Mr P E Jones
Mrs P A C Arculus	Mrs A J Jupp
Mr L H Barnard	Mrs S Knight
Mrs E A Bennett	Mr R A Lanzer
Mr B K Blake	Mr J Livermore
Mr G G Blampied	Mr S E McDougall
Dr H S Bloom	Mrs M E Millson
Mr P J J Bradbury	Mrs J S Mockridge
Mr D N Britton	Mr J A P Montyn
Mr M J Brown	Mr J J O'Brien
Mrs H A Brunsdon	Mr F R J Oppler
Mr R G Burgess	Mr C G Oxlade
Mr R D Burrett	Mr N F Peters
Mr P C Catchpole	Mr A J E Quirk
Mrs C A Coleman	Mr A S Rice
Mr B K Coomber	Mr R Rogers
Mr D G Crow	Mr A R H Smith
Mr D R Deedman	Mrs B A Smith
Dr N P S Dennis	Mr R J Smytherman
Mr C P Duncton	Mr C H Stevens
Mr R B Dunn	Mr G M Tyler
Mr T M E Dunn	Mrs D L Urquhart
Mr P C Evans	Mrs N J Waight
Mrs C M Field	Mr S G Waight
Ms M L Goldsmith	Dr J M M Walsh, RD
Mr P A D Griffiths	Mr B R A D Watson, OBE
Mrs A B Hall	Mrs E M Whitehead
Mr B Hall	Mr D R Whittington
Mr M N Hall	Mr F T Wilkinson
Mr M P S Hodgson	Dr C E Wilsdon

Apologies and attendance

89 Apologies were received from Mr Graysmark, Mr Hellawell, Miss Hendon, Mrs Mills, Mrs Richards, Mrs Ross, Mr Simmons and Mr Wells. Mr Britton, Mr Duncton, Mrs Jupp, Mr Livermore, Mr Peters and Mr Whittington gave their apologies for the afternoon session. Mr R B Dunn and Mr Watson left at 2.30 p.m. and 2.35 p.m. respectively and gave their apologies for the remainder of the meeting. Mr Doyle and Mr Sheldon were absent. Mr Oppler was absent for the afternoon session.

Minutes

Interests

- 90 Members declared interests as set out at Appendix 1.

Minutes

- 91 It was agreed that the minutes of the Ordinary Meeting of the County Council held on 14 October 2011 (pages 179 to 205) be approved as a correct record, subject to the addition of Dr Walsh's apologies for the afternoon session in paragraph 65.

Governance Committee: Chairmanship of the Treasury Management Panel

- 92 The Council considered a report recommending a change to the chairmanship of the Treasury Management Panel (pages 206 to 207).

- 93 Resolved -

That the change to the constitution of the Treasury Management Panel, as set out at the Appendix to the report, be approved.

Appointments

- 94 The following change to appointments was made which took effect from the end of the meeting:

Committee/Panel	Change
Treasury Management Panel	Mr Lanzer as Chairman in place of Mr Brown

Cabinet and Written Questions

Written Questions

- 95 Questions and answers pursuant to Standing Order 15(2), as set out at Appendix 2, were circulated. Members asked questions on the answers as set out at Appendix 2.

Cabinet Member Question Time

- 96 Members asked questions on the Cabinet Members' reports (pages 208 to 213), and on a supplementary report (pages 213A-B) which was circulated, as set out at Appendix 3.

Leader's Question Time

- 97 Members questioned the Leader on matters currently relevant to the County Council, as set out at Appendix 3.

Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2011/12

98 The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources moved the report on the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2011/12 (pages 214 to 227).

99 Resolved -

That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report 2011/12, as set out at the Appendix to the report, be approved.

Governance Committee: Review of Petitions Scheme

100 The Council considered a report recommending changes to the Petitions Scheme (pages 228 to 237).

101 Resolved -

- (1) That the number of signatures required for a debate at County Council or consideration of an issue by a Select Committee remain at 3,000 and 500 respectively;
- (2) That the deadline for submission of petitions to be debated by a Council meeting be increased from 13 to 15 working days;
- (3) That the order of business at Council meetings be revised to allow debates on petitions to be taken after any address by a Cabinet Member;
- (4) That the petitioner be given the option to submit a statement of not more than 500 words, to be received nine working days before the Council or Select Committee meeting. The relevant directorate to also submit a brief position statement/briefing note by the same deadline;
- (5) That the petitioner and the Cabinet Member be given the opportunity to make a closing statement at the end of a debate for a maximum of three minutes each, with any propositions put forward after any closing statements;
- (6) That the deadline for submission of petitions to be debated by a Select Committee meeting be set at 15 working days;
- (7) That the procedure for allowing the petition organiser to present a petition at a Council meeting be applied to the consideration of petitions by Select Committees;
- (8) That guidance on what may happen as a result of a Select Committee debate on a petition be included in the Petitions Scheme as is the case with debates at Council meetings; and

- (9) That the consequential changes to the Constitution, as set out at the Appendix to the report, be approved.

Governance Committee: Change to the Constitution - Reporting of Urgent Key Decisions

102 The Council considered a report recommending a minor change to the Constitution in relation to the process for reporting urgent key decisions which had not been listed in the Forward Plan (pages 238 and 239).

103 Resolved -

That the proposed changes to Standing Orders and the Access to Information Procedure Rules in relation to the procedure for reporting urgent key decisions to the County Council, as set out at the Appendix to the report, be approved.

Notice of Motion by Mrs Millson

104 The following motion was moved by Mrs Millson and seconded by Dr Walsh.

'The Coalition Government recently announced a consultation on cutting the 'Feed in Tariff' offered on new photovoltaic installations by over 50%. Although the consultation is open until 23 December, the 'reference date' (by which schemes have to be confirmed with Ofgem in order to retain the higher level of Feed in Tariff) is 12 December.

This Council notes:

- (1) That the scheme has been a huge success, with the latest government figures showing that the industry now employs 39,000 people compared with just 3,000 before the Feed in Tariffs were introduced and that installation costs have fallen by almost 30%; and
- (2) That the industry itself has called for its subsidy to be cut to reflect these reductions in costs and was planning on the basis of cuts in April.

The Council is concerned that the changes announced by the Government are precipitate; in particular, that the proposed changes will affect all installations registered with Ofgem after 12 December, despite this being two weeks before the end of the consultation.

The Council therefore calls on the Deputy Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change requesting a review of his emergency measures, and, if responding to the formal consultation referred to above, to include this request in his response. In particular, the Council supports delaying the implementation of the changes; and

protecting community run schemes, including those run or planned by councils, by extending the cut-off date for these schemes to the end of the financial year.'

105 The motion was lost.

Notice of Motion by Mr Oxlade

106 The following motion was moved by Mr Oxlade and seconded by Mrs B A Smith.

'This Council believes early intervention and quality initiatives that enhance services and so control costs later are fundamental to delivering sustainable improvements to the lives of our residents.

Open access youth provision currently provides early intervention and prevention work for young people in areas of need.

The impact on young people of removing council-run youth provision is as yet unknown, as is the possibility of increased costs for this authority as a result of a higher level of intervention and need in the future.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to:

- (1) utilise the uncommitted early intervention grant funding (£1.69m) to enable implementation of the decision set out in CF05(11/12) to be postponed until 2012/13;
- (2) continue discussions with local community and voluntary organisations about the possibility of taking on responsibility for youth establishments from which the Cabinet Member has proposed withdrawing provision (Appendix 1 of Executive Decision CF05(11/12) refers);
- (3) take account of the findings of the task and finish group (expected to report summer 2012), the willingness of the local community and voluntary organisations to take over provision, and any other appropriate evidence relating to the impact of withdrawing council-run youth provision, before considering whether further closures are cost effective in the long term;

If the Cabinet Member is then of the opinion that the further withdrawal of council-run youth provision is not cost effective, the Council asks the Cabinet Member to:

- (4) liaise with the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources in order for alternative savings proposals to be considered.'

107 The motion was lost.

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Report of Urgent Action

108 The report of urgent action taken under regulation 16 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 (pages 240 and 241) was noted.

Chairman

The Council rose at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 1 - Interests

Members declared interests as set out below. All the interests listed below were personal but not prejudicial unless indicated.

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 6(a) Question 2 (Open Green Spaces)	Dr Walsh	Member of Littlehampton Town Council and member of Arun District Council
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 3 (investment fund of up to £15m)	Mrs Coleman	Friend of Chichester Festival Theatre
	Dr Dennis	Friend of Chichester Festival Theatre
	Mr Smith	Member of Chichester District Council (co-funder of Chichester Festival Theatre)
	Mr Waight	Member of Worthing Borough Council
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 4 (Changes to police governance in Sussex)	Mr Barnard	Member of Sussex Police Authority
	Dr Bloom	Member of Crawley Borough Council
	Mr Evans	Member of Sussex Police Authority
	Mrs Knight	Member of Sussex Police Authority
	Mr Smith	Member of Sussex Police Authority
	Mr Waight	Chairman of Sussex Police Authority
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 7 (eligibility assessments for blue badges)	Mrs Arculus	Trustee of Purple Bus charity
	Mrs Coleman	Blue badge holder
	Mr Coleman	Wife is a blue badge holder
	Mrs Knight	Husband is a blue badge holder

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Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 7 (eligibility assessments for blue badges) (cont)	Mr Livermore	Blue badge holder
	Mrs Millson	Mother is a blue badge holder
	Mrs Smith	Husband is a blue badge holder
	Mr Tyler	Blue badge holder
	Mr Watson	Mother-in-law is a blue badge holder
	Mr Wilkinson	Sister is a blue badge holder
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 8 (youth support and development)	Mr Evans	Chairman of East Preston Neighbourhood Youth Centre, Committee member of Ferring Youth Centre
	Mrs Millson	Member of the Horsham Youth Centre Management Committee
	Mr Oxlade	Member of management committees of Bewbush, Oriel and Ifield Youth Wing and governor of Waterfield and Three Bridges Junior Schools
	Mr Rogers	Vice-Chair of Maybridge Keystone Club (Youth Club)
	Mr Tyler	Member of Rustington Parish Council
	Dr Walsh	Member of Littlehampton Town Council
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 14 (academy conversion)	Mr Bradbury	Director of Warden Park Academy Trust
	Mr R B Dunn	Governor of Sir Robert Woodward Academy

Item	Member	Nature of Interest
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 14 (academy conversion) (cont)	Mrs Knight	Governor of Oakmeeds School, Burgess Hill and temporary governor of Woodlands Meeds School, Burgess Hill
	Mr Oxlade	Governor of Waterfield and Three Bridges Junior Schools
	Mr Smith	Governor of Tangmere Primary School
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 16 (entrepreneurial attitudes)	Mrs Knight	Governor of Oakmeeds School, Burgess Hill and temporary governor of Woodlands Meeds School, Burgess Hill
	Mr Oxlade	Governor of Waterfield and Three Bridges Junior Schools
	Mr Rogers	Governor of Durrington High School
Item 6(b) CMQT paragraph 17 (Ofsted annual report)	Mr Burgess	Governor of St Wilfrid's School, Crawley
Item 10(a) Notice of Motion re Feed in Tariff on Photovoltaic Installations	Mr McDougall	Independent Authorised distributor for The Utility Warehouse, which includes feed in tariff services
	Mr Watson	Has solar panels
Item 10(b) Notice of Motion re Youth Provision	Mr Evans	Chairman of East Preston Neighbourhood Youth Centre, Committee member of Ferring Youth Centre
	Mr Oxlade	Member of management committees of Bewbush, Oriol and Ifield Youth Wing

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1. Written question from **Mrs B A Smith** for reply by the **Leader**

Question

- (a) Can the Leader advise me when the last meeting to discuss the possibility of a new hospital in Horsham/Crawley as proposed by Bio City took place involving herself and/or officers and whether any future meetings are proposed?
- (b) Furthermore, could she also advise how much this authority contributed to that proposal and whether she is aware of any future funding commitment by this authority or through the local enterprise partnership, Coast to Capital?

Answer

- (a) The last meeting with the representatives of Bio City was in November 2010. There are no further meetings planned.
- (b) The County Council contributed £12,500 to the cost of the feasibility report (released in December 2010) and no commitment was made to further funding. Coast to Capital would have considered endorsing a bid by Bio City to the first round of Regional Growth Fund in January 2011 but in the event Bio City decided not to submit a bid. Since then there has been no contact.

Additional Question

An additional question was asked by Dr Walsh.

2. Written Question from **Mr Acraman** for reply by the **Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise** and the **Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

Question

- (a) Would you confirm that it continues to be the strategic aim and policy of the Council to encourage and promote the availability of Open Green Space, particularly in the urban environment, recognising the Health and Emotional Well-being benefits that follow from enabling people to take the air and to indulge in informal activity on Open Green Spaces?
- (b) Does the Council recognise that there can be long-term financial benefits through the promotion of Health and Emotional Well Being by encouraging the use of Open Green Spaces and keeping them available?
- (c) Would you confirm that when the future of such green open spaces as are in the ownership of the Council are considered that that strategic aim is

given as much priority in the decision making process as would the financial considerations of disposing of the open green space for development?

- (d) Would you confirm that at this point in time there are no formal plans in place regarding the future of Old School Field or of the redundant county land immediately south of Littlehampton Community School in Littlehampton?
- (e) Would you confirm that the relevant officers will be instructed that any future plan for Old School Field in Littlehampton should retain at least 50% of the acreage as public open space and that Old School Field and the land to the south be considered jointly as a single integrated development?
- (f) Will you confirm that it is your intention that the area of open green space retained on Old School Field (whatever proportion of the acreage it is) can be and will be voluntarily dedicated as a Village Green under the Commons Act 2006?

Answer

- (a) The responsibility for planning for each local area rests with the district and borough councils which achieve this through the Local Development Framework process. The County Council wishes to support its partner authorities achieve the balance of planning objectives for each local area, such as the requirements for public open space, residential development, including social housing and business use.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) No, the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources will give due consideration to each of the County Council's strategic priorities when reaching a decision on any potential site disposal. Inevitably the potential benefits from each site can be quite specific to the site.
- (d) There are no formal plans for the use of this land at this stage.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources has already been listening to views expressed from the local community and is certainly minded to encourage a degree of open space within any central town scheme but there is a balance required given the need to deliver a sustainable and viable scheme of whatever size and nature.

Please note that the land immediately to the south of the Littlehampton Academy is not redundant at the moment and is being used by the school, nursery and youth services.

- (e) No. The Cabinet Member has asked officers to consider a range of options for the inclusion of public open space on the land north of the Academy. This is likely to include a health centre, affordable housing and several acres given over to green space.
- (f) No.

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Note: Any supplementary questions for parts (a) and (b) will be answered by the Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise and parts (c) to (f) by the Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

Supplementary Question

In relation to the answer to question (f), does this mean that the 1,000-plus signature petition submitted recently to the County Council, accompanied by the local MP, was a waste of time?

Supplementary Answer

The answer 'no' is an exact answer to an exact question because, as Cabinet Member, I do not have the power to make such a dedication. However, there are a number of ways in which the piece of green land could be protected for the wider use of the people of Littlehampton including the County Council as a whole designating it as such or a condition being added to a planning application. I will be happy to work with Mr Acraman, the local member and the Leader to see how the land can be protected for community use and not be subject to further development.

Additional Questions

Additional questions were asked by Mrs Millson and Dr Walsh.

3. Written Question from **Mr M N Hall** for reply by the **Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise**

Question

The national planning restrictions for new homes introduced in 2001 by the Labour government has resulted in conflict between neighbours and communities and on some developments management companies have introduced wheel clamping to prevent parking on roads within their developments.

In a desperate search to find parking places vehicles have been parked along adjacent highways or other local estate roads. The restrictions on parking places has now been removed by government ministers thus allowing councils and communities to set more realistic parking allocations on new developments in their areas.

Therefore, will the Cabinet Member ensure that together with our planning officers and local members we set new policies that reflect our views when responding to district and borough planning applications?

Answer

Last year, the County Council co-ordinated a review of the residential car parking standards for new development. The outcome of the review was that the maximum residential standard adopted by the County Council in November 2003 was replaced with a new approach. This uses the five main factors that influence

car ownership to guide the number of parking spaces needed on a site-specific basis. The factors which are used are: dwelling size, housing type, tenure, location, and the way parking is provided (allocated or unallocated).

This new approach to the calculation of parking spaces has been in place since September 2010 and is used to inform our responses when responding to consultations received from the district and borough councils on planning applications. It places strong emphasis on the importance of good design to ensure the provision of quality parking spaces and to ensure that there are fewer problems caused by overspill parking on the highway.

The district and borough councils have expressed interest in the preparation of a design guide to address issues associated with car parking and other highway issues in residential developments. The County Council will work with them on its preparation to ensure that it provides practical guidance on the application of the new residential car parking standards.

Supplementary Question

In the spirit of the Localism Act, and as inspired by Eric Pickles, would the Cabinet Member encourage local communities to be involved in the new design guide preparations, together with the borough and district councils?

Supplementary Answer

I am pleased to see the Council is looking at the difficult problem of car parking and welcome the issuing of a new statement. I can confirm that the County Council will be working with the borough and district councils.

4. Written question from **Mr Deedman** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Education and Schools**

Question

On 22 November Ofsted issued a report announcing a mixed picture for learners needing extra support after 16. Ofsted came to the conclusion that when young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities leave school, very few of them carry on to complete programmes that help them live independently, undertake further study or gain employment. Ofsted's report 'Progression post-16 for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities' found that arrangements to provide assessments for learners with a learning difficulty were not working well. In two thirds of the case studies the providers had not received an assessment and where they had they were often lacking in specific detail or arrived late. The timing of the local authority arrangements for assessment was not aligned to the post 16 providers' recruitment and induction procedures, and providers continued to rely on their own assessments. Given that Chichester College were among the providers interviewed, can the Cabinet Member please:

- (a) Confirm that 100% of assessments for young people aged 16 and over with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in West Sussex between September 2010 and 2011 have been provided to further education providers on time,

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in advance of the providers' recruitment and induction procedures and were adequately completed to progress their education and improve their chances of being employed;

- (b) That in all such cases, work-based learning provision was considered an option;
- (c) Confirm the number of young people aged 16 and over with learning difficulties and/or disabilities currently undertaking further education in West Sussex and the proportion of those that are studying courses that will assist them in gaining employment as opposed to improving their life skills.

Answer

- (a) S139a assessments, otherwise known as 'Moving On Plans', are the tools used by local authorities to support the transition of learners with learning disabilities and/or difficulties into post-16 educational provision.

We estimate that 50% of these assessments were received by the deadline according to FE sources with variable performance in some areas arising from significant staffing issues within the Connexions Service. Area B was particularly affected with very late arrivals due to unavoidable staffing issues in the Connexions Service. Northbrook College are still awaiting three outstanding assessments. Worthing College have reported that the majority of assessments have now arrived after their own initial contact with potential learners. Connexions have now re-organised their teams so that Area B is covered more comprehensively. There are seven key members of staff in West Sussex who are co-ordinating the delivery process of all S139a assessments.

Since the quality of assessments had been variable in the pilot year, the County Council undertook to train all specialist personal advisors in delivering good quality assessments in readiness for September 2011 with improving results reported by FE providers. Unlike some other local authorities who only offer S139a assessments to those with statements, the County Council offers these assessments to all young people with SEN including those who are on School Action. This approach was requested by FE providers. However, not all eligible young people choose to take up the offer of an assessment as they are entitled to refuse to share their previous educational information with a new post-16 provider.

487 assessments were completed in 2011. Eighteen assessments were sent later than the original date of completion because the parents or the learner contested the content and consequently refused to sign the document. Significant negotiations were carried out with local providers which resulted in specific support packages being created for all those learners with complex needs where the S139a has been used as the basis for the conversation. These developments have in turn resulted in a reduction in the number of young people applying for out of county provision in a specialist college or being in the NEET group.

Of those 18, 12 would not have been able to participate in learning locally due to a lack of available mentoring provision and they would have most likely become NEET. The remaining six are likely to have been successful in applying for an independent specialist placement at an average cost per annum of £45,000 per learner for day provision and £68,582 per learner for residential provision.

In 2011/12, 14 placements were made into independent specialist provision after it was clearly demonstrated that local providers could not meet their particular needs, mostly due to the need for complex health and social care interventions as part of their support package.

- (b) Work-based learning provision (apprenticeship) is always considered as an option where appropriate. Apprenticeships are, however, only a realistic option for those learners who can achieve both literacy and numeracy accredited qualifications at level 2 (which is the level expected of a pupil with A*-C GCSEs), otherwise they cannot complete the framework. Learners functioning at foundation level (level 1) for instance, cannot realistically enter into an apprenticeship programme. In 2011/12, 25 Apprenticeships were recorded as a realistic career option for young people with a S139a assessment.
- (c) In 2011/12:

1,056 young people with learning difficulties or disabilities (with statements or on School Action Plus) are currently undertaking a further education programme in West Sussex. Of those:

414 have a statement

642 are on School Action Plus

750 have enrolled with Further Education Colleges with the remainder either in special schools at post-16 or other provision.

The vast majority (over 80%) of those young people have applied for vocational programmes such as BTecs at levels 1, 2 or 3. 18 have applied to sixth form colleges to undertake 'A' levels. In Chichester College, the majority of programme enrolments are within the vocational areas of Land-Based and Agriculture (Brinsbury Campus), Plumbing, Catering, travel and tourism and Motor Vehicle repair. In Northbrook College, most enrolments are made in Public Services, Motor Mechanics, ICT and Creative Arts programmes. In Central Sussex College, Health and Social Care and construction programmes have received the maximum of applications. Sixteen have opted for Further education Colleges outside of West Sussex namely Plumpton College and City College Brighton and Hove.

Supplementary Question

Can the Cabinet Member tell me the percentage of those leaving college with learning difficulties who have gone on to secure employment?

Supplementary Answer

I will let Mr Deedman know the percentage.

5. Written question from **Mr Smytherman** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Education and Schools**

Question

As the Cabinet Member is no doubt aware, for every child that is eligible for a free school meal but not claiming it, that child's school is missing out on £488 in the form of the pupil premium. Table 2.4 of the West Sussex Annual Public Health Report 2011 'Tackling Child Poverty' includes figures for the uptake of free schools meals in maintained schools in West Sussex (based on the January 2010 school census figures). According to those figures, 6,986 children (6.8%) were eligible for a free school meal but 5,959 children (5.8%) were taking them up, (a difference of 1,027 children).

Can the Cabinet Member please:

- (a) Provide a table identical in format to that at 2.4 of the Tackling Child Poverty report circulated on the date of the previous County Council meeting based on the January 2011 census figures?
- (b) Confirm that, in accordance with the undertaking made at the last County Council by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, he has discussed with him what action can be taken to ensure that stigmatisation of taking up free school meal entitlement is not an issue for pupils across West Sussex?
- (c) Confirm that action has been taken in accordance with the advice issued by the Department for Education on 14 November in order to see an improved uptake in free school meals (FSM) by 19 January 2012?
- (d) Confirm that he will ensure the school meals provider takes advantage of the Education Act which enables special pricing offers to be introduced with effect from September 2012 in order to encourage more pupils to try a healthy school lunch. Furthermore, that he will look into the possibility of making school food more affordable from September 2012 for parents on low incomes who do not qualify for free school meals?
- (e) Confirm that the school meals and drinks being provided to pupils attending academies across West Sussex meet the same nutritional standard as those provided to pupils attending maintained schools across West Sussex?

Answer

Firstly it is important to emphasise that it is the action by parents to register their children as eligible for a free school meal that triggers the pupil premium in the funding of schools rather than the child actually taking up the meal. If parents

who are in receipt of specified benefits do not register their eligibility with the County Council's Pupil Support Team, the school will not get the pupil premium. However, we know from our termly monitoring that schools have been assiduous in chasing parents to register in order to ensure that children benefit in their school from the pupil premium.

- (a) Yes. However, I suggest that I ask officers to undertake this work in February 2012 so that you have both the January 2011 and January 2012 data as this is a better use of resources. According to the Pupil Support Team there has been a 23% increase in registrations between January and November 2011 and this is expected to increase further by 12 January 2012 for the next annual school census.
- (b) I can assure you that the steps to avoid the stigmatisation of children who are entitled to Free School Meals have been promoted with schools and catering contractors. For example, the Primary School 'Steamplicity' contract which operates in 230 of our primary schools does not require any identification that a child has an entitlement to Free School Meals as this is all dealt with in the 'back office'. Similarly many secondary schools and contractors have worked with parents to introduce cashless payment systems which tackle this issue and also avoid the risks of children losing money or suffering from petty theft.
- (c) The Schools Catering Officer will continue to work with our schools and our contractors to take forward opportunities to improve take-up and keep the service affordable. The County Council encouraged parents to register with an article earlier this year in Connexions and individual schools have been persuading parents too. The take up of Free School Meals in Primary Schools in West Sussex is now 96.2%, significantly above the national figure of 85.9%. This shows that the impact of the recession and the implementation of the new hot meal in primary schools has increased take up of the Free School Meals.
- (d) I can confirm a yes on both points.
- (e) We are not aware of any evidence that school meals in academies across West Sussex do not meet the same nutritional standard as those provided to pupils attending other maintained schools across West Sussex.

Supplementary Question

Would the Cabinet Member accept that the learning service also has the information about take-up of free schools meals available to them and therefore has a responsibility, along with the Cabinet Member, to do all they can to increase the take-up of such meals, not least so that each school receives the maximum pupil premium?

Supplementary Answer

The monitoring of school meals is between the school and the provider of the meals and it is therefore up to the school to make sure that the offer of school meals is made to parents and carers. The County Council will however facilitate

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any processes that allowed schools to take up their allowances. There has been a significant increase in the uptake of free school meals in the last quarter.

Additional Questions

Additional questions were asked by Mr B Hall, Mrs Knight, Mr Rogers and Mrs Whitehead.

6. Written question from **Mr Acraman** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

Question

Could I be supplied with a list of county land holdings with acreage that

- (a) Are in an urban environment;
- (b) Are more than one acre in size;
- (c) Are currently unused and vacant (whether or not they have privacy or similar notices posted, and whether or not the public can physically access that land); and
- (d) Have not been subject to any formal planning applications submitted for their future by either district or county.

Answer

The schedule below identifies land holdings which are:

- (a) In urban environment and;
- (b) Over 1 acre and;
- (c) Currently unused or vacant; and
- (d) Not subject to any formal planning applications.

Schedule (covers all items (a), (b), (c) and (d))

Address	Current Use	Size	Notes
Chichester Orchard Street	Field adjacent to Central School playing fields	2.4 acres	Managed by local school/community groups use by agreement
North Littlehampton	Unallocated	Circa 10 acres	Recent Village Green application rejected
Tangmere	Vacant. Concrete yard and access to Tangmere airfield	10 acres	Known as the 'Concrete Apron site' and submitted to Chichester DC LDF as

Address	Current Use	Size	Notes
			part of a wider envelope of development by a consortia of landowners.
Crawley Tilgate	Former school site	10.5 acres	Identified for housing by Crawley BC LDF No application submitted as awaited Tilgate Dam works.

However, a meeting can be arranged with the relevant officers to agree a more precise understanding of your criteria and the list of properties that matches these.

Supplementary Question

I am surprised that the list of county land holdings only has four entries. Would the Cabinet Member be happy if I speak to officers to see if the list is as long as it might be?

Supplementary Answer

I can confirm that officers will be available to go through the database with you.

7. Written question from **Mrs Millson** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources**

Question

Frameworki (FWi) is the name of the main social care computer system for which both the case management and financial management aspects of the system went live on 13 June 2011. Since then a number of issues have arisen with the financial aspects of the system. Payments to suppliers (many of whom are classified as small and medium sized businesses) through the system have had to be suspended and a 'work around' system has been put in place. In addition to this, £467,000 of customer contributions have not been collected from over 500 residents since the system went live. Arrangements have been put in place to collect the underpayments from the affected customers. Can the Cabinet Member please confirm:

- (a) Whether he is satisfied with the arrangements put in place to collect the underpayment from those customers affected, some of whom have learning difficulties or are elderly;
- (b) Whether he expects to recover the total uncollected sum due;
- (c) Whether he considers more could and should have been done to prevent

this occurring before the system went live;

- (d) How much it has cost this authority to deal with this problem, including workshops for suppliers, additional staff costs to recover the payments and the upgrade to the system to correct these issues;
- (e) Whether the upgrade for FWi has been introduced yet and whether the financial management system is now fully working as intended?
- (f) Furthermore, I understand that problems persist with the CASPAR case management system, used to manage the finances and property of vulnerable adults across West Sussex who cannot manage their own arrangements and have no one else to do it for them. Can the Cabinet Member reassure me that the County Council is effectively meeting its obligations in respect of properly managing the finances of all in this client group?

Answer

- (a) A project team from Business Change was established as soon as the problem became known and is working closely with Adults' Services and Finance. Letters have been sent to affected customers informing them of the situation. Customers will be asked to begin payment of the arrears from February, unless they wish to pay earlier and will be offered the opportunity to pay instalments. To keep the wider public informed the Chief Executive wrote to the local press at the end of November sharing the problem with the readership. Customers are responding well to this approach and a number have settled their bills in advance. I am therefore satisfied that the arrangements are appropriate and take account of the needs of the customers affected.
- (b) The aim is to recover all monies due. However, if there are genuine hardship cases, these will be handled sensitively and decisions made on a case-by-case basis. The County Council will be particularly sensitive about the appropriateness of approaching the family if a customer has died.
- (c) A comprehensive user-acceptance test programme was carried out and signed off prior to go-live. Unfortunately this did not pick up the issues referred to in your question. With the benefit of hindsight, it would have been helpful to have tested the electronic interface with suppliers and with a greater volume of live data as several of the issues encountered post go-live were as a result of the inconsistent formats of data received from suppliers.
- (d) Two temporary finance staff have been employed until March 2012 to work through the data and manually process the backlog at a cost of £21,000. We will track progress of this work on a weekly basis and keep resources under review to ensure the problem is solved. The workshops for suppliers were undertaken by existing staff. The recent upgrade to the latest version of Frameworki was provided as part of the annual support fee that is paid to Corelogic.

- (e) The upgrade successfully went live on 12 December. It has removed several bugs, including one which could have caused duplicate payments to suppliers or duplicate billing of customers. We have reverted to a manual process for inputting the financial information into the system and I am confident that suppliers and customers will be charged and paid accurately. Work is now underway to understand the costs and timeframes further to automate the process of receiving information from our suppliers. This is now being scoped and we hope to have a solution in place early in next financial year and when completed should ensure that the system operates with a minimal amount of human intervention.
- (f) The use of CASPAR has been reviewed as part of the response to a recent internal audit of the work of the Financial Adult Safeguarding Team. That review highlighted that the FAS Team were not using all of the facilities that CASPAR offers. A project team has been established to ensure that the work of the FAS Team is on a firm foundation and work was carried out in October 2011 to determine a consistent approach to the use of CASPAR. This is now in place and will be finalising its recommendations on the use of CASPAR early in the New Year. I can assure you that the plan addresses all of the issues in the report and will be completed by 31 March 2011. As far as protecting the interest of the financially vulnerable adults is concerned, I am confident that despite the problems with CASPAR a satisfactory service is being provided.

Supplementary Question

Is the Cabinet Member confident that the proposed interface with SAP will not produce any similar problems?

Supplementary Answer

One always needs to be cautious in saying that computer systems will be OK. However, the solution that is being developed should mean that the data that the system needs to generate payments to suppliers and invoices to customers will be an automated process needing minimal manual intervention.

8. Written question from **Mrs B A Smith** for reply by the **Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport**

Question

At a recent meeting in Crawley serious concern was expressed about the increased number of aircraft flying low over Crawley neighbourhoods and Town Centre which is attributed by GAL to 'go arounds'. Does the Cabinet Member have any official indication that this may suggest an increase in flights into and out of Gatwick and may lead to a request for the ending of West Sussex County Council's agreement before 2019 to build a second runway at Gatwick?

Answer

A 'go around' is the movement that in-coming aircraft occasionally have to make

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when it is not possible to land at the Airport. There are a number of reasons why go arounds occur, the most common being when: the runway is not clear of aircraft, as either a recently landed aircraft is slow to leave, or a departing aircraft is slow to roll and leave the runway; or when the crew of an aircraft in the final stages of approach consider that unstable weather conditions make a renewed approach advisable. In such circumstances, the aircraft will abort the landing and carry out a procedure known as a go around, and make a second approach.

The records provided by Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) show that in recent years the number of both go arounds and flights have decreased.

Table: Aircraft Go Arounds (Air Traffic Control figures)

Year	Number of in-coming flights	Number of go arounds	Percentage of in-coming flights that go around	Annual passenger numbers
2007	133,271	434	0.33	35,168,306
2008	131,858	415	0.31	34,178,563
2009	125,899	455	0.36	32,369,935
2010	120,263	364	0.3	31,348,114

Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) is currently consulting on its draft Master Plan, which sets out its growth forecasts to 2020 and, in less detail, to 2030. It states that it has no current plans for a second runway at Gatwick, and remains fully committed to the 1979 legal agreement precluding the construction of a new runway before 2019. The draft Master Plan assumes growth in passenger numbers to 40 million passengers per year by 2020, with one runway and two terminals within the existing Airport boundary. GAL is looking to optimise the capacity of the runway by making small improvements in peak capacity, but these will be limited to one or two additional movements in peak hours.

The legal agreement has almost eight years to run. However, it is important to keep up to date with developments and proposals relating to Gatwick Airport. The new owners have been clear about their intentions for managing the Airport over the next few years. There is no benefit to speculating at this time about the value, purpose and aims of a further legal agreement to replace the 1979 agreement. The downward trend in the number of flights and go arounds, and the commitment to the 1979 legal agreement, does not suggest any interest in seeking to end the agreement prematurely.

Supplementary Question

There is a very real concern amongst local residents about the number of 'go arounds' over-flying the neighbourhoods and the town centre. I will make enquiries about whether the routes have changed.

Supplementary Answer

I do not yet have the figures for 2011 but there is nothing to suggest that the number of 'go arounds' have gone up. I will however keep a close eye on the figures together with the statistics showing any deviations from the prescribed flight paths.

Agenda Item No. 6(b) - Cabinet Member Question Time

Members asked questions on the Cabinet Members' reports as set out below. In instances where a Cabinet Member undertook to take follow-up action, this is also noted below.

Leader

The Leader answered questions on paragraph 1, Growing Places Fund, from Mr B Hall and Mrs Millson.

In response to a request from Mrs Millson that the Council was informed at least as early as the press about which schemes were submitted, the Leader said she would raise the issue at the Local Enterprise Partnership Board to see whether it was possible.

Deputy Leader and portfolio for Communities, Environment and Enterprise

The Deputy Leader answered questions on paragraph 3, an investment fund of up to £15m, from Mr Burrett, Mrs Coleman, Mrs Millson, Mr Smytherman, Dr Walsh and Mr Watson.

Cabinet Member for Adults' Services

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the paragraph 7, eligibility assessments for blue badges, from Mr Lanzer.

Cabinet Member for Children and Families (Lead Member for Children's Services)

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 8, youth support and development, from Mrs Arculus, Mr O'Brien, Mr Tyler and Dr Walsh.

In response to a comment from Dr Walsh, the Cabinet Member said he would respond to him on the situation with regard to Rustington Parish Council and youth provision.

Paragraphs 11 and 13, Safeguarding Peer Review and Corporate Parenting Panel, from Mrs Field and Mrs Knight.

In answer to a question from Mrs Knight about what actions the Cabinet Member planned to take in response to the report of the Peer Review in relation to early intervention, the Cabinet Member said he would provide her with a full written response.

Cabinet Member for Education and Schools

The Cabinet Member answered questions on paragraph 17, Ofsted annual report, from Mr Burgess and Mr Smith.

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Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

The Cabinet Member answered questions on paragraph 23, Government's Provisional Finance Settlement, from Mr Deedman and Mrs Whitehead.

The Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport

The Cabinet Member answered questions on the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 24, A27 and A23, from Mr Blampied, Mr M N Hall, Mrs Smith, Mr Smith, Dr Walsh and Mr Wilkinson.

In response to a request from Mr Hall, the Cabinet Member said he would keep members updated on progress with the study to bring improvement work on the A27 Chichester bypass into the 2014/15 major projects programme.

In response to a comment from Mrs Smith about the signing of the road works at Warninglid and the need for a clearer explanation of the length of and reason for the diversion, the Cabinet Member said he would raise the issue at the next review between the County Council and the Highways Agency.

Paragraph 25, reductions in the County Council's financial support to local bus services, from Dr Dennis.

Cabinet Member for Public Protection

The Cabinet Member answered questions on paragraph 21, merger of East and West Sussex fire and rescue services, from Mr Blake and Mr Stevens.

Agenda Item No. 6(c) - Leader's Question Time

The Leader answered questions from members on the following topics:

'Don't Cut Us Out' campaign, from Mr T M E Dunn.

Following a request from Mr Dunn the Leader said she would provide members with a brief summary of the matters discussed at a meeting due to be held with Barry Pickthall of the 'Don't Cut Us Out' campaign in February.

Chichester Festival Theatre Funding, from Mr Rogers.

Mr Henry Smith MP's statement of the decision on the European treaty, from Mrs Coleman.

Big Brother Watch and data loss, from Mrs Millson.

Children's Services intervention, from Mr Crow.