

## Wealden Cabinet News 12 July 2017

### [Two thirds of Council spending is with East Sussex companies](#)



JUST OVER TWO THIRDS of Wealden District Council's £24 million spend on goods and services was with East Sussex companies last year and thanks to its use of public sector buying groups - in particular the East Sussex Procurement hub - it was able to make savings of £563,000 in 2016/17. An increasing proportion - 35% - of the Council's expenditure is on capital projects including new council housing and a crematorium for the District. The Council's revenue spending is falling year-on-year. Of the Council's spending last year, £3.8 million was with companies based in Wealden, and 73 % of these were small companies. Just over half (52%) of the Council's spending was with Small and Medium Sized Enterprises which is well in excess of the Government's spending target of 25%. The East Sussex Procurement Hub, which is based at Wealden and provides a shared service to other East Sussex councils, undertook 67 procurement exercises on behalf of Wealden, Rother and Hastings and, since it was set up in 2010, has produced savings and revenue worth around £12 million.

*For further information, please contact Gerry Palmer, Corporate Procurement Officer.  
Tel 01323 443350, email address: [gerry.palmer@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:gerry.palmer@wealden.gov.uk)*

### [It's been a good year](#)



CABINET AGREED THAT 2016/17 had been a good year for the Council as it welcomed the annual performance report. Thanking all members of staff, Council Leader Bob Standley said: "We've had a good year. I am never complacent but I think we are delivering on our corporate plan." Among the achievements highlighted:

- Wealden's Drive to Digital Programme has generated more than £200,000 in year-on-year efficiency savings whilst enabling the council to handle 8% more customer enquiries.
- 22 new council homes acquired.
- Through the Local Plan proposed submission, 150,136 m<sup>2</sup> of new employment space has been identified, helping create 3,467 new jobs by 2028.
- Consents for renewable energy projects in Wealden have the capacity to power the equivalent of 19,800 homes.
- Progress made in the efficient processing of benefits claims has meant there were no claims outstanding at the year-end – traditionally only 1 in 10 local authorities achieve this level of performance,
- Securing £100,000 of support for a Flood Resilience programme across the District, with potential saving the local economy £1.5m in repair and restoration costs in the event of flooding.

A short summary of [Wealden's Year in Figures](#) can be found on the Wealden website.

*For further information please contact Malcolm Harris, Policy Officer.  
Tel: 01323 443744 or email: [performance.management@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:performance.management@wealden.gov.uk)*

## [More help for private home owners](#)



A NEW POLICY to provide financial assistance to vulnerable private home owners enabling them to carry out a wider range of improvements, has been approved by Wealden's Cabinet. The new Private Sector Housing Financial Assistance Policy 2017 – 2020, uses Home Renewal Loans to support a wider range of improvements including more assistance for disabled applicants, carrying out energy-saving improvements and encouraging properties that have been standing empty for over a year back into use. Government changes have seen funding for Disabled Facilities Grants rise by over 100% and various restrictions removed. Additional assistance includes:

- Top-up Assistance for disabled adaptations reflecting the fact that the maximum mandatory grant has not increased since 2008.
- Shared Equity Loans to assist home owners - primarily families with disabled members - who are currently locked in unadaptable housing. The shared equity loan will help them move to more appropriate accommodation.
- Fast Track Minor Adaptations which will work with Social Care to provide minor adaptations and the equipment for people to allow them to leave hospital when ready.

Funding is provided through the Better Care Fund. For more details of assistance available to private home owners, please email: [privatehousing@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:privatehousing@wealden.gov.uk) or telephone 01323 443321.

*For further information, please contact Julie Wilkins, Property Services Manager.  
Tel: 01323 443312 or email: [julie.wilkins@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:julie.wilkins@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Housing project completed



Twelve local families have recently moved into the Council's new Leap Cross housing development on London Road, Hailsham, which boasts a fresh contemporary approach to traditional design, and features zinc standing seam roofs echoing the site's industrial past. The new homes, designed by Churchill Hui architects and built by Eastbourne-based contractor Trinity Homes, offer a range of one, two and three-bedroom accommodation. A further seventeen homes are currently being developed on St Mary's Avenue in Hailsham, along with a 67-unit Retirement Living Court in Uckfield.

*For further information please contact Hayley Frankham, Housing Development Team Leader. Tel: 01323 443278 or email [hayley.frankham@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:hayley.frankham@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Find out about Operation Blitz



Wealden residents are being urged to make use of Sussex Police's Operation Blitz to report incidents of small scale crime, vandalism and antisocial behaviour. It provides residents a direct line to officers on patrol during Operation Blitz –often during Friday and Saturday nights - allowing them to quickly respond to any issues about anti-social behaviour. By signing up to Sussex Police's [In the Know email bulletins](#), residents are told when Operation Blitz is taking place in their area. Chief Inspector Emma Brice, District Commander of Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden, told Wealden's Overview & Scrutiny Committee that Sussex Police was having to make substantial savings by 2020

and adapt to current changes in the types of offences: "I have officers and PSCOs who respond to calls and patrol all over the District. It is really important that any crime is reported to us. We are moving towards the hot spot model where we analyse crime and anti-social behaviour so we can focus our resources on where it is needed most. Even if the police do not attend at that time, they will still have a record of that call which we can use in analysis of where the hot spots are."

*For further information, please contact Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Officer.  
Tel: 01323 443305 or email: [jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Fire safety in Wealden



The tragic events at Grenfell Tower in London have a heightened awareness across the country of the need for fire safety. Wealden District Council does not have any tower blocks or any properties that had the cladding system in question. Housing Officers have inspected all low rise council flats and double checked for compliance with fire safety certificates and adequacy of means of escape. In addition, surveyors from the East Sussex Building Control Partnership have been working across the county in a joint exercise led by East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service to inspect all premises considered at risk. At the 19 July meeting of Full Council, Members were told that issues raised by the tragedy, particularly the response of local authorities to civil emergencies, would be carefully considered by the Council.

*For further information, please contact Mark Gray, East Sussex Building Control Partnership.  
Tel: 01892 602005 or email: [mark.gray@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:mark.gray@wealden.gov.uk)*

## [Grants that make a real difference: 1](#)



The Wealden Small Grants Scheme awarded a total of £20,000 to 16 local organisations this year, helping provide way-markers for an 11 mile walking route, supporting a community play in Forest Row, and providing free woodworking classes. The money has been used to provide musical instruments for Wadhurst Brass band, shuttle bus services for Crowborough Festival Association and help the Mayfield and Five Ashes Community Services overhaul its Community Car Scheme. Small Grants also helped Ripe Village Stores increase its opening hours to become self-financing and Culture Shift support cultural activities for people with learning disabilities. “These grants can plug gaps, provide the equipment and ensure local volunteer groups have the wherewithal to keep going and expand,” said Councillor Claire Dowling, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Community Safety. A full list of the grant recipients can be found [on the Wealden website](#). Wealden’s Partnerships and Funding Support Officer Michelle Gray also gives support to third sector organisations on sourcing relevant funding, assistance with applications, sustaining income and signposting advice.

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

## [Grants that make a difference: 2](#)



Scout troops and sports clubs are among the beneficiaries of this year’s Wealden Community Capital Grants which are putting £80,000 back into Wealden towns and villages to improve building facilities used by youth organisations, sports clubs and other community groups. “The commitment of time and effort made by local volunteers is most inspiring,” said Councillor Claire Dowling, Cabinet member for Public Health and Community Safety. Scout huts in Crowborough, Broad Oak, Forest Row and Horam have received capital grants to carry out a range of improvements. Sports clubs who have benefited include the Mayfield Lawn Bowls club, Uckfield Rugby Club, the Hadlow Down Playing Fields Association and the Forest Row Sports Ground Association. Nutley Windmill, The Ashdown Forest Visitor Centre and the Ninfield Local History Group also received grant support. The next round of Wealden Community Grants, including Small Grants of up to £3,000 for equipment and activity programmes and Capital Grants of up to £10,000 for improvements to community buildings and sports grounds, will be open for applications in just over a month’s time. Please email [community.grants@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:community.grants@wealden.gov.uk) to be notified of the start date or for general funding advice for your organisation.

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

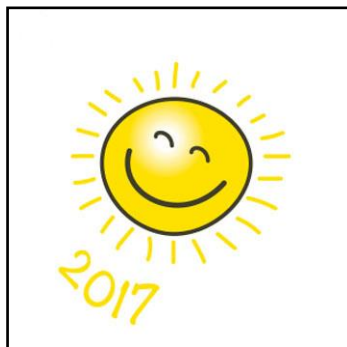
## Benefits fraudster successfully prosecuted by Wealden



Residents are reminded of the importance of informing the Council of changes to their financial situation as soon as possible, after a Wealden resident was given a 12 month community order, requiring 120 hours of unpaid work, for fraudulently claiming benefits by Hastings Magistrates. Stuart Jenkins (54), who gave an address at Nevill Road, Uckfield, pleaded guilty to committing fraud by dishonestly failing to disclose to Wealden District Council that his circumstances had changed when he received a substantial inheritance totalling £267,000. He falsely received Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits totalling £4,907.66. Mr Jenkins has since repaid the full amount he falsely claimed. "Our Officers will always show sympathy and understanding to those in difficult circumstances but it is a crime to claim benefits that you are not entitled to." said Councillor Graham Wells. Costs of £940 were awarded to Wealden District Council and Mr Jenkins was ordered to pay £60 victim surcharge. Residents who have suspicions of any fraudulent activity are asked to contact the East Sussex Counter Fraud Hub on 0800 731 7039 or by emailing [info@focusonfraud.co.uk](mailto:info@focusonfraud.co.uk).

*For further information please contact Alex White, Head of Customer Services.  
Tel: 01323 443171 or email [alex.white@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:alex.white@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Playtime is important



Wealden's free Summer Activity Days are here again. Activities include sports taster sessions, arts and crafts, team games, and tasty fun cooking with the Community Chef as we highlight the benefits of regular physical activity. The Summer Activity Days are among the many events taking place up and down the country as part of Play Day 2017, to emphasise the importance of organised play in children's lives both for the social development and the physical health of our future generations.

This year's events are:

**Wednesday 2 August**

10 am – 2pm

**Friday 4 August**

10 am – 2pm

**Wednesday 9 August**

10 am – 2pm

**Friday 11 August**

10am – 2pm

**Wednesday 16 August**

10am – 2pm

Goldsmiths Recreation Ground,

**Crowborough**

Wannock Road Recreation Ground,

**Polegate**

Sheepsetting Lane Recreation Ground,

**Heathfield**

Maurice Thornton Playing Fields,

**Hailsham**

West Park Recreation Ground,

**Uckfield**

Under 10's must be accompanied by an adult. Wealden's Summer Activity Days are supported by Active Play, Booker and Best, Freedom Leisure, Waitrose, Tesco and the Safer Wealden Partnership. To find out more visit the Wealden website, [www.wealden.gov.uk](http://www.wealden.gov.uk). Or call the Active Play Team on 0771 7776788.

*For further information please contact Katherine Jenner, Special Projects Support Officer.  
Tel: 01323 443266 or email [Katherine.jenner@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:Katherine.jenner@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Keeping Wealden safe



The Safer Wealden Partnership has funds available to any organisation for projects which support one or more of the Partnership's 2017/18 priorities:

- Reduce the amount of anti-social behaviour experienced by residents in Wealden;
- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured on Wealden's roads;
- Reduce the amount of residential burglary including burglary from sheds & outbuildings;
- Take steps to protect vulnerable residents from rogue traders;
- Raise awareness and support services available for victims of domestic abuse.

The Safer Wealden Partnership will also be proactive in responding to emerging threats, support campaigns to counter terrorism and organised crime as well as deliver a number of projects to improve general community safety. Applications will be considered by the Joint Action Group which meets monthly. Its membership includes Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire & Rescue, The Youth Development Service, East Sussex County Council. If you have a project that meets one or more of the Safer Wealden Partnership's aims, you can make a bid for funding. Applications forms are available from Alison Brook– email [alison.brook@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:alison.brook@wealden.gov.uk).

*For further information, please contact Jeremy Leach, Principal Policy Officer.  
Tel: 01323 443305 or email: [jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:jeremy.leach@wealden.gov.uk)*

## Safety in Action winners 2017



The winning school in this year's Safety in Action was Nutley Primary School scoring the most points across the wide range of hands-on safety events. The prize was awarded by Keith Mates, president the sponsor, Uckfield Lions, and Wealden District Council Chairman Chris Hardy. The Lawrence Memorial Shield road safety was won by Blackboys Primary school. It was presented by Debbie Reeve. The shield is in memory of her son who sadly died in a road accident in Wealden. Two weeks of Safety in Action took place at the Bowles Outdoor Centre and Herstmonceux Castle. They involved 1300 year six Wealden school children from 50 primary schools. The following

agencies took part: Sussex Police, South East Coast Ambulance, East Sussex Fire and Rescue, UK Power Networks, Southern Railway, Freedom Leisure, NHS and Wealden District Council.

*For further information please contact Sophie Hepworth, Public Health Specialist.  
Tel: 01323 443275 or email: [sophie.hepworth@wealden.gov.uk](mailto:sophie.hepworth@wealden.gov.uk)*



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