

Jane , Members

First of all, I am so sorry but I can't make the meeting tonight. I hope these notes will help to give a flavour of what is happening.

At this moment I don't have an update on Brewhurst Bridge. If I should get an update I will send it to you.

You will remember what dire straights our Childrens Services were say 5 years ago. Well I am pleased to say that things have moved onwards and upwards and we expect an OFSTED visit in the not too distant future.

Our Childrens homes have been judged either Good or Outstanding and that's something to be very pleased with. I am hopeful that the rest of the Service will get the same results.

On the same theme we took on and trained many new Social workers and one of them has recently been awarded an accolade in a national Social Worker competition. Absolutely great. They are doing a wonderful job for many that need help and their getting it.

Fire and Rescue is also performing very well. I am particularly pleased with the amount of visits that they have achieved to peoples homes to make sure they know what is needed to keep themselves safe in their own homes. Of course this doesn't mean that other parts of this Service get neglected. What it does mean is that we work with our Adult Services department as well and it often enables residents to live safely in their own homes which is most of their choice before Adult Services have to step in with help. In my mind that's a win, win.

We would still like to reach out to any who would like to consider Fire and Rescue as a career or just as a retained Service. Our retained Service is a very valuable asset and we are always short on numbers. To give you an example at Petworth retained Station we have 8/9 retained and we really need about 14. If you know of anyone who would be interested tell them to get on line and apply. It's a great career or extra as retained and it's fully inclusive for diversity.

Of course we still can't give a definite on devolution and I am sure you know as much as I do but to be clear. I think I said last month that Counties opinion for West Sussex (The Mayor is of course for the whole of Sussex), that it needs one Unitary authority. County already do 80% of local Government work so it is only 20% extra that those elected have to take on and would require 90 Councillors instead of 146 if there were 2 Unitaries for West Sussex. I can't tell you how many would be required if Brighton & Hove's suggestion that they have submitted for 5 Unitaries was chosen by DEFRA but imagine many more Councillors and a very costly return time to balance the books and hopefully save some money. The decision will be with DEFRA. With regards to elections at this moment in time the Minister has said that there will be elections in 2026 BUT, isn't there always a but? There is another rumour that those few of us who are looking at new Mayor's for election in May next year and of course Unitaries the year after that they may and it is may at the moment cancel the 2026 County elections. If they don't who ever is elected will only have one year and then the County Council disappear and the Unitaries take over. I say one year because for 2026/7 they will be shadow Unitaries and County, District and Boroughs will still be in situ for 26/27 and from 27/28 they become the shadow authorities with the new Unitaries taking over and the rest disappearing in 2028. I hope that's clear. It's the best I can do at the moment.

I hope to be with you for December's meeting and please let me know if there is anything I need to follow up.

Janet

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