

Chidham and Hambrook Parish Council Report- November 2016

Tidebank

This subject was raised to Johnathan Ullmer who is the WSCC Highways manager last Friday. He has committed to finding a solution using the technical expertise of Kevin Macknay. The fact that C&H parish were unsuccessful with OW3 does not prevent an exploration of how WSCC can assist. There is no admission of ownership by WSCC and this lack of ownership may be unfathomable moving forward. I have hopes that WSCC will step up to the challenge.

Future Expansion at Chidham Parochial School

I have written to the WSCC Cabinet member for Finance – Jeremy Hunt as follows:

Dear Jeremy

Can you please describe to me the timeframes for the expansion of school numbers at the Chidham Parochial School, Chidham and the planned increase in pupil numbers that are envisaged over the next 5 years that warrant this expansion.

Can you please describe the resulting class sizes and the additional costs for running an expanded school in Chidham and how this is being financed.

Can you also please describe any improvements in the Highway infrastructure that is also being planned to match this expansion of the school and applying to Chidham Lane.

As you may know this approach road to the school, has already had a serious accident involving a child this year due to busyness of parents dropping off and picking their children up. I would hate that safety is further worsened due to any expansion proposals and therefore it is essential that any school expansion is complemented with improvements to the highway serving the school.

Specifically can you tell me the following with regard to the highway that serves the school, Chidham Lane:

1. What additional parking is being planned outside the school to accommodate pick up/drops off?
2. What additional safety measures are being planned for the parking of vehicles outside the school and particularly at busy periods of the day?
3. What if any land has been identified to take the expansion of the school premises and additional car parking on site for staff et al?
4. Following (point 3) – is there any scope for compulsory purchase of adjacent land to facilitate improvements in parking?
5. What if any speed restrictions are being altered in the approach to the school?

His response is as follows:

Apologies for not responding to you before now. Unfortunately I do not have an answer for you yet, but as soon as I do I will get back to you.

Coperforma Contract – Press Release

The UKIP Group at West Sussex County Council has been proactive in voicing the very real concerns of the public about Coperforma's performance in recent months. UKIP members have raised questions at meetings of the County Council on 27 May and 21 October, urging the Cabinet to take action to lobby the NHS to improve the situation. The UKIP Group welcomes the news that Coperforma is handing back its contract for patient transport services in West Sussex. UKIP members will continue to monitor the situation and the transition to the new service in April 2017.

Written Questions raised by UKIP at recent County Council meeting 21/10/16

Question 1

As a commissioner of public health services and on behalf of our residents, is the Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing lobbying the Clinical Commissioning Groups to get a grip on ambulance services, given the poor performance of Coperforma on patient transport services and a worrying 'inadequate' rating for the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Trust?

Answer to Q1

Whilst the Cabinet Member is responsible for the commissioning of public health services, the patient transport service and the operation of the South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (SECAMB) is the responsibility of the Kent, Sussex and Surrey Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs).

The CCG contract, quality and commissioning leads are jointly monitoring the SECAMB Unified Recovery Plan based on recommendations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) report. CCGs commission patient transport services locally. In West Sussex, Coastal West Sussex CCG, Crawley CCG and Horsham & Mid Sussex CCG commission the Sussex Patient Transport Service.

The Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee (HASC) continues to receive evidence from and scrutinise the Sussex Patient Transport Service and considered a report at its 29 September meeting. HASC, in its health scrutiny role, will be holding the commissioners and contractors of this service to account at its 10 November meeting and will be joining with elected members from neighbouring authorities to carry out ongoing scrutiny of SECAMB as it takes forward the necessary actions, as a result of the CQC inspection.

Question 2

The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner's reduction in Police Community Support Officer posts is concerning, with 65 posts being removed in the coming financial year, against a backdrop of significant reductions and change in their operation. A reduction in PCSOs could lead to low level crime increasing in the county, impacting on community safety programmes and leaving councils to deal with resulting problems, such as dealing with flytipping and graffiti.

Does the Cabinet Member share my concern about the Police and Crime Commissioner's reduction in Police Community Support Officer posts in West Sussex and the potential impact on our community safety programmes?

Answer to Q2

The Cabinet Member is aware that the new Local Policing Model for Sussex includes changes to both the role specification and establishment number of Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) posts across West Sussex.

The Cabinet Member recognises that the Chief Constable is responsible for the operational delivery of policing which includes oversight of their organisational transformation programme and implementation of the new Local Policing Model.

Further information can be found here: <http://www.sussex.police.uk/about-us/priorities-and-direction/local-policing-model/>.

The Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner holds the Chief Constable to account and her actions are scrutinised by the Sussex Police and Crime Panel. The Cabinet Member is confident that County Council members on the Police and Crime Panel (including Ms James) will be actively engaging in the discussions and so the County Council makes no further comment about the Police and Crime Commissioner's actions in this regard. Further information and minutes of the Police and Crime Panel can be found here: <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/committees-and-decision-making/other-meetings/sussex-police-and-crime-panel/>.

Members of the public are encouraged to continue to contact their local district or borough council directly to report fly-tipping and graffiti or via the County Council using the online reporting tool available on the website. District and borough councils are responsible for the removal of waste on public land and commission graffiti removal services in partnership with the County Council.

The Cabinet Member anticipates that problem-solving activity across West Sussex will not be negatively affected by the changes to PCSO numbers or role. Localised partnership forums will continue to respond to emerging issues through establishment of a Local Action Team or consideration by the Joint Action Group, accountable to a district or borough Community Safety Partnership. County Council officers will continue to participate in these multi-agency meetings which provide targeted responses to hotspot activity (such as fly-tipping or graffiti), to develop longer-term community safety programmes or crime prevention activity.

The Cabinet Member understands from specific briefing material provided by Sussex Police that:

- The new policing model for Sussex is focused on protecting vulnerable people, catching criminals and being there when people need us.
- The new role of the PCSO has been specifically developed in line with changing demands in policing and reshaping our service to make it as effective as possible to meet the needs of the local community.
- Equipped with additional new skills and powers, they are being deployed more flexibly across the whole of Sussex to where they are needed most, tackling the issues that affect the most vulnerable.
- PCSOs are supported by constables who have enforcement capabilities, and are one of a number of layers of policing working to prevent and respond to and investigate crime.
- They are an integral part of larger teams solving local problems and working alongside partners to respond to community needs. They will work closely with partner agencies where appropriate to deal with these local problems.
- The number of PCSO posts in West Sussex in the new model is 84, however currently there are 61 people working across West Sussex, filling the equivalent of 58 posts.
- From the recent recruitment campaign 25 new joiners will be deployed on West Sussex once they have completed their training; some are currently in training and will be on divisions by late October, and the others start their training in November and will be on divisions by January 2017.

Question 3

The County Council's school funding campaign and press reports are highlighting the severe financial challenges facing schools in West Sussex. Suggestions have been made of some schools reducing opening hours (e.g. to four days a week) if the situation is not addressed.

- (a) Can the Leader outline the extent of the problem faced by schools in West Sussex?
- (b) What action is being taken to lobby the Government to achieve a fairer funding formula for West Sussex schools?
- (c) Is there a risk that the County Council will be expected to bail out schools (maintained or academies), leaving a stark choice of either supporting schools or other essential County Council services?

Answer to Q3

- (a) The low funding of schools in West Sussex, together with increased inflation, pay and pension pressures, and the potential unfunded cost burdens, create risk to the provision of education in maintained schools and academies to the detriment to children and young people. In recent years, in view of the low funding and new additional costs of pensions and national insurance, schools have achieved considerable efficiency savings through staffing reviews, improved purchasing and collaboration with other schools. West Sussex schools cannot absorb more pressure on their budgets through further efficiency measures. The savings measures that school leaders are now considering for 2017/18 may reduce the curriculum offer and impact on the school day which could affect skills and future economic development.

The County Council is the accountable body for the proper control of budgets delegated to maintained schools. In consequence, there may be specific financial risk to the Council because its maintained schools may need to set deficit budgets with recovery plans to reduce expenditure, including potential staff reductions. Maintained schools with deficit budgets that become sponsored academies potentially leave any legacy deficit to the County Council on conversion but consultation will take place shortly to convert deficits to repayable loans which would transfer on conversion. The County Council is also the compensatory body for redundancy costs arising from staff reductions in maintained schools. Academies are responsible for meeting their own redundancy costs.

- (b) The Leader wrote to the Secretary of State for Education on 27 July to express deep disappointment about the delay in introducing the national funding formula and its impact on schools in West Sussex. The Minister for School Standards responded on 30 August and gave assurances about the need for the stability of school funding and urged school leaders to consider efficiency measures such as smarter procurement and collaboration. The Leader wrote to the Secretary of State again on 14 September to seek government action as follows:
- allocate transitional funding to West Sussex County Council to support school cost pressures until the implementation of the NFF;
 - reconsider the removal of the general services Education Support Grant (ESG); and
 - recognise High Needs pressures by allocating additional funding.

The Leader also challenged the cut to the ESG because the County Council will still have statutory responsibilities for its maintained schools and passing the cost of ESG to them is to the detriment of the provision of education. The Secretary of State has not yet responded to this second letter.

West Sussex MPs have been briefed about the funding pressures. School leaders have relaunched the WorthLess? campaign and a petition has been delivered to Downing Street by school representatives. There has been considerable media interest in the campaign.

- (c) The County Council also faces considerable cost pressures in 2017/18 as a result of anticipated cuts to government grant, inflation on pay and pensions, new burdens such as the Apprenticeship Levy, and cuts to the ESG. The County Council needs to maintain front line services and unfortunately, like many other local authorities, it cannot absorb these costs for schools.

Question 4

Re: SDNP/16/04679/CM UKOP planning application for drilling and producing oil at Markwells Wood. I accept that this planning application will be dealt with in due course by the South Downs National Park Authority with a cut off for replies given as the 28 October 2016.

- (a) Would the Cabinet Member, however, please confirm what input will be made by the County Council concerning the proposed drilling operations at this site and involving 'acidisation', and which in turn may affect the County Council's Highways and Fire and Rescue Services.
- (b) I am also concerned that the statutory duty of safety given to West Sussex residents by the County Council means that in this instance the County Council is instrumental in conversing with Water utilities on the need to ensure there is no risk of contamination to the water supply to Chichester and its surrounding area especially given the close proximity of water aquifers under this site. Would the Cabinet Member elaborate on how West Sussex residents are being kept informed on any implications for their wellbeing from such operations and whether the County Council is taking any stance in making this happen?

Answer to Q4

- (a) The South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) is the mineral planning authority (MPA) that is responsible for determining the planning application. The County Council, as both a neighbouring MPA and the highway authority (HA), has been formally consulted by the SDNPA about the planning application. There are no cross-boundary issues arising from the Markwells Wood proposal and, therefore, no comments have been made by the County Council as the MPA. The County Council, as the HA, is currently considering the potential impacts of the proposal on highway capacity and road safety and it has not yet responded to the consultation.
- (b) With regard to the potential impact of the proposal on the water environment, including the protection of water resources, the County Council has no statutory duty in this matter. This issue is regulated through both the planning system and environmental permitting regime. Therefore, it is a matter for the SDNPA, as the relevant MPA, and the Environment Agency, which operates environmental permitting regime. Accordingly, it is for those authorities to keep local residents informed about (a) the potential impacts of the proposal and (b) how any adverse impacts are controlled through the relevant regulatory regimes.

Question 5

For some time I have been promised the commencement of a Feasibility Study on the operations of a Household Waste Recycling Site (HWRS) at Hambrook to counter the regretful closure of this mobile site on 1 October 2016 – this closure went ahead despite widespread appeals from parish councils within Bourne and the local member objecting to its closure. It is equally regretful that the planning for this Feasibility Study was not commenced prior to the closure of the mobile site.

Could the Cabinet Member please address:

- (a) At what stage is the Feasibility Study for appraising the reopening of the Hambrook HWRS and why was it not possible to conduct this prior to the closure of the HWRS in Hambrook on 1 October?
- (b) What involvement is planned from the local parish councils and the local member for Bourne as part of this Feasibility Study?
- (c) Is the Cabinet Member willing to consider suggestions from stakeholders as to the future running of such a facility on this site including potential private enterprise?
- (d) Can the Cabinet Member please provide a full annualised financial breakdown on how the Mobile site was previously operated (past 5 years), please include the status of the ownership of the site?

Answer to Q5

- (a) Now that the operational changes are in place at the HWRSs, the team have more capacity and can commence working on the feasibility study with effect from the end of October. It is expected to be completed by the end of November in readiness for reporting back to the Cabinet Member by the end of the year, as stated in the decision report. For clarity, the feasibility study will focus on the opportunity to create a waste reuse facility at the Hambrook site (County Council-owned) and not for the reopening of the mobile HWRS service.
- (b) The feasibility study will be carried out utilising (among many other aspects), tonnage data which includes the type and quantity of reusable items currently in the residual waste stream from a local, district and county-wide perspective. The County Council's recent waste composition analysis clearly defines this waste stream and shall also form part of the study. The County Council intends to engage with all West Sussex borough and district councils (with particular focus on Chichester District Council) as part of this study to determine the scope and scale of their current collection operations and how this affects the feasibility. As part of this views will be sought from the parishes and local elected members.
- (c) It is known that there are many reuse facilities operated by other local authorities around the UK that are managed by authorised and qualified private enterprises, charities, community and voluntary organisations. Depending on the outcome of the feasibility study, the County Council will be open to discuss how any facility should or could be managed and operated. Reference will also be taken from the findings and recommendations of the Chartered Institution of Wastes Management 'Reuse in the UK and Ireland – a 'State of the Nations' report' (October 2016).
- (d) It can be confirmed that the land previously used for the mobile HWRS service at Hambrook is under the ownership of the County Council and forms part of its current asset register. Over the past five years the Hambrook Mobile Service has operated for around 324 hours per year and it has therefore cost on average £26,800 per year to run. This figure relates solely to the management and transport fees as it is assumed that this waste would have represented a cost at a static HWRS had the Hambrook site not been in operation.

Best wishes Sandra

Sandra James

County Councillor Bourne Division