

## Report to Chichester City Council by Sarah Sharp, County Councillor for Chichester South December 2024

### Budget Concerns

The County is under severe budgetary constraint. A public consultation survey which shows the difficulties the Council is facing ended on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December which asked for public feedback into how to tackle the shortfall.

- a) The final government settlement won't be known until mid-December. But real terms increase of 3.2% in Core Spending Power for the whole local government sector was announced in the Budget with an extra £1bn for the Household Support Fund.
- b) Adult social care budgets are under stress due to adults with increasingly complex needs, the growing number of adults of working age with high needs and the increased national living wage that has just been announced. It is unclear whether or how councils and other public and charity sectors will be compensated for the increase in cost of employer National Insurance. The County Officers stress the need to keep residents at home for as long as possible. With family members moving away older people are often placed in expensive care homes too early at a cost of £2k a week. When funds run out the Council can't maintain people in these expensive homes and they need to be moved.
- c) The Budget announced a £1bn increase nationally in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision funding. This is especially welcome due to the large numbers of children needing EHCPs (60% increase) and the increased cost of home to school transport (up 20% in the last year). The high number of Child Protection Plans is luckily on the decrease which will help the budget as each placement can cost £0.25-0.5m. Some Multi-Academy trusts have excluded pupils with SEND and this has put extra pressure on maintained schools. The County has a SEND Stakeholder Board that only has representatives from maintained schools on it so far.
- d) Since the LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships) were abolished earlier this year economic planning has come into the County and a Board has been set up with an independent chair.
- e) More is spent on rubbish disposal than on the roads. Highways are under great stress due to increased rainfall. But the Budget did include an increase of 50% in local roads maintenance funds amounting to £500m. More information about highway repairs can be read here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/better-roads/>

### Consultations

- 1) Share your views on West Sussex's new Road Safety Strategy:

<https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/road-safety-strategy>

Deadline 2nd February.

- 2) If an adult you know needs or would benefit from respite care, this survey is open for your feedback until 5<sup>th</sup> January: <https://yourvoice.westsussex.gov.uk/lis-mh-respite-recommissioning>

## **Other Matters of Interest**

### **Food Waste Collection**

Waste Collection Authorities (in our case CDC) will be required to collect food waste separately from household waste by March 2026. The County Council will need to provide a network of transfer stations for the collections authorities to deliver the food waste to. Work will need to be done to reconfigure Westhampnett Amenity Tip to allow food waste to be segregated from other waste streams before being transported onwards for reprocessing by Anaerobic Digestion at Warnham Mechanical Biological Treatment facility which is also currently being reconfigured to treat separately collected food waste.

Work at Westhampnett will include fitting of new doors, improved odour control and new wash down facilities.

### **Pension Credit**

The deadline to apply for Pension Credit is 21<sup>st</sup> December. A successful application to Pension Credit will give residents automatic eligibility to the Winter Fuel Payment of up to £300. This can be claimed even if the resident has modest savings, a retirement income or own their town home. Accessing Pension Credit could also give access to other help eg for council tax or housing costs. <https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit> or phone 0800 99 1234

Help is available in the library or with the Supporting You team at CDC on 01243 534860.

### **Abuse to West Sussex staff working on the Roads**

Officers and contractors working on the road carrying out repairs etc are facing increasing intimidation and abuse. The County Council has made it clear that it will not tolerate this behaviour. Work is being done to improve the roads and it doesn't make sense to be offensive to the very people trying to improve and make things better.

### **Smoking**

There are 90,000 smokers in West Sussex and reducing this number is key to reducing the burden on the NHS. An app has just been launched which is free to West Sussex residents to help with stopping smoking: <https://app.smokefreeapp.com/code?voucher=wsxdigital>

As many people who smoke in West Sussex work full time an online app is seen as a great addition to the face-to-face help which is on offer as the app is available 24/7.

This is the link to get more general help with stopping smoking:

<https://www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/topics/smoking/services-for-west-sussex>

Call 01243 521041 or contact [wellbeing@chichester.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@chichester.gov.uk) to get a face-to-face appointment.

There is also a new phone number to report sale of illegal vapes or cigarettes: 08082231133.

## **A27**

A letter from the County Council has been sent to the Prime Minister about concerns about the A27 particularly because of the cancellation of the Arundel Bypass Scheme. A meeting is being sought with the Transport Minister to look for real and lasting improvements to road congestion.

## **Devolution**

WSCC has put in an expression of interest in devolution on the West Sussex footprint. However, none of the District and Boroughs signed up to this. They have signed the expression of interest with Brighton and Hove. The model chosen will ultimately be driven by Westminster which favours the mayoral model. Some commentators say that one county deals are not likely to proceed as the area is too small. The view of the Cabinet at West Sussex is currently not to spend too much time on this but to concentrate on delivering services as devolution has been talked about for many years. Devolution could also potentially bring about re-organisation of local government possibly including making unitary authorities. This is currently a matter of speculation and more will be revealed in the White Paper due out soon.

## **Adult Social Care**

An inspection of adult social care at West Sussex has been set for mid-February and preparation has been intense to get ready for this. The services will be inspected by the CQC which has itself been found failing. This is the report prepared in advance: [Care Quality Commission Self - Assessment Report | WSCC Publication](#)

## **Re-Use Shops**

Billingshurst's Amenity Tip has a Re-Use shop and the income of this is going to be recycled to benefit the local community through a new project, supported by Biffa West Sussex, where Sussex groups will be eligible for a portion of the £50,000 funding. Applications for projects for example Swap Shops, Community Fridges, Repair Cafes, "Library of Things", will be welcome early 2025.

There aren't any plans to have a re-use shop in Westhampnett at the moment to reduce items going into landfill as the site needs to be reconfigured but a second Re-Use Shop has just been opened in Worthing.

## **Paint Recycling**

The county council has collaborated with Biffa and Community RePaint, for a new initiative aimed at reducing paint waste and redistributing surplus paint to people across the county.

You can now donate unwanted water-based paint or take away up to three tins of paint donated by others at designated Recycling Centres across West Sussex, in a bid to encourage reuse throughout the community.

This service is available at Westhampnett – you do need to book a time to go into Westhampnett to deposit or pick up paint: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/land-waste-and-housing/waste-and-recycling/recycling-and-waste-prevention/recycling-centres/book-to-recycle-booking-system/> or by calling 01243 642106.

### **Fostering**

A new film has been launched to recruit more foster carers:

<https://fosteringwestsussex.org.uk/everything-film>

Foster care is at crisis point. Since 2018, the number of people enquiring about fostering has significantly decreased, while we have seen a 33% increase in the number of children and young people the County care for. Please ask people you know whether looking after a child is something they could consider.

For more information <https://fosteringwestsussex.org.uk/>

### **Keeping up to Date**

The County has a series of newsletters on different topics that you can subscribe to keep up to date with the different work streams the county covers eg highways, environment, education, library service, public health etc.

<https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKWSCC/subscriber/new>

Over 200,000 residents have subscribed to the Residents' Newsletter