

COUNCIL
11 October 2023
Motions for consideration by Council

(a) Proposed by Councillor Roger Noel

The Care Leavers service in West Sussex supports young people to exit care successfully as they move towards independence and operates under a clear legislative framework provided by the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The most recent Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee held on the 13th September 2023, included a paper on 'Leaving Care in West Sussex' which was in direct response to the recent comments in the full inspection by Ofsted back in March 2023 with respect to meeting the needs of care leavers.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 introduces corporate parenting principles which comprise seven needs that local authorities in England must have regard to. The West Sussex Care Leavers service and increasingly our partners, operate in line with these principles which centre around the promotion of physical and mental health and wellbeing of those children and young people; to encourage those children and young people to express their views and to take those views into account; to help children and young people gain access to and make the best use of services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners; to promote high aspirations and seek to secure the best outcomes for those children and young people; for those children and young people to be safe and have stability in their homes, relationships and in education or work, and ultimately to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

Whilst it is accepted that corporate parenting is not the statutory responsibility of the District Council, as District Councillors we should acknowledge that we are all corporate parents, particularly given that the West Sussex House Project Memorandum of Understanding was recently signed by all seven of the District and Boroughs Council partners, endorsing this view.

But as Horsham District Councillors, we could be the first to go further and support the further aspirations of the West Sussex Care Leaver service through initiatives such as;

- Providing a shopfront facing community base for our Care Leavers – providing a communal space to meet, laundry facility, life skills, WiFi and a place to meet Leaving Care Personal Advisors
- Linking to the above objective, a space for the County Council's Youth Emotional Support Service for meeting with children from across the county.
- To offer free access to local gym/leisure centre/swimming pool to support young people's health and wellbeing.
- An apprenticeship or work based opportunity provided by the District for any Care Leaver who wanted to explore this as an alternative Employment Education and Training option.

This Council therefore calls upon the Leader and Cabinet to instruct officers to explore these initiatives, by engaging directly with the West Sussex Care Leavers Service, to proactively help the service move towards Good and onto Outstanding status through the implementation of these initiatives for the benefit of our young people leaving care.

(b) Proposed by Councillor Philip Circus

This Council, whilst acknowledging the very significant contribution made to the local economy and the Gatwick Diamond Area, expresses its opposition to further expansion of Gatwick airport. Such expansion, the Council believes, would be damaging to the interests of residents in respect of noise and pollution and the Council does not believe the existing infrastructure, particularly in terms of road and rail, is adequate for the needs of the airport. There is, in our view, no realistic possibility that further expansion could be matched by the necessary investment that would be needed in terms of further infrastructure.

With a newly elected Council, we have resolved to confirm our long-standing position on this important issue.