

Wealden Cabinet News 19 October 2016

[Shared service to continue...](#)

CABINET HAS APPROVED plans for the shared Environmental Health and Licencing Service between Rother and Wealden district councils to continue for another five years. The shared service was set up in 2012 as one of the initiatives of the Council's Transformation Programme. So far it has saved Wealden £279,000. The service looks after Wealden's environmental health, food & safety and licencing & pollution responsibilities. Members agreed to seek a new management agreement to run until 2022. The expected future savings are likely to be lower than those achieved in the first five years of the shared service.

*For further information, please contact Isabel Garden, Director of Environment & Community Services.
Tel: 01892 602404 or email: isabel.garden@wealden.gov.uk*

[...And another to expand](#)



PLANS TO SEEK to expand the Wealden's shared building control service with Eastbourne to include Rother, Lewes and Hastings have been approved by Cabinet. Initial talks with the other authorities, following Eastbourne's closer working with Lewes, has identified the potential for a wider shared Building Control to include all the East Sussex district and boroughs and to be hosted by Wealden. Wealden's current shared service with Eastbourne has been operating successfully since 2011. Rother and Hastings have also set up a similar shared service. A wider East Sussex service would increase savings due to economies of scale, provide a consistent service across the whole county area, improve the resilience of staffing for emergency cover and create a larger pool of expertise.

*For further information please contact Kelvin Williams, Head of Planning and Environmental Services.
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[More compliments than complaints](#)



COMPLIMENTS CONTINUED TO out-number complaints received by Wealden District Council during the last year. The Council received 56 Stage 1 complaints and 81 formal compliments during 2015/16. Many of the complaints have been used as learning points to help improve services and have resulted in a review of procedures regarding taxi licences, more consistent recording of work carried out to Council properties and increased use of scanning when handling benefits documentation. Only one of the Stage 1 complaints resulted in an escalation to Stage 2. Wealden District Council has more than 1 million transactions with customers each year, which last year included 600,000 telephone calls; 360,000 unique website visitors and 3,500 emails.

*For further information please contact Alex White, Head of Customer Services, Revenues and Benefits.
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New legislation raises concerns



A REPORT TO Wealden's Cabinet highlighted concerns about some of the effects of the new 2016 Housing and Planning Act. These include the Pay to Stay policy which introduced a market rent to those tenants who are considered able to afford it. The Act sets a combined income threshold for tenant and spouse of £31,000. The extra money charged in rent will be passed on to the Treasury. The Council is writing to all its tenants who are not in receipt of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit to obtain income details. If tenants fail to respond to this, Wealden has been advised that councils should assume tenants are earning over the income threshold and a full market rent will be charged from April 2017. Pay to Stay is expected to encourage some tenants to buy their council houses. This, together with a reduction in the supply of affordable housing caused by the Council having to sell high value council homes that become available in order to compensate Housing Associations for new Right To Buy measures, will place even further pressure on the housing register and increase the length of time applicants wait for housing. A further concern is the effect the new duty to encourage the development of starter homes will have on the Community Infrastructure Levy which pays for new infrastructure. To enable developers to sell starter homes at a 20% discount, they will no longer be expected to make a contribution to the CIL on these homes.

*For further information, please contact Amanda Hodge, Head of Policy & Community Services.
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Go ahead for housing company

APPROVAL HAS BEEN given to set up a wholly-owned local authority Housing and Regeneration Company to concentrate on providing housing to specific local market sectors. These include frustrated down-sizers, *Generation Stuck*, and those who are unable to get on the housing ladder, *Generation Rent*. The company would also look at commercial/residential mixes in town centres. The decision follows discussion with the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Audit and Finance Committee, Cabinet Advisory Groups and representatives of other local authority housing companies. The new Wealden company will provide housing for sale, shared ownership and private rental.

*For further information, please contact Isabel Garden, Director of Environment & Community Services.
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Planning News

Crematorium plans published



Wealden District Council has submitted plans for the District's first crematorium. One of its key aims is to allow an hour for every service so that loved ones can fully pay their respects. The new crematorium, located south of Horam, will be able to allow a longer time for each service than many other crematoria. Generous parking provision will avoid parking problems. Discussions with various faith groups and local undertakers have helped create the design for the new Wealden facility. Provisions are being put forward for conserving and managing the farmland around the crematorium so that the facility will be hidden in the landscape. The application also includes improvements to the A267, including a separate right-hand turn lane for southbound vehicles to maintain the free flow of traffic. View the planning application on the Wealden website: the application number is WD/2016/2533/MAJ.

*For further information please contact Trevor Scott, Director of Governance and Corporate Services
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The next stage of the Wealden Local Plan



The current stage of Wealden's Local Plan, which will guide development in the District until 2037, is being extended for three months to allow for the completion of a number of key studies. These are necessary to ensure the most appropriate proposals are put forward. "We had hoped to be putting forward the Revised Wealden Local Plan this December for further representations but delays in some of the reports from our consultants, many of which are inter-related, and the need to allow for them to be accurately assessed, mean that we will be aiming to bring forward the Revised Local Plan document by the end of the first quarter of 2017," said Councillor Ann Newton, Cabinet member for Planning and Development. "Given the scale of development we are expecting during the next 20 years, I want to be sure we have the best information at hand." One of the key pieces of evidence which is not yet complete relates to the impact of development on Ashdown Forest. The Council is drawing up a comprehensive picture of what development will be possible across the District whilst continuing to protect Ashdown Forest. This has involved monitoring levels of nitrogen deposition on the Forest, regular ecology reports and traffic modelling work which will need to reflect highway improvements across the District including improvements to the A27. The revised timetable will still see the Council aiming for final Wealden Local Plan adoption in 2018. The extended deadline will provide an opportunity to share some on-going elements of the work as they emerge.

*For further information please contact Nigel Hannam, Director of Planning Policy & Economic Development
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This month's Parish Conference

The Wealden Parish Conference will take place on Wednesday 30 November at the Civic Community Hall, Hailsham, beginning at 9.30am. It will include sessions on Health and Rural Isolation, The Local Plan, Communications and Engagement, Planning and a service update from East Sussex Fire & Rescue. There will also be an update by the Leader of Wealden District Council on a number of strategic initiatives including the Three Counties- East and West Sussex & Surrey- devolution bid; the creation of a Council-owned Housing & Regeneration Company and the Wealden Crematorium. The event includes lunch, refreshments and plenty of opportunities for networking. If you want to attend, please contact committee.services@wealden.gov.uk.

*For further information please contact Gill Cameron-Waller, Policy & Partnerships Manager
Tel: 01323 443745 or email: gill-cameron-waller@wealden.gov.uk*

Deadline for Wealden Community Grants



The closing date for applications for this year's Wealden Community Grants Scheme is **30 November 2016**. The Small Grants Scheme offers clubs and societies up to £3,000 for equipment and programme development. The Capital Grants Scheme offers up to £10,000 for improvements to community buildings and sports grounds. Awards are made for the 2017/18 financial year. Last year Wealden made awards totalling £23,000 through the Small Grants Scheme and £76,000 through the Capital Grants Scheme to 41 local organisations. Grants have to be match funded, but this can be entirely 'in-kind' through volunteer time. Organisations can submit a draft application form by 15 November, and receive feedback to help to strengthen the application, although it cannot guarantee success. More information about the application process can be found on [the Wealden website](#).

*For further information please contact Michelle Gray, Partnerships & Funding Support Officer
Tel: 01323 443520 or email michelle.gray@wealden.gov.uk*

Answering Hailsham's housing need



With the foundations now laid, progress continues on Wealden District Council's new build council house development at the site of the former Leap Cross business Park in Hailsham. This project, which is being built for the Council by local building contractor Trinity Homes, will deliver 12 high quality affordable homes, all with their own private outside space in the form of gardens or balconies. The development includes 3 one-bedroom maisonettes, 3 two-bedroom maisonettes, 4 two-bedroom houses, and 2 three-bedroom houses which will be made available for rent to local people from the Council's Housing Register. The development, costing around £2,000,000, is expected to be ready for occupation in June 2017. "One of our top priorities is to address the need for more affordable homes for local people," said Councillor

Graham Wells, Cabinet member for Housing at Wealden District Council. "Hailsham has the highest housing need of any town in the District, and these new council houses are the real brick and mortar answer to the needs of our local communities." There are about a thousand applicants on the Council's Housing Register, and over a quarter of these are waiting for accommodation in Hailsham.

*For further information, please contact Hayley Frankham, Housing Development Team Leader
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Shared approach to getting more from computers



David and Pat Nicholls are the tablet winners in the draw held at Wealden's *Coffee, Cakes, Computers & A Whole Lot More* event in Alfriston. They believe team work is the best way to avoid missing out on the internet. "Wealden's *Coffee, Cakes, Computers & A Whole Lot More* events are an informal way of seeking help and advice from people who don't try to baffle you with technical jargon. There's no question too simple and hearing about other people's experiences is reassuring," said David. "Between us, Pat and I can just about manage, but if one of us were no longer around, it is important the other can still cope. That is why we are both taking the opportunity to

learn more about computing." Mr & Mrs Nicholls, who live at Polegate, are also taking advantage of Barclay's [Digital Eagles](#) course taking place at the Royal Oak & Castle Pub in Pevensy. It is a free seven week course on using the internet and includes setting up an email account, digital security, social media, online shopping and Skype. "Another *Coffee, Cakes, Computers & A Whole Lot More* session was held on 1 November in Crowborough Community Centre. There is also free computer access available in the public foyer of Wealden's Vicarage Lane offices at Hailsham.

*For further information please contact Nicola Levett, Housing Policy Officer
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[A27 improvement scheme](#)



Highways England is holding a consultation on a range of proposed improvements to the A27 between Lewes and Polegate. The package of proposals of up to £75million of improvements including work to the Selmeston section, the Drusillas roundabout, the junctions at Polegate and Wilmington and the creation of a corridor to be used by cyclists, pedestrians and other non-car users. A number of public events have been arranged over the coming month to explain the changes including exhibitions at Polegate Church on 9 November and Berwick Village Hall on 26 November. A brochure of the proposals is available from the [Highways England website](#). The consultation closes on 8 December. Work is expected begin in 2020.

*For further information please contact Highways England.
Tel: 0300 123 5000 or email info@highwaysengland.co.uk*

[Cyber crime for breakfast](#)



Crime will be the main subject at the next Wealden Business Breakfast which takes place on Tuesday 22 November 2016 at the Buxted Park Hotel, Buxted. Speakers include the Police and Crime Commission for Sussex, Katy Bourne, who will be talking about working with local communities and partners to keep Sussex safe, and Detective Inspector Andy Haslam, Head of the Cyber Crime Unit & Economic Crime Unit for Surrey & Sussex Police. Cyber crime has been highlighted as a key issue by the Federation of Small Businesses, which supports Wealden Business Breakfasts. Research shows 42 per cent of FSB members have been a victim of cyber crime in the last 12 months and these have cost an average of £4,000 per business. The event will help businesses assess the risks of online crime and fraud and explain what steps can be taken to avoid this. It also provides a great networking opportunity. The Business Breakfast costs £10 per person and includes full English breakfast. Bookings can be made via the [East Sussex FSB Eventbrite booking](#) system. The deadline for bookings is noon on 21 November.

*For further information please contact Sarah King, Community & Regeneration Officer
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