

October 2026

Sustainable councils at 'tipping point'



Cllr Jay Mercer

The Council Leader is warning government that national funding decisions are placing increasing pressure on local services.

Cllr Jay Mercer is calling for urgent action on financing for local government, ongoing SEND support, and support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children.

In letters to ministers, he says West Sussex County Council is well run but stresses that "we can no longer continue to absorb rising costs, increasing demands and further uncertainties."

He added: "We now risk reaching the financial tipping point that pushes even the most responsible authorities beyond the limits of what can be managed sustainably."

WATCH: the meeting of County Council on Friday 16 October.

Read letters in full

Major funding secured for SEND



Cllr Sam Raby

We've secured £182.7 million funding after the government approved our local Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Reform Plan.

The funding will cover 90% of our current high needs funding deficit, while the plan aims to improve outcomes for children and families across West Sussex.

Cllr Sam Raby said: "Supporting children and young people with SEND continues to be one of our highest priorities."

View our SEND Reform Plan

Mobile boost for Chichester



Cllr Yvonne Gravely

Work is underway to tackle poor mobile phone signal in Chichester city centre.

We're working with technology providers and the district council to install the infrastructure needed.

WATCH: Cllr Yvonne Gravely said: "By investing now, we're supporting local businesses, improving the experience for residents and visitors and helping prepare Chichester for future technologies and services."

Discover Chichester OpenDigital

Supporting residents every week



Cllr Nicholas Russell

The council's customer service centre handled more than 137,200 calls from residents in the first half of 2026, around 5,200 every week.

Performance figures released during National Customer Service Week show satisfaction remains high at around 85%.

WATCH: Cllr Nicholas Russell said: "We are a listening organisation and customer service is at the heart of what we do. The results reflect our commitment to putting residents first and continually improving the services we provide."

Read more

Better Roads and flood action



We're trialling new AI technology in highway inspection vehicles to help identify issues such as potholes and worn road markings more quickly.

The system could improve safety, increase inspection coverage and help keep roads in better condition.

We're also marking Flood Action Week by encouraging residents to take simple steps to prepare for possible winter flooding, like creating a household flood plan.

Read more

Free support to help quit smoking



Stop Smoking advisors with the Director of Public Health and Cabinet members

Whether you're ready to quit or supporting someone who is, help is available for free in West Sussex.

Our mobile stop-smoking unit is visiting communities across the county, throughout Stoptober and beyond, offering advice and support closer to home.

You can also access free face-to-face, telephone and digital support through Quit 4 Wellbeing, the Smoke Free app and local wellbeing teams.

Find your free support

What's on

Half term fun at our libraries includes book-themed Storytime and some novel crafts, plus more! All activities are free but must be booked in advance.

Multi-sensory story times for children and young people with additional needs are run at some libraries monthly. Join in person or watch our videos from home.

Carers Support West Sussex runs in-person and online events supporting carers across the county. Book a space on one of their Carers Rights Day events.

Get involved

Could you make a difference for a child in care? Volunteer as an Independent Visitor. Join an online session on Monday 16 or Wednesday 18 November for more.

Have your say on the future of opportunities for young people in West Sussex. Tell us your views on our Young People's Strategy for 2027-2032.

Received an invitation to complete the Your Health Matters survey? Take part and help us better understand the health and wellbeing of people living in West Sussex.

Share your experiences of Sussex family courts in a survey that will help improve processes, communication and more in the family justice system.

Stop the Spark! Keep your batteries, vapes and electricals out of household bins.

For you

Applications are now open for children due to start in reception at primary and infant schools across West Sussex in September 2027.

Plan your future care with guidance to support you through the adult social care system that can help you make informed decisions.

Invited for breast screening? Make sure you attend because it can detect cancer early, often before symptoms appear. Click for NHS information on rearranging an appointment and checking your breasts or chest regularly.

There's more on breast screening services in West Sussex, including screening locations and what to expect at your appointment.

Keep little smiles healthy this Hallowe'en with a few simple swaps. Try ideas like banana ghosts and pumpkin satsumas and find practical advice on oral health.

Applications are now open for the Waste Prevention Community Grant Fund, with money available for West Sussex projects in 2027.

Are you caring for the child of a relative or friend? Our Kinship Care team offers advice and support on family contact, education and health, and provides opportunities to connect with other kinship carers. Watch grandparent Zelly share her experience or call 01403 229900 to find out more.

More news

Good luck to our teams attending tonight's Social Worker of the Year Awards! We're keeping our fingers crossed for a win. Click to read the nominations.

Crawley shop is banned from selling vapes and tobacco products after repeated sales to underage customers.

Catch up on the latest news from West Sussex County Council.

Did you receive this eNewsletter from a friend? Sign up here.


