

County Council Report –November 2019-11-06

Local Liberal Democrats have condemned cuts to Children’s Centres in Lewes District that will leave only one Children’s Centre in the whole of the constituency of Lewes. Under plans to be carried out by April 2020 14 Children’s Centres have been earmarked for ‘de designation including Seaford, Newhaven, Ringmer and Chailey. If no partners can be found to rent out these centres they will be closed.

These cuts will leave coastal and rural families struggling when their local children’s centre closes. There’s no guarantee that “partners will take the centres over and provide the services, nor is it obvious how families will continue 'to receive keywork services at home from nearby keywork hubs’.

Many families will now have no choice but to pay the high costs of travel to Lewes in order to access children’s services at all and we know how much pressure families are under in our communities and the additional time and high transport costs are yet another thing for them to cope with if these cuts go through.

A Petition calling for the East Sussex Pension Fund to divest from fossil fuels was presented to Council in October and the Lib Dems presented the following motion in support, which was voted against by the Administration.

Lib Dem motion

That East Sussex County Council believes that it would be possible for East Sussex Pension Fund to obtain either the same or greater return for the fund by divesting from shares in the fossil fuel based companies within their portfolio. To do so would also remove the financial risk that the fund has recognised such investments bring.

The Council therefore requests that the fund issue immediate instructions to their investment consultants (Hymans Robertson) to provide an analysis of the implications of fossil fuel divestments and its associated risks and opportunities. The outcome of such analysis will allow the fund to decide on whether it can meet its long-term strategic objectives if it divests current fossil fuel holdings.

We also presented a Motion declaring a climate emergency, which was also voted against by the ruling administration. We called for ESCC to support the aims and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, recognises and declares a Climate Emergency, set a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2030, build upon the work we have undertaken to date and commit resources where possible and align our policies to address the Climate Emergency including setting out a clear plan of action to reduce our carbon emissions.