

Cabinet Members' Reports

The following reports from Cabinet Members cover the period from 28th May 2010.

Leader - Ms Louise Goldsmith

- 1 On 10th June the Leader attended the **County Joint Leaders'** meeting with the District and Borough Leaders of West Sussex. The discussion focused on issues arising from the General Election and the anticipated budget announcement on 22nd June. The group agreed that difficult decisions would be required in the coming months on service delivery to the residents of West Sussex. To address this concern it was agreed that swifter progress was required on the 'Better Together' programme, to look at joined-up working opportunities in the areas of economic prosperity, support services, asset management, procurement, customer access, waste and integrated services. The meeting also touched briefly on the future of the South East England Development Agency and the establishment of Local Economic Partnerships.
- 2 On 18th June the Leader and Cabinet and the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Democrats met **West Sussex Members of Parliament**, the first such meeting following the General Election and the formation of the coalition government. The opportunity was taken to revise the format of the meetings, with the Leader chairing the meeting and MPs updating members on the coalition programme and Cabinet Members updating MPs on key areas of activity within the County Council. At this meeting MPs outlined plans for Education, the Police and the Cabinet Office and received updates from the County Council on the Fire and Rescue Service redesign, Youth Service transformation, Adult and Community Learning, grants and finance, day care services and highways. The meeting concluded that the new format worked well and provided improved discussion and actions to take forward.
- 3 On 2nd July the Leader chaired an emergency meeting of the **Public Service Board Executive** (PSB) to consider the impact of the Government's recent announcement of a reduction in Local Area Agreement Performance Reward Grant which, for West Sussex, amounts to £6.07m. Detailed analysis and categorisation of projects and commitments revealed a shortfall of £3,156,640. The County Council was able to put forward a proposal to cover the majority of the shortfall, which would be achieved through a number of reductions in grants in areas of its budget, subject to a formal decision later in July. In agreeing to support the proposal from the County Council it was noted that there would still be a small shortfall that the other partners agreed to address. The PSB Executive also supported the reductions in grants to the projects for School Safety Zones, Adult Education Centres, the Invest to Save fund, carbon dioxide emissions in public buildings, additional grit supplies and preparation of local planning documents. The PSB Executive agreed to look at how the partnership should work together in the future and what priorities it should be addressing, particularly in relation to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Deputy Leader and portfolio for Highways and Transport - Mr Lionel Barnard

- 4 The Deputy Leader welcomed the County Council's involvement in the **National Highways and Transport Public Satisfaction Survey** to find out how people feel about local roads and transport. A questionnaire has been sent to thousands of randomly selected West Sussex residents this month as part of the survey which is being run by Ipsos MORI, the results of which will be published later in the summer. The study will cover all aspects of local highway and transport services from the condition of roads and pavements to the quality of local bus services. This is the first year that West Sussex has taken part in the survey, which has been running nationally for three years. Until now West Sussex has carried out its own annual household travel survey which has shown recognition of the impact transport has on the environment and the importance of reducing car use and switching to 'greener' modes of transport.
- 5 On 11th June the Deputy Leader attended the final **Regional Transport Board** (RTB). The RTB Chairman has since met the Under Secretary of State for Transport and highlighted the most urgent schemes that are in imminent danger of losing their funding, one of which is Gatwick Station. The future of the remainder of schemes identified for West Sussex such as the A23, A24 and A27 improvements, and the Coastal Transport System (jointly with Brighton & Hove City Council), will now be subject to the Government's autumn expenditure review. It now remains for the County Council to lobby the Government directly on the future of these schemes. Therefore, the Deputy Leader has written to the Secretary of State for Transport highlighting the need for improvements, in particular along the West Sussex coast, and requested a meeting with him so that he can arrange a visit to the area.
- 6 The Deputy Leader has launched a consultation on the content of the new **Local Transport Plan**, a blueprint for transport in West Sussex from 2011-26. The plan will set out the County Council's transport policy and planned improvements for the next five years. The County Council has worked with many organisations to establish their views and priorities for transport in order to draw up the draft plan. Until the outcome of the Government's autumn spending review, it is unclear whether it will be possible to fund everything in the plan. Therefore the consultation will be used to help identify priorities. The County Council will also seek to secure additional funding such as developer contributions to deliver the plan. A questionnaire is now available on the County Council's website and a series of road shows are being held across the county during the 12-week consultation period for people to find out more and give their views on transport in West Sussex. The County Council will be asked to adopt the plan formally early next year.

Cabinet Member for Adults' Services - Mr Peter Catchpole

- 7 The Cabinet Member has endorsed a three-month consultation on a new, three-tier model of **day services** to meet the diverse needs of older people and working-age adults with a physical and sensory impairment or acquired

brain injury. Following the introduction of personal budgets, people now have more choice and control over the way their social care is provided. The consultation seeks views about the activities and opportunities customers wish to have available and which can be provided through a range of local community services or, for those with more complex needs and high dependency, through more specialist services in a building-based setting. Feedback from the consultation will inform the Cabinet Member's decision on implementation of the new model early in 2011.

- 8 A new framework for commissioning **prevention and wellbeing services** for older people is being developed jointly with NHS West Sussex and other partners, including third sector organisations, and will be considered by the Cabinet Member early in the autumn. The framework will provide a strategy for funding the third sector and will underpin the new model of day activities. A series of events has been held for third sector organisations to identify their concerns and assist them in preparing for new ways of working that will arise from the growth of Self Directed Support, changes in day services and the conclusion of the Partnerships for Older People Project pilot scheme in September.

Cabinet Member for Children and Families - Mr Pete Bradbury

- 9 The Cabinet Member will shortly be approving proposals for the future delivery of **Youth Services** in West Sussex. Following a review of the existing service and completion of an extensive public consultation, proposals have been developed to create an integrated youth support and development service and deliver £2m in savings. Under the proposals the County Council will continue to offer preventative and early intervention services targeted at those communities in most need and work closely with the education and voluntary sectors and other local authorities to deliver universal community-led services. Work to implement the proposals will begin immediately and the Cabinet Member will keep members advised of progress.
- 10 On 5th July a further meeting involving the Executive Director Adults and Children, the Director Operations (Children and Young People) and the Department for Education Intervention Team took place to discuss progress with the removal of the **Intervention Notice**. The position of the Intervention Team is that they have recommended to the new Minister that West Sussex could now come out of Intervention and implied that the Intervention Notice from the Minister has now ended. However, the new government is still determining the criteria through which local authorities will come out of Intervention, including those like West Sussex that have made significant progress. The Cabinet Member has therefore written to the Secretary of State pressing him to remove the notice.
- 11 On 5th July the Secretary of State for Education confirmed that capital funding for **children's centres** will not be cut this year. The programme to deliver the centres in West Sussex was developed as part of the national 'Sure Start' initiative. Whilst the Cabinet Member welcomes this announcement, the ongoing costs associated with running the centres is a

concern. The Cabinet Member has therefore initiated a review of the revenue costs of the centres in West Sussex. The Cabinet Member awaits further information from the Government and will keep members advised of developments.

Cabinet Member for Communities - Mr Brad Watson

12 The Cabinet Member has welcomed the formation of a **Sussex Young People's Police Authority**, a joint initiative between the West Sussex Youth Cabinet and the Sussex Police Authority. The first meeting, which was attended by members of the Youth Cabinet and students from a number of secondary schools, took place on 1st July and provided the opportunity for the young people to question the Assistant Chief Constable of Sussex Police and the Chairman of Sussex Police Authority about modern policing and the role of the Police Authority and to give their views about policing in the local area. The meeting was successful and a follow-up event will be arranged in the autumn with other Youth Cabinets in Brighton and Hove and East Sussex, and young people from harder to reach or marginalised groups in Sussex. The Cabinet Member is also pleased that the activities of the **West Sussex Youth Cabinet** have been recognised at a presentation, at Westminster on 5th July, of Democracy Awards to the 19 West Sussex schools and colleges which achieved a turnout of 50% or more in the annual elections for the Youth Cabinet and UK Youth Parliament.

Cabinet Member for Education and Schools (Lead Member for Children's Services) - Mr Peter Griffiths

13 The Secretary of State for Education has written to all schools in West Sussex setting out the Government's intentions for extending the **Academies programme** and the legislative timetable for the Academies Bill, which contains proposals to enable all maintained schools to become Academy schools. The Cabinet Member has written to head teachers and chairs of governors of schools that have expressed an interest in becoming Academies to assure them that the County Council will do all it can to support them in making their decision. The direction of government policy is broadly in line with the West Sussex Education and Schools Policy, which provides a framework to deliver education and training to improve learning in West Sussex. Work is being undertaken to explore ways in which the County Council can provide all schools with the same freedoms and benefits as Academies.

14 On 18th June the Secretary of State for Education wrote to all local authorities advising them of the progress with the Government's school reform proposals and announced plans to set up '**Free Schools**'. These are independent schools set up by groups aiming to tackle educational inequalities in an area. The Department for Education plans to work with a range of groups who are interested in founding Free Schools through the New Schools Network, which will vet initial applications and assist applicants through the process. The Secretary of State has emphasised the role of local

authorities in understanding the local circumstances before a final decision is made and the Cabinet Member awaits further information about the Government's proposals.

- 15 On 28th June Ofsted conducted an inspection of the **West Sussex Adult and Community Learning Service**. The inspectors focused on leadership and management of the service and carried out reviews of various aspects of the service including technology, languages, arts, media and publishing. The Cabinet Member was interviewed as part of the inspection process and discussed the options that were being considered for the future provision of the service. The inspection report will be published in six weeks' time and the outcome will influence the development of the provision of adult and community learning in West Sussex.
- 16 The Cabinet Member is pleased with the recent round of **OFSTED** inspections and that the number of schools that are improving on their previous Ofsted grades continues to exceed the national average. Since the last meeting of the County Council a number of West Sussex schools have been inspected and the percentage of schools that are outstanding has increased to 16 per cent. Littlegreen Special School in Chichester and Queen Elizabeth II Silver Jubilee School, Horsham have been judged as outstanding with a number of other schools judged as good or satisfactory.
- 17 On 5th July the Secretary of State for Education announced a national review of all **capital investment in schools**. The Cabinet Member welcomed the news that the four West Sussex Academies and the County Council's 'Building Schools for the Future' pathfinder scheme are unaffected by the Minister's announcement. Further information on the review is not expected before its completion in October and the Cabinet Member will keep members advised of developments. In the meantime, officers are in discussion with Department for Education officials so that the County Council can assess the potential impact of any further announcements of 2010/11 capital grant reductions.

Cabinet Member for Environment and Economy - Mrs Deborah Urquhart

- 18 On 3rd June the Cabinet Member attended the first meeting of the **West Sussex Environment and Climate Change Board**. The Board is made up of organisations from public, private and voluntary sectors with Rolls Royce, the West Sussex Growers' Association, Southern Railway, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Chichester University and Viridor represented at the first meeting. The Board has a common aim to work together to develop a prosperous sustainable economy, moving to more sustainable energy sources, and a reduction in the county's carbon dioxide emissions. The Board will meet four times a year and will establish targets to achieve on a variety of environmental and climate change issues. Professor Bob Allison from Sussex University was elected Chairman of the Board, and the Cabinet Member, Vice-Chairman.
- 19 The Cabinet Member is pleased with the impact that a successful bid by the County Council for funding from the **Future Jobs Fund scheme** has had in West Sussex. Around 170 job vacancies had been identified for the scheme

by the end of June and so far 120 young people have started in funded, six-month positions. The jobs are aimed at 18 to 24-year-olds who have been claiming Job Seeker's Allowance for approaching six months and are identified as eligible for the scheme by Job Centre Plus. They are matched with a job that suits their skills and training, their interests and career aspirations. Each job lasts for an initial period of six months, with employers able to extend the length of employment offered. In addition, all young people on the scheme receive training and development. Some of the jobs targeted at the most deprived areas of the county, including Crawley and the coastal strip, are open to those aged over 25.

- 20 The Cabinet Member is pleased that the County Council has signed the **Material Resource Management Contract**, which is a 25-year contract with Biffa Waste Services for the long-term management of household waste that cannot be recycled. Under the contract Biffa will build, and from 2013 operate, a mechanical biological treatment plant at its landfill site near Warnham, north of Horsham, which will be able to turn rubbish that cannot be recycled into resources such as compost and electricity. The plant will join the other flagship waste management facilities within West Sussex that, together with improved waste collection methods, have seen household waste recycling levels reach 42 per cent in 2009/10. These sites are further supported by the County Council's ongoing waste reduction plan through schemes such as home composting and the real nappies campaign.
- 21 The Cabinet Member has attended a number of shadow **South Downs National Park Authority** (SDNPA) meetings since the last Council meeting, as arrangements are made for its formal establishment in April 2011. As part of these arrangements, the SDNPA will become the sole planning authority for the park area from April 2011 and the County Council's role as planning authority within the National Park will cease at that point. As the Cabinet Member is a member of the SDNPA, the Leader will shortly decide, subject to terms of agreement, whether the County Council as the current local planning authority, will determine non-major planning applications on behalf of the SDNPA from April 2011 under an agency arrangement proposed by the SDNPA. Major applications will be dealt with by the SDNPA.
- 22 The Cabinet Member will shortly be approving a proposal that the **Minerals and Waste Core Strategy**, part of the statutory Minerals and Waste Development Framework, should not be taken forward in line with the timetable that was approved in March 2010. The intention in the draft scheme was that a Preferred Option draft of the Core Strategy would be presented to the County Council in October for approval for public consultation purposes. However, primarily due to uncertainties that have arisen about plan preparation resulting from the announcement of the Government's intention to abolish the Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan), the implications of the designation of the South Downs National Park and the new legislation on energy and climate change which will promote energy from waste, it is considered sensible to suspend formal preparation of the Core Strategy. A new timetable for preparation of the Core Strategy will be prepared at a later date.

- 23** The Cabinet Member has met representatives from the RSPB and local members regarding the possible transfer of the management of the **Pagham Harbour Local Nature Reserve** to the RSPB from the County Council. Since the initial announcement of the proposals by the County Council in November 2009, the two organisations have been investigating the implications of transferring what is a very complex and detailed project. The RSPB now has a detailed understanding of what is involved in managing the site, with both parties happy with progress. There will be a consultation period between 31st July and 4th September for local people to register their views and suggestions. Dependent on the outcome of the negotiation stage, a date for possible transfer of management is expected in 2011.

Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources - Mr Michael Brown

- 24** On 10th June the Government announced **reductions in grant funding** to local authorities for 2010/11, with grants to the County Council cut by £12.717m. The reductions include £6.07m from the Local Area Agreement Reward Grant, £2.26m from capital grants and £3.43m from the Area Based Grant. The Government has removed the ring-fence for some specific grants to allow local authorities some flexibility in meeting the reductions. The Cabinet Member and Cabinet have discussed options and proposed a way forward, with the aim of the reductions having the least possible impact on residents. Internal efficiency savings and using uncommitted funding will save £1m. £0.7m savings will be found from school support activities, early education and health and family support. There will be reduced spending of £1.1m on training and development work for school improvement, with schools contributing more from their own budgets. A reduction of £0.2m will be made in grants supporting special or additional needs. Finally, a recruitment freeze will contribute £0.4m to savings.
- 25** The Cabinet Member is considering proposals to deliver savings over the next three years as the implications of the coalition **government's emergency budget** on 22nd June are studied. At this stage the County Council believes it will need to save at least an additional £75m over the next three years, but full details will not be known until the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review is announced on 20th October. The proposals include reducing the cost of internal bureaucracy, no spending in discretionary areas where there is limited or questionable return on investment, working with the private sector to develop new and different ways of delivering services and implementing internal service reviews. A members' seminar to discuss corporate priorities and the 2011/12 budget was held on 1st July, with members contributing positively to the business planning process by setting out many of their priorities for the county.
- 26** On 22nd July the Cabinet Member and Leader will meet the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Cabinet Member is lobbying the Government for urgent changes to the **Area Cost Adjustment (ACA)** element of government funding for local authorities. The ACA is the part of the local authority grant formula that compensates authorities which incur wage costs higher than in other parts of the country. The County Council has had eight successive years of

the lowest possible rises in its core grant from the Government, much of it caused by reduced ACA funding. As agreed in the motion passed by the County Council on 26th March, the Cabinet Member will call on the Government to open up the ACA calculation to scrutiny, share its information with all local authorities and implement a revised ACA in time for 2011/12, using the research by NERA Economic Consulting, West Sussex and other local authorities.

Cabinet Member for Public Protection - Mr Peter Evans

- 27** The Cabinet Member has launched a consultation on proposed changes to the **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service** to update the service and ensure it has the right resources in place to continue to make West Sussex a safer place. Proposals include changes to some fire stations, personnel and appliances, significant investment in training and facilities for firefighters, a faster response in parts of the county more at risk, strengthening work in the community to prevent fires and making efficiency savings. The proposals include providing full time firefighters at Burgess Hill and Littlehampton Fire Stations during busy periods, closing retained fire stations at Bosham, Findon and Keymer and providing new fire stations and training facilities in Crawley and at Broadbridge Heath, Horsham. The consultation is open now and closes on 8th October.
- 28** The Cabinet Member attended the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the **West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and the British Red Cross**, strengthening the existing partnership. For more than a decade the British Red Cross have been working alongside the service operating a Fire and Emergency Support Service to provide practical and emotional support to hundreds of people each year across the county whose lives have been adversely affected by fire, flood or similar emergency. Red Cross volunteers use specially adapted vehicles operating from Haywards Heath Fire Station, and more recently from Littlehampton Fire Station, to provide immediate support. Volunteers also signpost people to agencies that can provide any longer-term assistance they may need.
- 29** The Cabinet Member reports that the **mortuary** at Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath has closed following a Clinical Pathology Accreditation inspection for failing to meet the necessary standards. The closure means that post-mortem examinations can no longer take place at the hospital. While the situation is being reviewed, mortuary provision and post-mortems for the north of the county will take place at East Surrey Hospital in Redhill. HM Coroner for West Sussex is investigating all the current mortuary provisions that are in place across West Sussex.

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Background Papers

None