**Report to North Mundham Parish Council January 2025 by Cllr Sarah Sharp, County Councillor for Chichester South**

## 1) Devolution

Before Christmas the Government published a White Paper (https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper) to outline plans for devolution and reorganisation of local government. This involves the introduction of Strategic Authorities with an elected Mayor to unblock infrastructure and attract greater investment.

This will see the introduction of Mayoral Combined Authorities to all areas of England and associated move to unitary government replacing two tier local government where it exists – this means that the Districts and Boroughs will no longer exist.

Mayors will have powers over planning, will control grant funding for regeneration and housing delivery. They will also have powers over the railway and transport. Police, fire and rescue and health will also come under the authority of the Mayor who will chair the Integrated Care Partnership. The mayor will be responsible for strategic planning and housing and, in time, for wider public services including Police, Fire and Rescue, Probation, skills and employment support, environment and climate change, business support, health and health inequalities.

West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council have worked together on a joint proposal to combine into a single authority and all three wrote to Government by the deadline to apply to join the fast track process to become a Mayoral Strategic Authority.

The County Council also asked Parliament to postpone the May elections. You can watch the Cabinet meeting here where this was discussed: https://westsussex.public-i.tv/core/portal/webcast_interactive/943498

The papers are here:
https://westsussex.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4125&Ver=4

**Local Government reorganisation**

The Government wants all areas to have unitary councils serving a minimum of 500,000 people. The Government could decide to create one or two unitary councils in the footprint of West Sussex. The size of authorities has been fixed (unitary councils at least 0.5m population and Mayoral Combined Authorities at least 1.5m population)

This whole process seems very rushed. Devolution should be the transfer of power to local communities, whereas this process seems quite the opposite by undermining the sense of identity, ownership and local accountability that communities currently enjoy.

In the current funding environment with social care and SEND provision requiring so much of our county councils' budgets, district council services (housing, leisure and the environment) risk being squeezed in such large unitary authorities. To some extent residents just want to see services delivered and don't mind who delivers them. Some argue that the changes will save money.

There should be public consultation on devolution in February if the Government approves Sussex's plans. The consultation is due to take place in February and so would clash with the election period and this was the main reason that the County asked to postpone the elections. The elections also cost £1.6m so it was thought best to postpone them and progress as quickly as possible to the new unitary authority and to have a seat at the Council of Nations and Regions and the new Mayoral Council so that we aren't left behind as a region.

2) **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.

3) **Foster Care**

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/

4) Share your views on West Sussex's new **Road Safety Strategy**:

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

Deadline 2nd February.

**5) Westgate Orchard Street Roundabout – Planned Opening February 2025**

Works to complete the offsite highway works relating to Phase 1 of the White House Farm residential development are due to complete in early 2025, including completion of the works to the Westgate / Orchard Street roundabout and associated paving works in Westgate. The overall works will deliver required improvements to the existing highway network associated with the proposed development site in West Chichester.

As part of these works, the construction of a 'Dutch-style' roundabout to replace the existing roundabout at the Westgate/Orchard Street (A286)/Avenue De Chartres (A286)/West Street junction is currently ongoing and due to complete next month. Completion of the new roundabout will deliver a considerably different junction arrangement at this location, with priority given to cyclists and pedestrians over vehicles.

The design of the roundabout has been developed to incorporate the designated cycle lane around the outside of the circulatory, with associated reduced speed limits, narrowed carriageways and raised pedestrian crossings over each of the entry/exit arms, with the combined intent to slow traffic and improve safety to cyclists and pedestrians. The proposed roundabout is therefore intended to operate at low speeds, with full priority to non-motorised users.

To ensure the safety of all road users during the transition and initial operation of the new roundabout, a video has been created to explain how the roundabout will work from the perspectives of all road users:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m8zSwrkUkLs

6) The Library Service in West Sussex is 100 years old this year: https://arena.westsussex.gov.uk/centenary
7) The Records Office is offering short workshops about researching your family history or history of your house: https://www.wsro.org.uk/events/#
8) The County Council runs services to help people reduce their alcohol consumption:

   https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/campaigns/call-the-shots-on-alcohol/

9) Free NHS Health Checks are available for those aged 40-74: https://www.westsussexwellbeing.org.uk/topics/nhs-health-check/nhs-health-check
10) Support for anyone experiencing domestic abuse: https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/fire-emergencies-and-crime/domestic-abuse/

**Local matters:**

A Greenway meeting took place on Tuesday about a path to the Free School as part of the longer route between Selsey and Chichester. The discussions resulted in an impasse as four landowners need to be in agreement to dedicate the path over their land in perpetuity before the Public Rights of Way department will agree to look to investing public money.

Following a request from a resident to me, Highways will be measuring the B2145 to see if there is enough width for a footpath to the Free School. This would have to be progressed as a Community Highways Scheme.