



CABINET

TUESDAY, 5 MARCH 2024

10.00 AM, COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Keith Glazier (Chair)
Councillors Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Claire Dowling,
Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2024 (*Pages 3 - 8*)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Disclosures of interests
Disclosures by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
4. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgent.
5. Council Monitoring: Quarter 3 2023/2024 (*Pages 9 - 78*)
Report by the Chief Executive.
6. The Ofsted inspection of East Sussex County Council's Children's Services (*Pages 79 - 98*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
7. SELEP Transition Plan (*Pages 99 - 160*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.
8. Any other items considered urgent by the Chair
9. To agree which items are to be reported to the County Council

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26 February 2024

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CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 23 January 2024.

PRESENT Councillors Keith Glazier (Chair), Nick Bennett (Vice Chair), Bob Bowdler, Claire Dowling, Carl Maynard and Bob Standley

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Beaver	- items 5 and 7 (minute 37 and 39)
Councillor Belsey	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Bennett	- items 5 and 6 (minute 37 and 38)
Councillor Daniel	- items 5 and 7 (minute 37 and 39)
Councillor Denis	- items 5 and 7 (minute 37 and 39)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 7 (minute 39)
Councillor Field	- items 5 and 7 (minute 37 and 39)
Councillor Galley	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Hollidge	- item 7 (minute 39)
Councillor Maples	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Murphy	- item 7 (minute 37)
Councillor Osborne	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Scott	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Standley	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Swansborough	- item 5 (minute 37)
Councillor Taylor	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5 and 7 (minutes 37 and 39)
Councillor Ungar	- item 5 (minute 37)

35. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 DECEMBER 2023

35.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 12 December 2023 were agreed as a correct record.

36. REPORTS

36.1 Copies of the reports referred to below are included in the minute book.

37. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR): DRAFT COUNCIL PLAN 2024/25, REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

37.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive together with a summary of the consultation meeting held with Trade Unions which was received after publication of the Cabinet agenda.

37.2 It was RESOLVED to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) Approve in principle the draft Council Plan 2024/25 at Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the relevant Lead Members;
- 2) Increase Council Tax by 2.99% in 2024/25;

- 3) Increase the Adult Social Care Precept by 2% in 2024/25;
- 4) Issue precepts to be paid by borough and district councils in accordance with the agreed schedule of instalments at Appendix 5 (Draft);
- 5) Approve the net Revenue Budget estimate of £538.1m for 2024/25 set out in Appendix 2 (Medium Term Financial Plan) and Appendix 3 (Draft) (Budget Summary) and authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Leader and Deputy Leader, to make adjustments to the presentation of the Budget Summary to reflect the final settlement and final budget decisions;
- 6) Agree the Reserves Policy set out in Appendix 6;
- 7) Approve the Capital Strategy and Programme at Appendix 8;
- 8) Note progress with the Council Plan and Budget 2023/24 since quarter 2 set out in section 4;
- 9) Note the Medium Term Financial Plan forecast for 2024/25 to 2026/27, set out in Appendix 2;
- 10) Note the comments of the Chief Finance Officer on budget risks and robustness, as set out in Appendix 6;
- 11) Note the comments from engagement exercises set out in Appendix 7;
- 12) Note the schedule of fees and charges that have increased above 4% at Appendix 9; and
- 13) Agree to continue lobbying as strongly as possible for sustainable funding to meet the needs of East Sussex residents, using all available avenues.

Reason

37.3 This Council has a firm foundation of sound and prudent financial management over many years, endorsed by external assessments. We have taken difficult decisions when we needed to in order to balance the books and make best use of stretched resources. Our robust RPPR process has enabled us to direct spending towards priorities and core services, in particular protecting services for the most vulnerable in our county.

37.4 The past year has seen a rapid escalation in costs and demand for services, due to factors beyond local control, which has not been matched with increased funding. Despite the action we have taken locally to address pressures wherever we can, the scale of these challenges leaves us facing a very significant deficit and substantial risk in the coming years. There also remains considerable uncertainty about the future funding regime for local government, particularly when overdue reform which will provide sustainable long-term financing for the sector will be delivered.

37.5 There is continued national reliance on raising funding for core pressures, particularly growing demand in social care, through local Council Tax which is unrelated to need and unsustainable. In this context we must again ask local people to contribute more to protect services for the most vulnerable for the future. This recommendation is not made lightly, given the ongoing pressures on household budgets, but it is essential if we are to protect services as far as possible. Support will continue to be available through local Council Tax Support Schemes for those residents eligible and we will continue to work with partners to signpost residents to sources of support with the cost of living, including access to benefits they may be entitled to.

37.6 Even after this contribution, the budget presented for the year ahead relies on using our reserves to balance the books, significantly depleting this safety net for the future. This is an unsustainable position. The reality is that there are not sufficient reserves available to meet the deferred deficit and we will need to consider what action it is possible to take in the coming year to address the significant financial gap between the funding we currently expect to have and the cost of providing our services in 2025/26 and beyond. Our ability to do so without a detrimental impact on the quality of life of our residents, communities and business is very limited.

37.7 In this context, and with future national policy being shaped ahead of a general election, our lobbying will also be vitally important and we will consider how this can be further intensified and broadened. We will need to ensure the hard choices we now face and the impacts these will have on local residents, business and communities are heard loud and clear. We will continue to work with our local, regional and national partners to highlight the specific needs of East Sussex. We will press for immediate short-term support and longer-term fair, sustainable and needs-based funding that enables us to continue to meet the needs of our residents. Until this is delivered our medium term financial position will remain extremely difficult and present significant risk to our ability to meet local needs in the future.

38. AUDITOR'S ANNUAL (VFM) REPORT ON EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL 2022/23

38.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Finance Officer.

38.2 It was RESOLVED to note the report.

Reason

38.3 The Annual (Value for Money) Report for 2022/23 has identified no significant weaknesses in the Council's VfM arrangements. Whilst putting forward 2 improvement recommendations, these are only advisory and management has responded appropriately.

39. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF POTHOLE MANAGEMENT

39.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Assistant Chief Executive and a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport with observations on the Scrutiny Committee's report.

39.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note and welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee;
- 2) Recommend the County Council to welcome the report of the Scrutiny Committee and to agree the response of the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as Appendix 1 to the Director's report.

Reason

39.3 The Scrutiny Review has been welcomed as it has highlighted a number of areas for improvement in our approach to pothole management and the need to lobby Government for better long-term funding for local road maintenance and changes to the way utility company reinstatement works are regulated.

40. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2024/25

40.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

40.2 It was RESOLVED to recommend the County Council to:

- 1) Approve the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement for 2024/25;
- 2) Approve the Annual Investment Strategy for 2024/25;
- 3) Approve the Prudential and Treasury Indicators 2024/25 to 2026/27; and
- 4) Approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement 2024/25 at Appendix 1 (Section 3) of the report.

Reason

40.3 The report fulfils the requirement to submit an annual/half yearly report in the form prescribed in the Treasury Management Code of Practice. The report sets out the acceptable limits on ratings, investment periods, amounts to be invested and the borrowing strategy. The financial position is kept under constant review and if at any time it is felt that any of these limits represent an unacceptable risk appropriate and immediate action will be taken accordingly.

41. ANNUAL ACCOUNTS FOR LEWES PUBLIC LIBRARY AND MUSEUM CHARITABLE TRUST

41.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

41.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the final accounts for 2022/23 for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust; and
- 2) Note that there are no issues that require any further action by the County Council as the Corporate Trustee.

Reason

41.3 The report fulfils the requirement for the annual accounts for the Lewes Public Library and Museum Charitable Trust to be submitted to the Cabinet.

42. THE CONSERVATORS OF ASHDOWN FOREST - 2023/24 FORECAST OUTTURN POSITION AND UPDATED MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN INCLUDING THE 2024/25 BUDGET

42.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

42.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the Quarter 2 budget position for the Conservators' 2023/24 Core Budget;
- 2) Note the Conservators of Ashdown Forest medium term financial plan; and
- 3) Approve the 2024/25 Core Budget.

Reason

42.3 The report sets out the financial position of the Conservators of the Ashdown Forest (COAF) for 2023/24, against the approved budget agreed by the Board of Conservators at their meeting on 21 November 2022 and presented to Cabinet in December 2022.

42.4 The current 2023/24 Core budget projections indicate that no additional contribution from East Sussex County Council will be required.

42.5 The current Countryside Stewardship (CS) budget is forecast to overspend by £55,610 this year. This is less than the budgeted overspend of £139,603 and reflects the difficulties that have been had securing contractors to undertake works on the forest. The deficit will be funded from the CS reserve.

43. TO AGREE WHICH ITEMS ARE TO BE REPORTED TO THE COUNTY COUNCIL

It was agreed that items 5, 7, 8 and 10 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: the items being reported to the County Council refer to minute numbers 37, 39, 40 and 42.]

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Title: Council Monitoring Report – Q3 2023/24
Report to: Cabinet
Date: 05 March 2024
Report by: Chief Executive
Purpose: To report Council monitoring for Q3 2023/24

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council; and
 - 2) approve the proposed deletion of the performance measure set out in paragraph 2.1.
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1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Savings Plan, together with Risks at the end of December 2023.

1.2 Broad progress against the Council's four strategic priority outcomes is summarised in paragraph 4 and an overview of finance and performance data is provided in the Corporate Summary at Appendix 1. Strategic risks are reported at Appendix 8.

2. Council Plan 2023/24 amendments and variations

2.1 There is 1 Adult Social Care & Health performance measure proposed for deletion:

- Number of providers registered with Support With Confidence

The Support with Confidence scheme was a directory of accredited providers offering care and support services in the local area. The scheme was closed by the licence holder on 31 December 2023 and the measure is therefore proposed for deletion.

2.2 The Strategic Risk Register, Appendix 8, was reviewed and updated to reflect the Council's risk profile. Risk 1 (Roads), Risk 5 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources) and Risk 6 (Local Economic Growth) have updated risk definitions and risk controls, together with updated risk ratings. Risk 8 (Capital Programme) has an updated risk definition and risk control. Risk 4 (Health), Risk 9 (Workforce), Risk 15 (Climate) and Risk 20 (Placements for Children and Young People in our Care) have updated risk controls.

3 Budget Outturn

3.1 The details of revenue over and underspends in each department are set out in the relevant appendices, and show a total forecast overspend of £29.1m. This is an increase of £4.3m from quarter 2. The main headlines are:

- Children's Services (CSD) is forecast to be overspent by £28.5m (£23.0m at quarter 2).

The main area of projected overspend is in Early Help and Social Care (EH&SC) of £27.9m, an increase from quarter 2 of £4.6m. The main pressures are within External Residential costs for Looked After Children. Whilst numbers of children have not increased since last quarter, the increasingly complex care needs of a relatively small number of children mean that there are further pressures on this budget area. Additionally, several high-cost placements have been extended beyond the expected step-down date, contributing to the increase in forecast expenditure this quarter. The service has worked with Impower to support longer term placement sufficiency and identify opportunities for delivering improved care placement options for children and young people through the 'Valuing Care' approach. The aim of this work is also to identify cost reductions and efficiencies within the service.

There is also an increased overspend of £0.9m within the Home to Schools Transport service. The new 2023/24 cohort started in September 2023, which also brought with it wage increases and higher fuel costs, resulting in increased contract costs. There is also a lack of market competition due to some operators leaving the market. The CSD team will be working closely with the CET transport service to explore all possible mitigations to reduce costs.

The CSD overspend will be funded Corporately for 2023/24 as follows:

Mitigation of CSD Overspend	£m
Forecast overspend	(28.5)
Mitigated by:	
Treasury Management underspend	7.4
Underspend on Capital Programme	1.8
General Contingency	4.9
Use of provision for budgetary risks	3.5
Part of Business Rates Levy surplus	0.3
Covid-19 General Funding (balance held Corporately)	5.7
Agreed use of COMF	1.6
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	2.0
Use of Financial Management Reserve	1.3
Subtotal Mitigation	28.5

- The projected outturn for Adult Social Care (ASC) is an overspend of £2.0m (£1.7m at quarter 2). It comprises an overspend of £2.9m in the Independent Sector due to a number of factors including increasing complexity of need, plus pressures arising from demand and demographic growth returning to pre-pandemic levels of modelling. This is offset by an underspend of £0.9m in Directly Provided Services, mainly being due to staffing vacancies which reflects difficulties in recruitment.
- Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) is forecast to underspend by £1.3m (£0.2m at quarter 2). The largest underspend is £2.0m in Transport and Operations where current market prices mean that electricity and recycling income is exceeding expectations in the Waste Service. The underspend of £0.3m in Communities is mostly due to staff vacancies in Trading Standards and Road Safety with additional income from Emergency Planning training. These are netted against an overspend of £0.6m in Highways due to the estimated increased cost of electricity for streetlighting; an overspend of £0.3m in Transport Development Control within Planning and Environment due to an increase in speculative planning applications for residential developments, which often have challenging transport issues that need addressing; and a £0.1m overspend in Economy which is mostly due the cost of consultants engaged to help transition SELEP funded projects back into Council control.

3.2 Within Treasury Management (TM), centrally held budgets (CHB) and corporate funding there is an underspend of £18.5m including the general contingency (£15.9m at quarter 2):

- In CHB there is a forecast underspend of £0.5m for Pensions because of the actuarial revaluation. This is offset by an accounting adjustment estimated at £0.7m to reflect the potential risk that increasing outstanding debt levels will not be settled. The General Contingency of £4.9m will be required in full to offset part of the service overspend.
- There is currently an estimated £7.4m underspend on TM, based on a continued improvement in the current forecasts for our market investment returns and increased cash balances. The anticipated average investment return for the year has increased to 5.37% from the 4.45% assumed when the budget was set, based on the latest forecasts from our external treasury management advisors. In addition, slippage on the capital programme and an increase in our cash balances has reduced the need to borrow externally in 2023/24.

- The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy published the revised Treasury and Prudential codes in 2021. These require quarterly reporting of performance against forward looking prudential indicators. The performance of the Council's treasury management activity against benchmarks and the key indicators in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council on 7 February 2023, are provided at Appendix 2.
- The aforementioned slippage on the capital programme has resulted in an underspend of £1.8m, where two transfers for Capital Expenditure from Revenue Account (CERA) will not be utilised this financial year.
- There is a planned £3.5m use of the in-year provision made for budgetary risks to cover part of the remaining overspend on service budgets.
- The £0.6m underspend on Business Rates is mainly due to the Levy Surplus Distribution for 2023/24, announced alongside the Local Government Finance Settlement on 5 February 2024.

3.3 The Council is still experiencing residual COVID-19 related costs and income losses which are being mitigated from general and specific COVID-19 grant funding. The balance of COVID-19 General Funding will be used to meet CSD cost pressures. The following table shows the use of this funding in 2023/24:

COVID-19 Grants 2023/24 (£m)	Carried forward	Estimated use in-year (including payback*)	Balance to offset CSD overspend	Specific set-aside for LAC in future years	Estimated balance remaining
COVID-19 General Funding	9.1	(1.7)	(5.6)	(1.8)	-
COVID-19 Specific Funding	4.3	(3.9)	-	-	0.4**
Total funding	13.4	(5.6)	(5.6)	(1.8)	0.4

*To date the Council has repaid £2.1m of unused grant.

** £0.4m will be spent in 2024/25 on the Additional Measures 4 scheme for specialist money advice services, as approved at Cabinet on 12 December 2023.

3.4 Capital Programme expenditure for the year is projected to be £73.9m against a budget of £80.4m, a net variation of £6.5m. The main headlines are:

- Total slippage of £7.3m across a number of projects as the programme continues to experience extended lead-in times, and where inflation and material cost increases has resulted in the pause and reassessment of a number of projects to ensure delivery within budgets, as well as other project specific factors. The largest areas of slippage include the Highways Structural Maintenance programme (£2.0m), Youth Investment Fund project (£1.1m), Integrated Transport Schemes (£1.0m), Bridge Assessment and Strengthening (£0.6m) and the Visibly Better Roads programme (£0.5m).
- A net overspend of £0.5m, mainly relating to the Bexhill and Hastings Link Road where project costs remain for post excavation archaeology, landscaping, and compensation.
- Minor spend in advance totalling £0.3m across a number of projects.

Whilst the implications of slippage in the capital programme are being managed in this financial year, future years profiling has been reviewed as part of the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process and a slippage risk factor will be applied in 2024/25 to mitigate the impact of likely slippage.

4 Progress against Council Priorities

Driving sustainable economic growth

4.1 The Council has spent £307m with 853 local suppliers over the past 12 months. This is 64% of our total spend and exceeds our target of 60%. We continued throughout quarter 3 to work with suppliers to maximise the social value delivered by our contracts. In quarter 3 we achieved benefits that were equal to 21% of the contract value, against a target of 10% (Appendix 4).

4.2 Work on our highways continued in quarter 3 using the additional funding approved by Council in recognition of the deterioration of the network following the last prolonged, wet and cold winter. 132 patch works have been completed so far in 2023/24 across 62 sites. Around 100 road signs had been replaced by the end of quarter 3, with further signs scheduled to be replaced in quarter 4 and 2024/25. Around 150 minor drainage schemes had been completed at the end of quarter 3, with 50 larger schemes also identified, and these will be delivered in quarter 4 2023/24 and 2024/25. 22 road improvement schemes were completed in quarter 3, and 5,194 potholes were repaired (Appendix 6).

4.3 The road condition outturns (where a lower figure indicates better road condition), have been published, these figures are only available at one point each year and are based on specialist laser surveys undertaken in summer 2023. The surveys identify roads that should be considered for maintenance, based on the Department for Transport's criteria. The percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance was 4%, meeting the target for the year. This is also an improvement on the 2022/23 outturn of 5%. The percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance was 5%, above the target of 4%. However, this is also an improvement from 2022/23 when the outturn was 6%. The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 17%, above the target of 14%, and also increasing from the 2022/23 outturn which was 13%. 2022/23 saw a wet winter and this has continued with a generally cool and wet summer and a wet start to winter 2023/24. The survey results for the unclassified roads reflected this with a noticeable increase in edge of carriageway defects identified. Road condition is influenced by a number of factors, including the make-up of the road, the volume of traffic, weather conditions and the level of investment in maintenance. The condition of our roads will vary from year to year depending on those factors. Our targets are based on modelling which tries to predict the rate of deterioration and therefore expected road condition. The targets are aligned to the Council's ten-year investment programme. (Appendix 6).

4.4 A number of projects have continued to progress in quarter 3 as part of the Council's Bus Service Improvement Plan. Improvements have been made to the FlexiBus service which now covers nearly 90% of East Sussex. The FlexiBus app has been improved to make it easier for users. Several of the FlexiBus zones have also been merged, providing greater travel opportunities for residents. Details of the amended services can be found here. The improvements, together with promotion and marketing of the service, has helped to continue the growth in passenger numbers during quarter 3. All bus stops in the county now have QR plates, which enable people to scan the plate and receive information about the next bus due at that stop (Appendix 6).

4.5 4.1% of children at academic age 16 (year 12) were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in December 2023. 5.8% of children at academic age 17 (year 13) were NEET for the same period. The Council has concerns about the lack of vocational/work-based learning offers for young people. We have raised this local and national concern with Ofsted, the Department for Education and the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA). The Council has also taken a number of measures itself to try and reduce the number of NEET children, including refocussing the newly re-commissioned Youth Employability Service Programme more closely on NEET children and encouraging existing education providers to run January course starts to allow young people to start courses as soon as possible (Appendix 5).

4.6 The Libraries team have worked with colleagues across the Council and schools to reintroduce work experience placements at libraries across the county. 49 young people have started placements in libraries in quarters 1 – 3 (Appendix 6).

Keeping vulnerable people safe

4.7 The inspection of the Council Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Inspections took place from 11 – 15 December. This was a short inspection. The inspection report was published 6 February, and we were awarded an overall effectiveness grading of Good with the experiences and progress of children in care graded as Outstanding (Appendix 5).

4.8 The rate of Looked After Children has decreased, from 64.4 (686 children) at quarter 2, to 63.0 (671 children), at quarter 3. Of the 671 children, 82 are unaccompanied asylum seeker children, an increase of 5 children from quarter 2. The rate of children with a Child Protection plan has continued to increase, from 63.0 per 10,000 (671 children) at quarter 2 to 70.6 (753 children) at quarter 3. We continue to keep these plans under review with a range of actions to look at how this number can be safely reduced (Appendix 5).

4.9 The 2022 figures (the latest data available) indicate that 79 people in East Sussex died as a result of drug and alcohol misuse. Although this represented a significant decrease in drug-related deaths compared to the previous three years, every death is a tragedy and these numbers remain higher than anyone would wish for. We continue to work with our commissioned providers and partners to ensure that all people requiring support are provided with this as early as possible, and aim for the number of deaths to decrease further in future. It should also be noted that there was an error in the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) baseline data used to calculate the target – OHID have confirmed that this should have been 77, rather than 74. Targets for future years will be revised based on the corrected baseline data. (Appendix 3).

4.10 The latest data for quarter 2 (reported a quarter in arrears) suggests that we may not reach the 2023/24 target for the number of people accessing treatment for opiate misuse. This reflects a national trend of decreasing numbers of people accessing treatment for opiate misuse. The Government recognises this trend and is revising down its expectations for the numbers of people accessing treatment for future years. We will continue to prioritise work to develop this service and locally increase the number of people that we reach (Appendix 3).

4.11 The Government's Sustainable Warmth Scheme, which was delivered through the Council's Warm Home Check Service came to an end in October 2023. Since May 2021, the £3.65m scheme has provided nearly 500 home energy improvements for low-income households, including installing insulation, solar PV and low carbon heating systems. These improvements supported residents to keep warm and safe in their homes, while also reducing the county's carbon emissions (Appendix 3).

4.12 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and the White Ribbon Day took place during quarter 3. The Safer Communities Team developed a joint social media campaign, which was adopted across Sussex, and led a joint webinar with West Sussex County Council. The webinar included a range of guest speakers, including Sussex Police, local specialist services, and the Voices of Lived Experience Board (Appendix 3)

4.13 The Council's Public Health team received a Silver Award from the Infection Prevention Society for Nurturing Infection Prevention and Control Talent 2023. The award recognised the work done by the team in 2023/24 with the wider remit of groups such as unpaid and informal carers, day services and volunteers working in the community and people's homes (Appendix 3).

Helping people help themselves

4.14 The Employability and Skills Service for people in Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refuges held job fairs in Newhaven and Eastbourne in quarter 3 for people who are furthest from the workplace. Over 200 local people who were unemployed and also had additional requirements to getting and sustaining work, such as a history of homelessness or veterans etc., attended. 12 people were referred to the Moving on Up Programme which supports people into apprenticeships and work with training via a work mentor and provides funding for childcare, travel and rent arrears or to pay a deposit for private rent. Mentors are currently working with 61 people to support them into work and the private rented sector. In quarter 3, a total of 16 people who were furthest from the workplace were supported into jobs, of which 8 were also supported to move into private rented accommodation. This included people who may have never worked before and were homeless and living in temporary accommodation (Appendix 3).

4.15 The number of volunteer opportunities listed on the Council funded Tribe platform has continued to grow in quarter 3, enabling people to connect to volunteering opportunities in their area. Work is underway with voluntary, community and social enterprise partners to promote Tribe

to group and organisations in the county, and a promotional campaign for residents will be developed in quarter 4 (Appendix 3).

4.16 There has been a sustained effort by GP practices across the county to provide NHS Health Checks to those living in the most deprived areas of the county. At the end of quarter 2 (reported a quarter in arrears) 1,119 people living in some of the most deprived parts of the county had received a Health Check (Appendix 3).

4.17 The number of people in receipt of Direct Payments has increased from 1,520 at the start of 2023/24 to 1,562 on 31 December 2023. However, the overall the number of people receiving community-based long-term support has increased at a greater rate (4,792 to 5,165) meaning we will not achieve the target. Despite the reduced proportion of people in receipt of Direct Payments, the Council's performance is still good compared to national benchmarks. Based on current national data, performance would fall within the upper-middle quartile (Appendix 3).

4.18 The number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention improved in quarter 3 as referrals to the service increased, meaning we are now expecting to meet the target for 2023/24. The service relies on receiving referrals either direct from carers or via other organisations (Appendix 3).

Making best use of resources now and for the future

4.19 As part of our corporate lobbying work during quarter 3 the Leader took the opportunity to meet with local MPs and continued to raise the issues and priorities of the county with them. This included a specific update on the November RPPR Cabinet report drawing attention to the significant pressure the Council was under due to increasing demand and complexity in statutory services, particularly children's social care and special educational needs and disabilities. The Leader highlighted the very challenging medium term financial outlook for the Council and sought MPs' support in lobbying for certainty of future funding for local government, that reflects local need, and to ensure that service reforms are sustainable and properly funded. Ahead of the Autumn Statement the Leader also took the opportunity to write jointly with other county leaders in the South East to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing the urgent need for additional funding in children's services and home to school transport (Appendix 7).

4.20 16 energy efficiency projects have been completed in quarters 1 – 3, including 4 LED lighting projects and 5 solar PV energy generation schemes. Triple glazing and loft, door and wall insulation has been installed at a number of schools in the county. Further projects to reach the target of 23 schemes in 2023/24 have been identified, however, inclement weather, supply chain or onsite issues could still hamper achievement. Total energy consumption in quarter 2 (reported a quarter in arrears) was down 9% when compared with the same period last year and down 25% on the baseline year 2019/20. There is not yet enough data to accurately estimate the end of year outturn for 2023/24, however if consumption for the remainder of 2023/24 is the same as 2022/23 carbon emissions would decrease by 0.39% this year. The main contributing factor to the increase in emissions projected for 2023/24 is the increase in the electricity emissions factor (the carbon intensity of the national grid) which has risen 7% year on year. This is due to an increase in the use of natural gas for electricity generation and a decrease in renewable energy generation, which is out of the Council's control (Appendix 4).

4.21 The Council has continued to work with a range of partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work in quarter 3. This included, securing £245,000 from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to develop a plan to provide people with the skills to enable the retrofit of domestic properties to reduce their carbon emissions. The plan is due to be developed by the end of March 2025 (Appendix 6).

Becky Shaw, Chief Executive

How to read this report

This report integrates monitoring for finance, performance and risk. Contents are as follows:

- Cover report (includes how to read this report)
- Appendix 1 Corporate Summary
- Appendix 2 Treasury Management Prudential Indicators
- Appendix 3 Adult Social Care and Health – (ASCH)
- Appendix 4 Business Services (Department) – (BSD)
- Appendix 5 Children’s Services (Department) – (CSD)
- Appendix 6 Communities, Economy and Transport – (CET)
- Appendix 7 Governance Services – (GS)
- Appendix 8 Strategic Risk Register

Cover report, Appendix 1 and Appendix 2

The cover report, Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 provide a concise corporate summary of progress against all our Council Plan Targets (full year outturns at quarter 4), Revenue Budget, Savings Targets, Capital Programme and Treasury Management Prudential Indicators.

The cover report highlights a selection of key topics from the departmental appendices, for the four Council priorities:

- driving sustainable economic growth;
- keeping vulnerable people safe;
- helping people help themselves; and
- making best use of resources now and for the future.

More information on each of these topics is provided in the relevant departmental appendix referenced in brackets, e.g. (Appendix 3). More detailed performance and finance data is also available in the departmental appendices.

Departmental Appendices 3-7

The departmental appendices provide a single commentary covering issues and progress against key topics for the department (including all those mentioned in the cover report). This is followed by data tables showing progress against Council Plan Targets, Savings Targets, Revenue Budget, and Capital Programme for the department.

For each topic, the commentary references supporting data in the tables at the end of the appendix, e.g. **(ref i)**. The tables include this reference in the ‘note ref’ column on the right hand side. Where the commentary refers to the Revenue Budget or Capital Programme, it may refer to all or part of the amount that is referenced in the table, or it may refer to several amounts added together. Performance exceptions follow these rules:

Quarter 1	All targets not expected to be achieved at year end i.e. not RAG rated Green, and any proposed amendments or deletions. Changes to targets early in Q1 should be made under delegated authority for the Council Plan refresh in June.
Quarter 2	Targets that have changed RAG rating since Q1 including changes to Green (except where target was amended at Q1), plus proposed amendments or deletions.
Quarter 3	Targets that have changed RAG rating since Q2 including changes to Green (except where target was amended at Q2), plus proposed amendments or deletions.
Quarter 4	Targets that have changed RAG rating since Q3 to Red or Green (except where target was amended at Q3). Outturns that are not available are reported as Carry Overs. All target outturns for the full year are reported in the year end summary at Appendix 1.

Strategic Risk Register Appendix 8

Appendix 8 contains commentary explaining mitigating actions for all Strategic Risks.

Supporting Information regarding proposal for use of COMF funding Appendix 9

Information in support of the recommendation to approve a further and final annual extension of the Additional Measures Scheme for specialist money advice services through 2024/25, funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF).

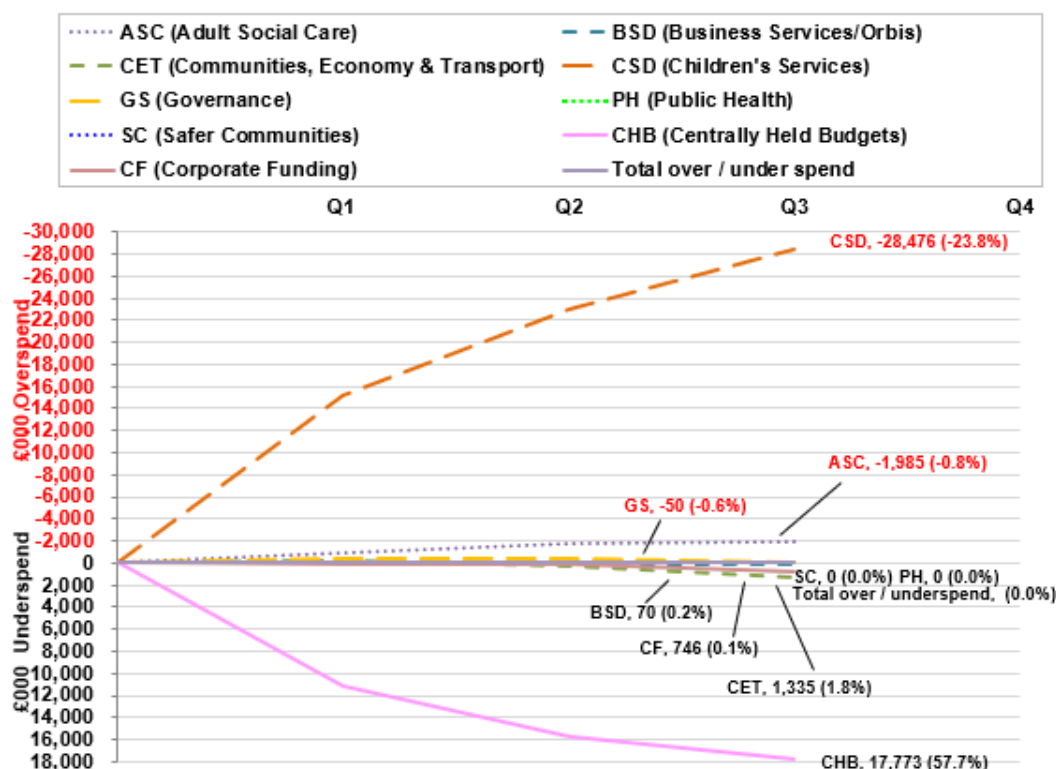
Council Monitoring Corporate Summary – Q3 2023/24

Council Plan performance targets

Priority	Red	Amber	Green	Amend / Delete
Driving sustainable economic growth	3	5	17	0
Keeping vulnerable people safe	2	2	8	0
Helping people help themselves	1	0	13	1
Making best use of resources now and for the future	1	1	5	0
Total	7	8	43	1

Performance overview Q2 2023/24	Performance overview Q3 2023/24	Measures off target by department
<p>Green, 47, 80% Amber, 7, 12% Red, 5, 8%</p>	<p>Green, 43, 73% Amber, 8, 13% Red, 7, 12% Amend/Delete, 1, 2%</p>	<p>There are 59 measures in the Council Plan. 4 departments had off-target measures in Q3.</p> <p>ASCH – 2 Red measures, 1 Amber measure, 1 Amend/Delete measure</p> <p>BSD – 1 Red measure, 1 Amber measure</p> <p>CET – 3 Red measures</p> <p>CSD – 1 Red measure, 6 Amber measures</p>

Revenue budget outturn (net £000)



Revenue budget summary (£000) 2023/24**Services:**

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Adult Social Care	344,354	(108,474)	235,880	380,678	(142,813)	237,865	(36,324)	34,339	(1,985)
Safer Communities	2,055	(909)	1,146	3,084	(1,938)	1,146	(1,029)	1,029	-
Public Health	33,777	(33,777)	-	33,379	(33,379)	-	398	(398)	-
Business Services / Orbis	55,738	(26,729)	29,009	59,103	(30,164)	28,939	(3,365)	3,435	70
Children's Services	403,167	(283,395)	119,772	437,042	(288,794)	148,248	(33,875)	5,399	(28,476)
Communities, Economy & Transport	160,969	(87,778)	73,191	162,504	(90,648)	71,856	(1,535)	2,870	1,335
Governance Services	9,058	(744)	8,314	9,139	(775)	8,364	(81)	31	(50)
Total Services	1,009,118	(541,806)	467,312	1,084,929	(588,511)	496,418	(75,811)	46,705	(29,106)

Centrally Held Budgets (CHB):

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Treasury Management	21,630	(7,700)	13,930	18,349	(11,867)	6,482	3,281	4,167	7,448
Capital Programme	527	-	527	-	(1,300)	(1,300)	527	1,300	1,827
Unfunded Pensions	5,202	-	5,202	4,653	-	4,653	549	-	549
General Contingency	4,880	-	4,880	-	-	-	4,880	-	4,880
Provision for Budgetary Risks	4,272	-	4,272	740	-	740	3,532	-	3,532
Apprenticeship Levy	772	-	772	781	-	781	(9)	-	(9)
Levies, Grants & Other	7,003	(5,779)	1,224	6,939	(5,924)	1,015	64	145	209
Debt Impairment	-	-	-	663	-	663	(663)	-	(663)
Total Centrally Held Budgets	44,286	(13,479)	30,807	32,125	(19,091)	13,034	12,161	5,612	17,773

Corporate Funding:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Business Rates	-	(94,336)	(94,336)	-	(94,962)	(94,962)	-	626	626
Revenue Support Grant	-	(4,076)	(4,076)	-	(4,076)	(4,076)	-	-	-
Service Grant	-	(2,916)	(2,916)	-	(3,036)	(3,036)	-	120	120
Council Tax	-	(351,828)	(351,828)	-	(351,828)	(351,828)	-	-	-
Social Care Grant	-	(44,612)	(44,612)	-	(44,612)	(44,612)	-	-	-
New Homes Bonus	-	(351)	(351)	-	(351)	(351)	-	-	-
Total Corporate Funding	0	(498,119)	(498,119)	0	(498,865)	(498,865)	0	746	746

APPENDIX 1

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
TOTAL	1,053,404	(1,053,404)	0	1,117,054	(1,106,467)	10,587	(63,650)	53,063	(10,587)
Use of Covid-19 general funding to cover operational overspend	-	-	-	-	(5,666)	(5,666)	-	5,666	5,666
Agreed use of COMF to offset CSD pressures	-	-	-	-	(1,596)	(1,596)	-	1,596	1,596
Council Tax Collection Fund Surplus	-	-	-	-	(2,031)	(2,031)	-	2,031	2,031
Use of FM Reserve to cover operational overspend	-	-	-	-	(1,294)	(1,294)	-	1,294	1,294
FINAL TOTAL	1,053,404	(1,053,404)	0	1,117,054	(1,117,054)	0	(63,650)	63,650	0

Revenue Savings Summary 2023/24 (£'000)

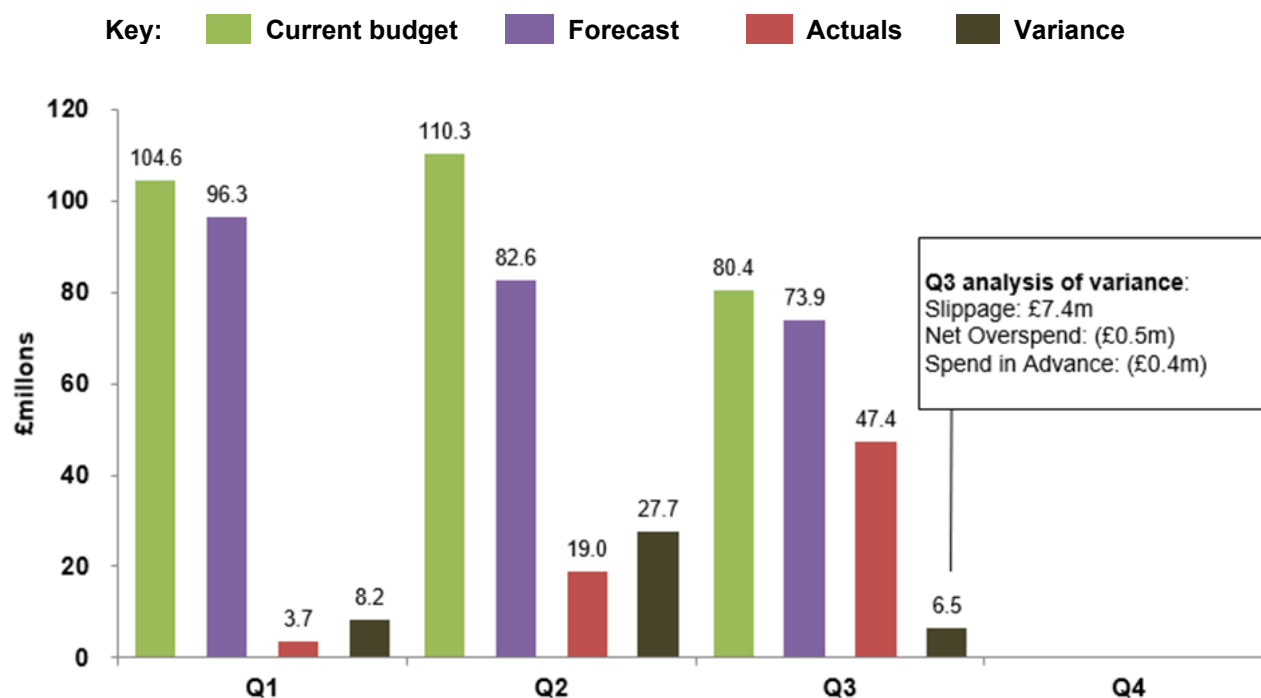
Service description	Original Target for 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved
ASC	-	-	-	-	-
BSD / Orbis	869	869	659	210	-
CS	-	-	-	-	-
CET	105	910	105	745	60
GS	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	974	1,779	764	955	60
ASC			-	-	-
BSD / Orbis			-	-	-
CS			-	-	-
CET			-	-	-
GS			-	-	-
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0
Total Savings & Permanent Changes	974	1,779	764	955	60

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total
ASC	-	-	0
BSD / Orbis	210	-	210
CS	-	-	0
CET	745	60	805
GS	-	-	0
Total	955	60	1,015

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance. It will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Capital Programme (gross £ millions) – approved projects**Capital Programme Summary 2023/24 (£'000)**

	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance
Adult Social Care	1,259	360	920	339	30	309	-
Business Services	21,162	16,218	19,191	1,971	369	1,602	-
Children's Services	1,215	1,175	1,420	(205)	(205)	-	-
Communities, Economy & Transport	56,714	29,616	52,347	4,367	(711)	5,386	(308)
Gross Expenditure (Planned Programme)	80,350	47,369	73,878	6,472	(517)	7,297	(308)
Section 106 and CIL	1,607	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Specific Funding	9,426	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	817	-	-	-	-	-	-
Formula Grants	32,502	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves and Revenue Set Aside	18,979	-	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowing	17,019	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	80,350	-	-	-	-	-	-

Treasury Management

The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), which provides the framework for managing the Council's cash balances and borrowing requirement, continues to reflect a policy of ensuring minimum risk, whilst aiming to deliver secure realistic investment income on the Council's cash balances.

The average level of Council funds available for investment purposes during Q3 was £269.102m. The total amount received in short term interest for Q3 was £3.646m at an average rate of 5.38%, compared to £3.540m at an average rate of 4.79% for Q2 2023/24. The anticipated average investment return for the year is currently 5.37%, from the 4.45% assumed at budget setting, based on the latest forecasts from our external treasury management advisors.

The Bank of England Base Rate was maintained in Q3 at 5.25%. The investment return outlook has improved however, the potential for increased interest rates into the future has reduced. 5.25% is expected to be the peak and the latest forecasts suggest marginal decreases in the bank rate from the summer 2024. Where possible a number of fixed term deposits with banks were placed for periods up to 1 year in Q3 at improved rates. These investments have been 'laddered' and will mature at different intervals in the next 12 months. This will take advantage of securing investment returns in future quarters.

In seeking investment opportunities, as defined by the TMS, opportunities have been taken to reinvest in maturing bank deposits that aligns to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In Q3, a total of £5m was reinvested for a duration of six months, the current balance of £23m is in place for investment in SDG deposits. We will look to place deals maturing with other local authorities in Q4 if the rates are favourable compared to traditional bank deposits.

No short-term borrowing was required in Q3. The majority of the Council's external debt, totalling £216.6m at Q3, is held as long-term loans. No long-term borrowing was undertaken in Q3, and no further cost-effective opportunities have arisen during Q3 to restructure the existing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or wider debt portfolio.

The Treasury Management budget is currently forecasting to underspend by £7.4m. This is based on the position outlined above with regard to balances held and investment returns and slippage on the capital programme reducing the need to borrow externally in 2023/24.

The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council on 7 February 2023, are set out at Appendix 2.

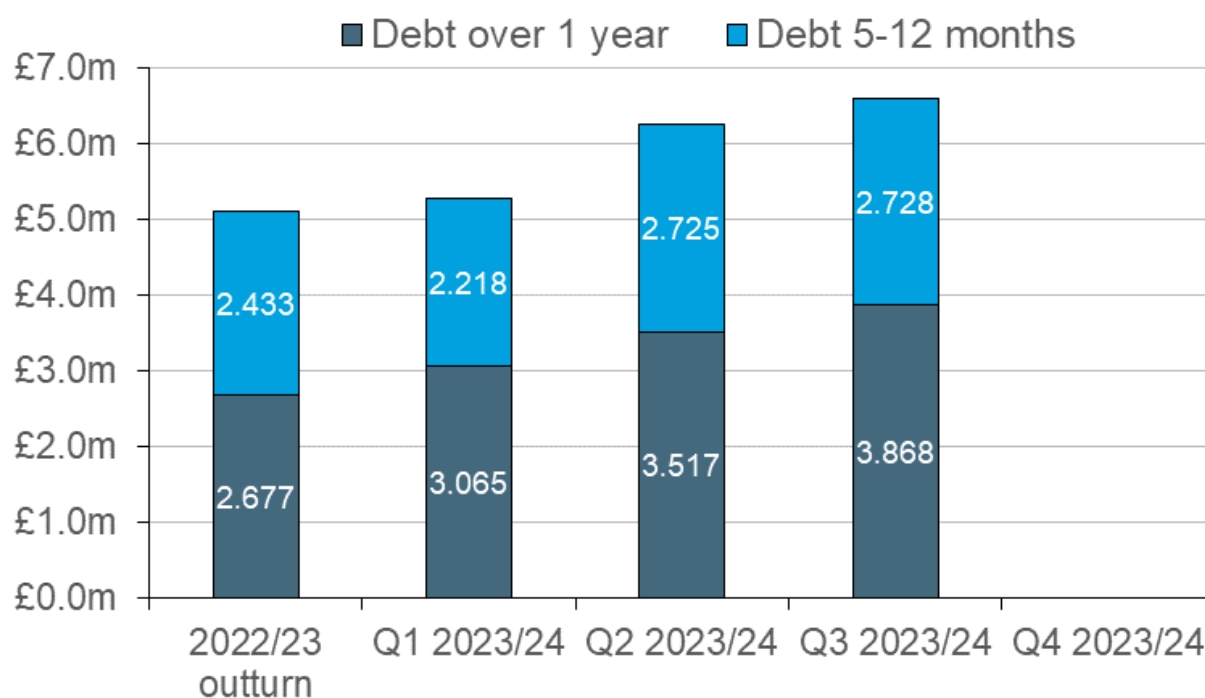
Reserves and Balances 2023/24 (£000)

Reserve / Balance	Balance at 1 Apr 2023	Forecast net use at Q2	Forecast net use at Q3	Movement	Estimated balance at 31 Mar 2024
Statutorily ringfenced or held on behalf of others:					
Balances held by schools	20,082	-	-	-	20,082
Public Health	7,812	(1,704)	(1,704)	-	6,108
Other	6,983	(882)	(867)	15	6,116
Subtotal	34,877	(2,586)	(2,571)	15	32,306
Service Reserves:					
Corporate Waste	19,883	(470)	(440)	30	19,443
Capital Programme	13,425	(4,062)	(4,061)	1	9,364
Insurance	7,363	133	133	-	7,496
Adult Social Care	3,099	-	-	-	3,099
Subtotal	43,770	(4,399)	(4,368)	31	39,402
Strategic Reserves:					
Priority / Transformation	17,398	(11,469)	(11,474)	(5)	5,924
Financial Management	41,880	(8,397)	(10,115) ¹	(1,718)	31,765
Subtotal	59,278	(19,866)	(21,589)	(1,723)	37,689
Total Reserves	137,925	(26,851)	(28,528)	(1,677)	109,397
General Fund	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
Total Reserves and Balances	147,925	(26,851)	(28,528)	(1,677)	119,397

¹ Currently excludes any transfers relating to Q3 variances

Changes to Fees & Charges

Changes over 4% during quarter 3 were reported to Cabinet on January 23, 2024, as part of the RPPR report.

Outstanding debt analysis (£ millions)

The value of debt aged over 5 months at Q3 has increased by £1.486m to £6.596m compared to the 2022/23 outturn position of £5.110m.

£6.269m (95.04%) relates to Adult Social Care (ASC), which has increased by £2.054m compared to the 2022/23 outturn position of £4.215m. £0.457m of this increase relates to income due from the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) and other Local Authorities and ongoing communications take place to facilitate repayment.

Recovery of debt continues to be a high priority focus with a continual review of systems and processes. During this quarter, ASC have started work on a debt recovery project with the aim of ensuring that there are clear, visible pathways to support clients to pay their client contributions and to recover any debt that arises as a result of non-payment. A monthly ASC debt panel has also been introduced to review complex and ongoing cases and ensure the most appropriate steps are taken to recover debt.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – Q3 2023/24

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy published the revised Treasury and Prudential codes in 2021, which now requires quarterly reporting of performance against forward looking prudential indicators. The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council at its meeting of 7 February 2023, are set out below.

Investments

The average investment return over Q3 was 5.38% performing above the benchmark rate by 19 basis points (or 0.19 percentage points). Performance has improved as a result of reinvesting maturing investments in a duration matched to a peak in the forecast Bank of England (BoE) bank interest rate.

Quarter	Average Investment Balance £m	Average Investment return	Average Benchmark Rate*	Difference
Q1	295.687	4.19%	4.34%	(0.15%)
Q2	293.169	4.82%	5.09%	(0.27%)
Q3	269.102	5.38%	5.19%	0.19%

**the Benchmark rate used is the Standard Overnight Index Average (SONIA); a rate administered by the Bank of England based on actual transactions of overnight borrowing by financial institutions.*

During Q3 we have monitored the security of the Council's investment, to assess the risk of those investments losing their value. These risks were assessed using the financial standing of the groups invested in, the length of each investment, and the historic default rates. Our investment strategy sets an allowable risk level of 0.050% (i.e. that there is a 99.95% probability that the Council will get its investments back). The actual indicator ranged between 0.005% and 0.007%, reflecting the high proportion of investments held in highly secure and/or very liquid investments.

Investment Risk benchmark	0.050%
Maximum investment risk experienced Q3	0.007%

Borrowing

The table below shows the Council's total external borrowing and average rate as at 31 December 2023:

	Balance as at 31 December 2023 £m	Average Rate
PWLB	210.142	4.53%
Market Loans	6.450	4.25%
Total borrowing	216.592	4.52%

The table below shows the Q3 forecast of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) compared to the estimate within the 2023/24 strategy approved in February 2023. The CFR is expected to give rise to new borrowing required of £64.905m by the end of the year, compared to the original estimate of £83.932m. The strategy currently forecasts that the level of reserves and balances in the medium term allows internal borrowing of up to £50.000m, and therefore it is currently expected that external borrowing of £14.905m may be required to support the capital programme.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (Underlying Borrowing Need)	Original Estimate 2023/24 £m	Revised forecast as at 31 December 2023 £m
Opening CFR	274.367	271.882
Borrowing Need	34.904	17.019
Minimum Revenue Provision	(7.429)	(7.404)
Closing CFR	301.842	281.497
External Borrowing as at 31 December 2023		216.592
Forecast Underborrowing (if no action taken)		64.905

The table below shows that the Council is operating within the Operational Boundary and Authorised Borrowing Limits set within the Treasury Management strategy and has sufficient headroom to cover the borrowing need arising from the year's capital programme.

Borrowing Limits	Operational Boundary £m	Authorised Borrowing Limit £m
Limit set for 2023/24	376.000	396.000
Less: PFI & Leases	65.000	65.000
Limit for Underlying Borrowing	311.000	331.000
Actual External Borrowing at 31 December	216.592	216.592
Headroom*	94.408	114.408

*Authorised Borrowing headroom cannot be less than zero

The maturity profile of the Authority's borrowing is within the limits set within the strategy.

Maturity Structure of borrowing	Lower Limit set	Upper Limit set	Actual as at 31 December 2023
Under 12 Months	0%	25%	2%
12 months to 2 years	0%	40%	2%
2 years to 5 years	0%	60%	7%
5 years to 10 years	0%	70%	16%
Over 10 years	0%	90%	72%

Adult Social Care and Health – Q3 2023/24

Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Adult Social Care (ASC)

Health and Social Care integration

Collaborative work has continued in Q3 to develop a pan-Sussex core offer for 'Integrated Care Teams' (ICTs), building on the agreement in Q2 to create an ICT footprint in each of East Sussex's boroughs and districts.

During Q3, intelligence and insight profiles have been produced to set out a picture of population health needs and service demand across each of the footprints. These will be used as part of the broader development of ICTs, alongside local community engagement, to support planning discussions about local priorities. A focused leadership meeting took place in Hastings to explore how ICT development can build on and add value in the context of local activity and challenges. A follow up meeting with frontline services and teams is being planned for Q4, alongside a phased plan for the other 4 ICT footprints.

Adults are able to take control of the support they receive

The number of people in receipt of Direct Payments (**ref iii**) increased from 1,520 as of 31 March 2023 to 1,562 as of 31 December 2023, but the overall the number of people receiving community-based long term support increased at a greater rate (4,792 to 5,165). Despite the reduced proportion of people in receipt of Direct Payments, the Council's performance is still good compared to national benchmarks. Based on current national data, performance would fall within the upper-middle quartile. It is important to note that this measure is a snapshot at the end of each reporting period, so performance can fluctuate.

Reabling people to maximise their level of independence

Reablement services are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Data shows that our reablement services are having a positive impact on the ongoing support needs of our residents and enable people to stay in their own homes after a stay in hospital. In particular:

- Between April and December 2023, 95.1% of people who received short-term services did not request any further support.
- Between April and September 2023 (reported a quarter in arrears), 93.5% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement / rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after their discharge from hospital. Based on current national data, this performance would fall within the upper quartile.

Homes for Ukraine - As at 31 December 2023, 1,762 guests had arrived in East Sussex under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, sponsored and hosted by 812 sponsors. A significant number (601) have moved on from their hosts into private sector accommodation, which is a positive achievement.

Third Sector support

During Q3, we continued to co-develop the Community Network Support Programme including by connecting with networks in each district and borough area to scope support needs.

In Q3, the number of volunteer opportunity listings on the Council-funded Tribe platform has continued to grow, to over 150, enabling people to connect to volunteering opportunities in their area. During Q3, listings for local activities and events were collected and will be added to Tribe over the next month, thereby providing information for Social Prescribers and Community Connectors to use. Work is underway with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector partners to promote Tribe to groups and organisations, and a promotional campaign for residents will be developed in Q4.

Support With Confidence

The scheme closed on 31 December 2023, therefore this measure is proposed for deletion (**ref iv**). A public consultation on the future of the Support with Confidence scheme ran from 27 September to 5 December 2023. In October 2023 the licence holders informed us that they are withdrawing the brand so the scheme closed on 31 December 2023. Our future offer to personal assistants, businesses and residents will be agreed by Lead Member on 6 March 2023.

Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention

The number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention (**ref vi**) has improved in Q3 as referrals to the service increased. The service relies on receiving referrals either direct from carers or via other organisations.

Safer Communities

Domestic Violence and Abuse, Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

During Q3, we led a partnership bid to participate in the Domestic Abuse Commissioner's (DAC) national pilot for the Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism. This bid was developed collaboratively between the Council, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner. Participation in this pilot will provide guidance and support from the DAC office, and the opportunity to showcase good practice nationally.

Q3 also saw the annual 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence and White Ribbon Day campaigns. The Safer Communities Team developed a joint social media campaign, adopted by partners across Sussex, and led a joint webinar with WSCC with a range of guest speakers, including Sussex Police, local specialist services, and the Voices of Lived Experience Board. As well as a White Ribbon promotion day at County Hall, the team participated in local events, including the Safer Hastings Partnership's White Ribbon 'Blue Light' event, focused on the safety of older people.

Fraud and Scams

During Q3, the Safer Communities Team worked with partners to offer [Get Safe Online](#) training to interested parties who work with those vulnerable to scams across the county and continued to deliver a 'digital ambassador' scheme aimed at building further resilience to scams.

Preventing Violent Extremism

During Q3, the Safer Communities Team delivered 37 community safety awareness sessions and Prevent-themed educational interventions across the county including to students and staff in schools and colleges, partners and the wider community. A total of 1,215 students and staff benefitted from this training during Q3.

East Sussex Violence Reduction Partnership - Serious Violence Duty

We worked with Sussex Police to identify communities and groups with lived experience of serious crime in hyper-local areas during Q3. We are engaging with these groups to develop holistic action plans to tackle violent crime. This work is funded by the Home Office Serious Violence Duty Implementation Grant.

Devonshire Safer Streets Project

During Q3, the Safer Communities Team worked with voluntary sector and grassroots partners to co-produce a Community Strategy and Action Plan. The Action Plan sets out calls to action to promote dialogue between statutory partners and community networks; counter perceptions; build capacity of local networks, and foster a culture of information sharing.

Harm to Hope

During Q3, the three sub-groups of the Harm to Hope Board were established. These groups are focused on ensuring a whole system approach to address the aims of the Government's Drug Strategy. The Treatment and Recovery Sub-Group is developing pathways to support a range of specific groups into structured treatment, including those with co-occurring conditions and those leaving prison.

Drug and alcohol related deaths

The latest figures for deaths resulting from drug or alcohol misuse have been released (**ref i**). These are for 2022, reported in arrears. These indicate that 79 people died as a result of drug or alcohol misuse. Although this represented a significant decrease in drug-related deaths compared to the previous three years, every death is a tragedy and these numbers remain higher than anyone would wish for. We continue to work with our commissioned providers and partners to ensure that all people requiring support are provided with this as early as possible, and aim for the number of deaths to decrease further in future. It should also be noted that there was an error in the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) baseline data used to calculate the target – OHID have confirmed that this should have been 77, rather than 74. Targets for future years will be revised based on the corrected baseline data.

Treatment for opiate misuse

Latest figures for Q2 (reported a quarter in arrears) suggest that we may be unable to reach the target of 1,247 people accessing treatment for opiate misuse this year (**ref ii**). This reflects a national trend of decreasing numbers of people accessing treatment for opiate misuse. The Government recognises this trend and is revising down its expectations for the numbers of people accessing treatment for future years. We will continue to prioritise work to develop this service and increase locally the number of people that we reach.

Public Health

Sustainable Food Places

Sustainable Food Places is a network of cross-sector partnerships that helps people and places to share challenges, explore practical solutions and develop best practice in all aspects of healthy and sustainable food. In Q3 the Lewes District and Eastbourne areas were awarded the Sustainable Food Places Bronze Award. This award recognises that each place has a cross-sector food partnership, with activity and impact delivered across the six key issues identified by Sustainable Food Places. Both areas have a wide range of initiatives, policies and strategies in place to support the local community to access to healthy and sustainable food.

Wellbeing at Work East Sussex

Affinity Select Insurance LTD are the first small business to achieve the East Sussex Wellbeing at Work scheme (WAW) 'GOLD' accreditation for their commitment and range of initiatives to promote the health and wellbeing of their 16 employees. A Mental Health strategy was introduced as well as mandatory completion of Zero First Aid Suicide Awareness training for all staff which has resulted in a safe and more open environment for discussions and support for mental health. In addition, a no smoking policy was introduced in tandem with education and support which has successfully reduced the number of employees that smoke. The Government has set a clear aim to end smoking for good in this country and the WAW scheme will help to achieve this amongst many other health and wellbeing aims.

Employability and Skills Service

The Employability and Skills Service for people in Supported and Temporary Accommodation and Refuges (ESTAR) held job fairs in Newhaven and Eastbourne in Q3 for people who are furthest from the workplace. Over 200 local people who were unemployed and also who have additional requirements to getting and sustaining work (history of homelessness, contact with criminal justice service, veterans, refugees etc.) attended. 12 people were referred to the Moving on Up Programme which supports people into apprenticeships and work with training via a work mentor and provides funding for childcare, travel and rent arrears or to pay a deposit for private rent. This included people who may have never worked before and were homeless and living in temporary accommodation. Mentors are currently working with 61 people to support them into work and the private rented sector. In Q3, a total of 16 people who were furthest from the workplace were supported into jobs, of which 8 were also supported to move into private rented accommodation. This included people who may have never worked before and were homeless and living in temporary accommodation.

Infection Prevention Society for Nurturing Infection Prevention Control (IPC) Talent 2023

Public Health received a Silver Award from the Infection Prevention Society for Nurturing Infection Prevention and Control Talent 2023. The award recognised the work undertaken in 2023/24 with the wider remit of groups such as unpaid and informal carers, day services and volunteers working in the community and people's homes.

Sustainable Warmth scheme in East Sussex

In October 2023, the delivery phase of the government funded Sustainable Warmth scheme, delivered through the Council's Warm Home Check service, came to its planned end in East Sussex. This included Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery and Home Upgrade Grant Phase 1 schemes. Since May 2021 the £3.65m scheme enabled the completion of nearly 500 fully funded home energy efficiency improvements for low-income households, including home insulation, solar PV (photo-voltaic) installations and low carbon heating systems, directly supporting residents to keep warm and safe.

Improving targeting of NHS Health Checks

We continue to see a sustained effort by GP practices to provide NHS Health Checks to those living in the most deprived areas of the county (**ref v**). Data for Q2 (reported a quarter in arrears) shows that 1,119 people in the eligible criteria for the measure have received a Health Check. GP practices in the Hastings and St Leonards area have increased their performance and are now delivering the majority of the health checks to being offered to those eligible under this measure.

Revenue Budget Summary

ASC

The net ASC budget of £235.880m includes a 10% inflationary uplift of £25.797m to support the care market across the Independent Sector. This uplift is in addition to £4.546m to fund growth and demographic pressures, with the costs of the increases being partially funded by £6.635m raised through the 2% ASC Care Precept. In July 2023, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced an additional £3.932m Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF), which has been fully invested to support the market.

The ASC net projected outturn is £237.865m. This gives a forecast overspend of £1.985m, an increase of £0.295m since Q2. The movement in Q3 comprises of an increase in the overspend of £0.507m on Independent Sector care provision (£2.943m total overspend), offset by an increase in the underspend of £0.212m in Directly Provided Services (£0.958m total underspend). The overspend on the Independent Sector is due to a combination of factors with the most material

being increasing complexity of need and pressures arising from demand and demographic growth returning to pre-pandemic levels. The underspend in Directly Provided Services is due to staffing vacancies and reflects the difficulties in recruitment.

Safer Communities

The net budget of £1.146m is forecast to be fully spent in 2023/24.

Public Health

The Public Health (PH) budget of £33.777m comprises of the PH grant allocation of £29.803m, the Supplemental Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG) allocation of £1.350m, a planned draw from reserves of £2.058m for projects and a £0.566m planned draw to support in year spending.

PH is forecasting an underspend of £0.398m in 2023/24, comprised of £1.100m slippage on the PH reserve projects, offset by a £0.036m forecast overspend on the general PH programme and a forecast overspend of £0.666m on the Health Visiting programme, which is used to support Children's Early Years.

COVID-19 related funding streams

ASC continues to incur expenditure relating to schemes initiated during the national COVID-19 response. £0.363m will be spent in 2024/25 on the Additional Measures 4 scheme for specialist money advice services, as approved at Cabinet on 12 December 2023.

Grant	Funding brought forward £'000	Planned Usage £'000	Balance Remaining £'000
Contain Outbreak Management Funding	2,695	2,332	363
CEV Grant (support to CEV individuals)	1,539	1,539	-
Omicron Support Fund	42	42	-
Total	4,276	3,913	363

Homes for Ukraine

ASC continues to lead on the programme of services to support Ukrainian guests to settle in East Sussex. Total projected expenditure in 2023/24 is £5.252m against expected funding of £11.637m, with the remaining budget allocated for the subsequent years of support required under statutory guidance. In addition, ASC will pass £1.671m to districts and boroughs to fund payments to hosts, in line with guidance.

HFU Grant Funding	Funding Confirmed £'000	Further Funding Anticipated £'000	Total Funding £'000	Actual Expenditure £'000	Balance Remaining £'000
Funding for guests	11,287	350	11,637	5,252	6,385
Host Payments	-	1,671	1,671	1,671	-
Total	11,287	2,021	13,308	6,923	6,385

Capital Programme Summary

The ASC Capital programme budget is £1.259m for 2023/24. The outturn this year is forecast to be £0.920m. There is slippage of £0.309m mainly due to delays following a contractor going into administration. That contract is in the process of being novated to a new contractor.

Performance exceptions (see How to read this report for definition)**Priority – Keeping vulnerable people safe**

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
Number of drug and alcohol related deaths in the county	N/A	74	G	G	R		79	i
The number of people accessing treatment for opiate misuse	N/A	1,247	G	G	A		Q2: 1,057 Reported a quarter in arrears	ii

Priority – Helping people help themselves

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
Proportion of working age adults and older people receiving direct payments	31.9%	>31.5%	A	A	R		30.2%	iii
Measure proposed for deletion: Number of providers registered with Support With Confidence	346	>346	A	R	A/D		Scheme closed 31/12/23	iv
Improved targeting of NHS Health Checks	Cumulative uptake: 29.5% (5 year period 2018/19–2022/23 Q4)	10% of the eligible population in the 20% most deprived areas (IMD1) have received a health check	R	A	G		1,119 / 2,300 NHS Health Checks delivered 49% of annual target met	v
Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention	494	390	G	A	G		247	vi

Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	0	0	0	0	0	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	0	0	0	0	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	0	0	0	

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year; the saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance - it will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)**Adult Social Care – Independent Sector:**

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
IS - Physical Support, Sensory Support and Support for Memory & Cognition	139,701	(72,315)	67,386	164,551	(94,445)	70,106	(24,850)	22,130	(2,720)	
IS - Learning Disability Support	86,412	(6,077)	80,335	89,511	(9,826)	79,685	(3,099)	3,749	650	
IS - Mental Health Support	25,496	(10,209)	15,287	32,638	(16,478)	16,160	(7,142)	6,269	(873)	
Subtotal	251,609	(88,601)	163,008	286,700	(120,749)	165,951	(35,091)	32,148	(2,943)	

Adult Social Care – Directly Provided Services & Assessment and Care Management:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Physical Support, Sensory Support and Support for Memory & Cognition	17,293	(5,121)	12,172	16,138	(5,331)	10,807	1,155	210	1,365	
Learning Disability Support	8,777	(592)	8,185	8,908	(566)	8,342	(131)	(26)	(157)	
Mental Health Support	3,221	(3,098)	123	3,221	(2,998)	223	-	(100)	(100)	
Substance Misuse Support	477	-	477	477	-	477	-	-	-	
Equipment & Assistive Technology	7,414	(3,782)	3,632	7,474	(3,812)	3,662	(60)	30	(30)	
Other	130	-	130	110	-	110	20	-	20	
Supporting People	6,144	(310)	5,834	6,144	(310)	5,834	-	-	-	
Assessment and Care Management	30,461	(2,203)	28,258	32,541	(3,347)	29,194	(2,080)	1,144	(936)	
Carers	3,536	(2,834)	702	3,583	(2,881)	702	(47)	47	-	
Management and Support	14,655	(1,735)	12,920	13,399	(1,782)	11,617	1,256	47	1,303	
Service Strategy	637	(198)	439	1,983	(1,037)	946	(1,346)	839	(507)	
Subtotal	92,745	(19,873)	72,872	93,978	(22,064)	71,914	(1,233)	2,191	958	

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Total Adult Social Care	344,354	(108,474)	235,880	380,678	(142,813)	237,865	(36,324)	34,339	(1,985)	

Safer Communities:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Safer Communities	2,055	(909)	1,146	3,084	(1,938)	1,146	(1,029)	1,029	-	
Total Safer Communities	2,055	(909)	1,146	3,084	(1,938)	1,146	(1,029)	1,029	0	

Public Health – Core Services:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Mental Health & Best Start	11,417	-	11,417	11,632	-	11,632	(215)	-	(215)	
Risky Behaviours and Threats to Health	12,153	-	12,153	11,870	-	11,870	283	-	283	
Health Systems	3,549	-	3,549	3,188	-	3,188	361	-	361	
Communities	930	-	930	1,037	-	1,037	(107)	-	(107)	
Central Support	3,212	-	3,212	4,334	-	4,334	(1,122)	-	(1,122)	
Recovery & Renewal	458	-	458	360	-	360	98	-	98	
Public Health Grant Income	-	(29,803)	(29,803)	-	(29,803)	(29,803)	-	-	-	
SSMTRG Grant	-	(1,350)	(1,350)	-	(1,350)	(1,350)	-	-	-	
Draw from General Reserves	-	(566)	(566)	-	(602)	(602)	-	36	36	
Draw from Health Visiting Reserves	-	-	-	-	(666)	(666)	-	666	666	
Project Board Reserves	2,058	(2,058)	-	958	(958)	-	1,100	(1,100)	-	
Total Public Health	33,777	(33,777)	0	33,379	(33,379)	0	398	(398)	0	

Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Supported Living Projects	6,400	6,400	1,200	359	900	300	-	300	-	
Greenacres	2,598	2,598	9	-	-	9	-	9	-	
House Adaptations for People with Disabilities	2,719	2,689	50	1	20	30	30	-	-	
Total ASC Gross	11,717	11,687	1,259	360	920	339	30	309	-	

Business Services – Q3 2023/24

Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Key cross cutting programmes

Carbon

In line with our current Climate Action Plan, further progress was made in Q3 on the delivery of energy efficiency projects across the estate. A total of 16 projects had been completed by the end of Q3, against a target of 23 for 2023/24:

- 4 LED lighting energy saving projects at Milton Grange Residential Home plus Frant, Hankham and Chiddingly Primary Schools.
- 5 solar PV energy generation projects at The Keep, the Phoenix Centre, and Bodiam, Chiddingly and Plumpton Primary Schools.
- 5 building insulation projects to cut heat loss: triple glazing at Grovelands and Greenwood Primary Schools and loft, doors and wall insulation at Hellingly, Rocks Park and Rotherfield Primary Schools.
- 2 large asset rationalisation projects providing more modern facilities with reduced carbon emissions. These are the Ropemaker Park to Alder Close project and the move from Ocean House to the reduced footprint at both Muriel Matter House and Cavendish House.

During Q4, a further 7 to 11 projects are due to be completed. However, there are significant risks posed by inclement weather, supply chain or site issues which could impact on installations.

The Property Team hosted two further energy savings workshops for managers / school caretakers in Q3, with a focus on heat cost savings. The annual target to train 40 site managers has been exceeded, with 81 trained via five events to date.

Total energy consumption (buildings, streetlighting and servers) in Q2 (reported a quarter in arrears) was down 9% compared with the same period last year and down 25% on the baseline year 2019/20. Building energy use in Q2 was down 10% compared with the same period last year and down 25% on the baseline year 2019/20.

There is not yet enough data to accurately estimate the end of year outturn for 2023/24. The majority of energy use and carbon emissions arise in the second half of the year as they are significantly influenced by the weather. However, if consumption for the remainder of this year is the same as last year our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions for 2023/24 would fall by 0.39% compared with 2022/23, against the target of a 16% reduction required to keep within the five-year carbon budget. This would result in a 32% reduction on the 2019/20 baseline, against a cumulative target of 43%. The main contributing factor to the projected annual emissions exceeding the reduction target for 2023/24 is the increase in the electricity emissions factor (the carbon intensity of the national grid), which has risen 7% year on year due to an increase in natural gas use in electricity generation and a decrease in renewable energy generation, which is out of the Council's control.

Modernising Systems

The Managing Back Office Systems (MBOS) Programme was established to deliver the replacement of the Council's core finance and Human Resources systems, to support further developments to increase agile and digital working. The programme will enable the Council to move off the SAP system, which is due to go out of support in 2027. Following the decision not to go live in 2023, the external programme support was significantly reduced and an independent review was commissioned to complete an assurance exercise of the system and programme. The first phase of the review gave a number of recommendations and confirmed that Oracle remains a suitable product for the Council. Following the first phase, a further health check of the system and programme is now being completed. This will inform next steps and enable programme dates to be reset.

Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD)

As part of our strategic response to the recruitment and retention challenges we are facing, we have refreshed the recruitment guidance for managers with the inclusion of new 'top tips' to support efficient and inclusive recruitment. Alongside this, we have run engagement sessions with staff in the Council who are under 25 to get feedback on what attracted them to work for the Council and to begin establishing a forum for our younger workers to highlight any specific issues for them. We have also established an exit interview pilot to gain insight and understanding into why individuals are leaving. More broadly, 2 strategic workforce planning sessions have been delivered to Heads of Service by the LGA.

Attendance Management and Wellbeing

The Q1 – Q3 2023/24 sickness absence figure for the whole authority (excluding schools) is 6.76 days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) role, a fall of 10.8% since last year. The year end estimate for 2023/24 is 8.98 days/FTE, so the target of 9.10 days/FTE is predicted to be met. The predominant reason for the decrease in absence rates is a large fall in COVID-19 related absence compared to the same period last year.

We have also seen a reduction in musculoskeletal absence of 954 working days compared to the same period last year which is a 7.5% reduction in absence; this directly correlates to the 9% increase in musculoskeletal/physiotherapy referrals made in the same period. This indicates that as a preventive measure, it is having a positive impact in reducing sickness absence for this reason. In addition, we are running a dedicated pilot within ASCH with Brighton University to explore how our musculoskeletal offer can be further improved to reduce absence and retain staff.

However, mental health absence has increased by 362 days in Q1 – Q3 2023/24 compared to the same period last year. Benchmarking data from our absence management provider, GoodShape, suggests this is a common theme across local authorities and our absence rates are within the average for this. Set against this background, we have launched a new process to evaluate our current mental health offer, whilst continuing to provide support to staff:

- In addition to the automated reminders from GoodShape, the Human Resources Attendance Management Team will contact all line managers during the first week an employee reports a stress related absence. The aim of this is to provide timely and practical guidance about how to support the employee back to work. This approach is being measured and will be reviewed as part of a six-month pilot to understand impact.
- Improving the Wellness Plan and Stress Risk Assessment which was successfully launched in Q3 and is being promoted in line with key awareness days.
- Providing enhanced tools and guidance for workplace adjustments specifically in relation to supporting performance and mental health.
- Offering employees additional support when they report an absence due to Mental Health to GoodShape. The aim is to reduce absence length and the risk of further mental health absence taking place in the future.
- Putting in place an additional reminder for the completion of return-to-work discussions when the absence has been due to mental health, as further analysis has indicated that when an absence is due to this, the managers are less likely to complete the form. This reminder email highlights the importance of early completion and signposts to further support and guidance.
- Raising awareness of the mental health support available from our Employee Assistance Programme, Occupational Health, and partners 'able futures' through a series of interactive staff webinars and individual staff sessions.
- Our growing Mental Health First Aid network continues to pro-actively support staff and promote wellbeing resources within teams.

Procurement

Procurement, contract and supplier management activities

The Council has spent £307m with 853 local suppliers over the past 12 months, which equates to 64% of our total spend, against a target of 60%. The Procurement team continues to promote our contract opportunities to local suppliers, as well as building local supply chain opportunities into our tenders where possible.

Social Value

In Q3 a total of 9 contracts commenced, of which 6 were out of scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter, which quantifies the economic, social and environmental benefits of the procurement, as they accessed an existing pre-approved list of suppliers (Frameworks) with predefined contractual terms. The three in-scope contracts had a total contract value of £2.2m and secured £472k in Social Value commitment, which equates to 21% against a target of 10%.

The Social Value commitments for Q3 included: apprenticeships, professional development opportunities and work experience offered to local people, creation of local jobs, local volunteering initiatives, support for community greening initiatives and sustainability awareness workshops in local schools and colleges.

Contract Management Advisory Service (CMAS)

Orbis Procurement launched a pilot scheme in Adult Social Care and Health in Q3 to deliver a CMAS, supported by dedicated procurement resource. The Council spent over £400m during 2022/23 on commercial contracts for outsourced services. Research shows that poorly managed contracts can result in up to 8.6% of a contract's value being lost over its lifetime. It can also lead to additional and avoidable costs and the delivery of substandard outcomes. To combat this, dedicated, experienced commercial resource will work collaboratively with service personnel to enable the delivery of consistent, structured and effective contract management. This will raise the standards of contract and commercial management, as well as providing visibility and reporting on contract risk and performance. The pilot will run for 12 months.

Internal Audit

Through the work of Internal Audit, the Chief Internal Auditor continues to be able to provide assurance over the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control for the Council. Internal Audit have continued to focus on delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Plan. At the end of Q3, we have completed 77.1% of the plan to draft report stage against a Q3 target of 67.5%.

All high priority actions agreed with management as part of individual audit reviews are subject to action tracking, whereby we seek written confirmation from services that these have been implemented. It was confirmed that 10/10 (100%) of the high-risk actions due to be implemented on a 12-month rolling basis have been actioned.

Property

Key outcomes for Property in Q3 include:

- Work has continued on an options paper for the County Hall campus, with additional technical support being provided by external specialists. The paper is expected to be completed in early Q4.
- A delivery plan to consolidate our Eastbourne offices into one main base was finalised in Q3 for implementation during Q4 and Q1 2024/25.
- Property completed the re-procurement of its facilities management services for its corporate and schools estate in Q3. Mobilisation of the services will take place in Q4 with full service implementation in Spring 2024.

- Following an initial assessment, surveys were commissioned in Q3 in relation to the non-schools estate to consider if any of the buildings had Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC). Most of the surveys are expected to be completed during Q4 and Q1 2024/25.
- The sale of Hindslands, Polegate is now progressing through legal process, with conditional contracts expected to be signed in Q4. If planning consent is approved by Wealden District Council the capital receipt should be received in 2024/25.
- The sale of Hye House Farm, Crowhurst is now progressing through the legal process, with up to 4 purchasers identified for the separate plots. It is anticipated some of the sales will proceed in Q4 2023/24 with the remaining due in 2024/25.
- Temporary school buildings were completed on schedule for the autumn term and a nursery extension in Wadhurst was completed in Q3.
- Planning permissions for two new youth facilities were secured in Q3 at Heathfield and The Joff, Peacehaven. Both are funded through the Youth Investment Fund from central Government.

IT & Digital

Migration of services to the new South East Grid (SEG) network on behalf of the Link Consortium has continued throughout Q3. Hosted by the Council, the network allows the Council and other public sector organisations in the South East to access higher speed digital infrastructure connections and contributes to the provision of ultra-fast data network connectivity throughout East Sussex.

A new WiFi service, underpinned by the SEG, has been procured to replace the current service contract that expires in March 2024. Work is underway to replace original equipment with new generation SEG WiFi across all Council sites. The new service will improve performance and enhance security. It will also be an enabler of newer technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) likely to be used in the future for a range of activities such as energy and intelligent buildings management.

Work to replace the core telephony solution paired with a dedicated contact centre solution has continued in Q3. The change from landline-based telephony builds on existing technology investment and provides a sustainable solution, reducing the carbon footprint (removing handsets and on-premises equipment) and removing building dependency, thereby supporting a reduction in office space.

Further procurement activity has also been underway to source a supplier for the next Device Refresh. Periodically refreshing our IT equipment is vital so that it stays up to date and safe to use to best support and enable a digital workforce. The scale at which this is done (across three councils through the Orbis Partnership) has many benefits, with the procurement ensuring that we get maximum value from our investment and the implementation ensuring we use our resources wisely.

External Funding

In Q3, the External Funding Team responded to 60 funding enquiries from a range of charities and social enterprises, working mostly in health and well-being and community work. Their needs included running costs, projects, cost of living, and support for new and existing organisations. The number of not-for-profit contacts subscribing to Funding News, our monthly electronic publication about forthcoming funding opportunities, continues to increase and there are now 10,900 subscribers. The team attended 20 meetings to discuss specific needs (e.g. support with data or writing a good application) and provided three quality-checks on funding applications, supporting groups with evidence of need and making the case for funding. In addition, Bid Writing training was delivered for school governors. The team has helped secure £389,361 of external funding so far in 2023/24.

Revenue Budget Summary

The 2023/24 Business Services net revenue budget is £28.661m. There are £0.869m planned savings in BSD this financial year, of which £0.210m (**ref i**) relating to the consolidation of the Eastbourne hubs will not be achieved but will be offset by underspending elsewhere. These unachieved savings are included within the current outturn forecast, which is a net £0.070m underspend (**ref v**). Finance and Business Administration has a net underspend of £0.063m (**ref ii**) due to staff savings and higher schools income partly offset by higher expenditure on contract staff. Property has a net underspend of £0.118m (**ref iv**) as a result of savings across various properties, additional service income and delays in staff recruitment. IT & Digital has an overspend of £0.111m (**ref iii**) due to the SAP platform costs and the office renovation costs linked to the relocation of the Schools ICT function from St Mary's to County Hall.

Capital Programme Summary

The 2023/24 capital budget is £21,162m with £1.602m of slippage forecast. The Youth Investment Fund slippage of £1.160m (**ref vi**) relates to delays as the project is value engineered to stay within budget. The Special Educational Needs slippage of £0.062m (**ref vii**) is mainly due to Robertsbridge being on hold. The Special Educational Needs - Grove Park/Beacon overspend of £0.084m (**ref viii**) relates to additional consultants' costs for options appraisals to mitigate ecological and wildlife constraints (badger setts on site) and associated survey works increasing the spend in 2023/24 which will need to be mitigated as part of the final agreed option. The Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools slippage of £0.419m (**ref ix**) relates to schools maintenance mainly due to the wet and stormy weather during Q3 which has impacted numerous roofing projects. 2 schools have also had delays in the Solar Panel Projects which has then impacted the delivery of the roof projects which were supposed to be completed once the Solar Panels were installed. Robertsbridge and Wallands have had third party lease agreement issues which has meant Solar Panels installation are delayed.

Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
No Council Plan exceptions in Q3								

Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Planned savings - BSD	869	869	659	210	-	
Planned savings - Orbis	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	869	869	659	210	0	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	869	869	359	210	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
Property: consolidation of Eastbourne hubs	210	-	210	i
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	210	0	210	

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year; the saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance - it will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Finance & Bus Admin	11,549	(5,754)	5,795	12,336	(6,604)	5,732	(787)	850	63	ii
HR & OD	3,310	(1,160)	2,150	3,310	(1,160)	2,150	-	-	-	
IT & Digital	11,903	(3,671)	8,232	12,155	(3,812)	8,343	(252)	141	(111)	iii
Procurement	-	(100)	(100)	-	(100)	(100)	-	-	-	
Property	25,105	(16,044)	9,061	27,431	(18,488)	8,943	(2,326)	2,444	118	iv
Contribution to Orbis Partnership	3,871	-	3,871	3,871	-	3,871	-	-	-	
Total BSD	55,738	(26,729)	29,009	59,103	(30,164)	28,939	(3,365)	3,435	70	v

Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
SALIX Contract	700	700	350	149	81	269	269	-	-	
Lansdowne Unit (CSD)	75	75	65	19	35	30	-	30	-	
Youth Investment Fund	7,624	7,624	1,510	212	350	1,160	-	1,160	-	vi
Special Educational Needs	3,198	3,198	1,114	872	1,052	62	-	62	-	vii
Special Provision in Secondary School (Priory and Robertsbridge)	120	120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Special Educational Needs - Grove Park	19,179	19,179	150	185	234	(84)	-	(84)	-	viii
Disabled Children's Homes	786	786	716	455	716	-	-	-	-	
14 Westfield Lane	721	721	53	26	53	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Schools Basic Need	98,444	98,444	2,066	1,794	2,051	15	-	15	-	
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Corporate	44,749	44,749	3,509	2,162	3,509	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools	42,049	42,049	4,218	2,355	3,799	419	-	419	-	ix
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation	72,956	72,956	4,055	2,746	3,955	100	100	-	-	
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation MBOS	13,125	16,514	3,332	5,243	3,332	-	-	-	-	

APPENDIX 4

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
IT & Digital - Utilising Automation	24	24	24	-	24	-	-	-	-	
Total BSD Gross	303,750	307,139	21,162	16,218	19,191	1,971	369	1,602	0	

Children's Services – Q3 2023/24

Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Early Help and Social Care

Inspection of East Sussex Children's Services

The inspection of the Council Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Inspections took place from 11 – 15 December. This was a short inspection. The inspection report was published 6 February, and we were awarded an overall effectiveness grading of Good with the experiences and progress of children in care graded as Outstanding. The report notes that '*Children in East Sussex continue to receive consistently strong and effective support*' and '*Social workers know the children they support exceptionally well. They are insightful and attuned to children's needs, helping them to express their views using individualised and bespoke communication methods.*' The judgement grades are set out below. 3 areas for improvement were identified and these are included in the report on the inspection finding which is included in the agenda for the 5 March Cabinet meeting.

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Review of modelling and placements

Children's Services has continued to work with IMPOWER in Q3. We have focused on:

- implementation of the valuing care model
- enhancing strategies in relation to development of our in house foster carer offer
- placement sufficiency to improve our ability to secure the right care for the right child for the right length of time

We have made progress in developing a reunification framework to support children to return home where it is safe and appropriate to do so. We have done this through:

- weekly valuing care panels assessing the appropriateness of current placements for children
- removal of barriers to achieve positive change for children
- establishing more commissioning capacity within the service to ensure improved value for money

This work will achieve actual cost savings of £299,692 in Q4 23/24 and has identified an estimated further £82,401 savings in the same period. Further savings have been identified for 2024/25 (£592,751 of actual savings and £2,367,077 of identified estimate savings).

Family Hubs

In Q3 we opened 2 new family hubs in Shinewater and Devonshire in Eastbourne. These are the latest of 11 family hubs that the Council opened in 2023. Visitors to the 2 hubs can get support and advice from midwives, health visitors, early communications support workers, early years practitioners and more. Activity sessions will give children, parents and carers the chance to socialise and support their children's needs and development.

The focus in Q3 has been on recruitment and staff development in three areas:

- Peri-natal mental health and parent/infant relationships. Recruitment has included senior infant mental health practitioners, parent infant mental health specialists, additional community staff

nurses. 2 staff nurses were also recruited to deliver the ‘time for me post-natal support group which started in October.

- Infant feeding. Recruitment included two infant peer support co-ordinators and two community nursery nurses. We have also established the pilot feeding equipment loan scheme.
- Home learning. Recruited Early Years Practitioners to deliver Solihull post-natal groups. We also appointed Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Specialist Health Visitors to support the Small Beginnings groups.

Development of the Early Intervention Partnership Strategy

A series of workshops were held in Q3 with colleagues from the voluntary sector, NHS and education. These will inform the development of the new Early Intervention Partnership Strategy. The strategy will build on the strong partnerships and services already in place.

Principles and key deliverables have been collectively identified through engagement across the system. They will form the foundation for the delivery of this whole system early intervention offer. Our early intervention system is a network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people, and their families at the earliest opportunity.

This strategy is based on the understanding that investing in early intervention is the very best way to support families. There is not a statutory framework for Local Authorities to deliver early intervention. This means that we must work collaboratively with partners to deliver the very best that we can with the resources that we have.

We will publish the strategy in Q4.

New Child’s Plan

We have redesigned our plan for children and families where there is a Child in Need or Child Protection Plan in place. We worked with young people in the Youth Vocals group and the parent forum to develop the new plan. The plans now use more straightforward language, talk directly to families, and the structure is easier to understand for families to understand. This makes the records more meaningful to them in the future. It also keeps the child’s experience in mind when the social worker is writing the plan, and the family and professionals are reading the plan.

We launched the new child's plan at an event in November which 110 practitioners attended. This event stressed the importance of plans being specific, measurable and time bound and clearly setting out:

- what needs to change
- what tasks need to be undertaken and by whom
- what are the timescales

Social workers report that writing directly to the child and family has been transformational for some cases. This has resulted in improved engagement and progress of plans.

Children in Care Council

As part of National Care Leavers’ week, Coram Voice, a national charity, hosted an event for care-experienced young people from around the country on 25 October 2023. A National Voice, the national children in care council, organised the event to provide an opportunity for children in care councils to come together, share experiences and celebrate the amazing work that they do. Members of East Sussex Children in Care Council (CiCC) attended the event and came second for the Participation award.

The East Sussex CiCC were shortlisted for this award for their passion in promoting positive mental health, digital safety, and writing a sexuality and gender training session.

They have had an impact both locally and nationally.

- Locally they have been working to encourage adults to see things through the eyes of a looked after child. They have met with services, worked directly with young people and given views and ideas to how there could be more of a two-way relationship.
- They have contributed to the national agenda by attending meetings and sessions run by Coram Voice and Department for Education (DfE). They have used their experiences to highlight the need for change. For example, the 'stable homes built on love' project run by Coram Voice.

Newly Qualified Social Workers

The Council continues to be successful in recruiting and retaining newly qualified social workers. In November 2023 we celebrated the completion of 24 of our social workers' first year in practice. During the event managers provided feedback on the quality of their practice with themes of creativity, tenacity, warmth, having a caring attitude, being highly skilled, and being valued team players. They also described how these relatively inexperienced social workers are already making a very real, concrete difference to family's lives. Repeating this pattern was the successful recruitment of 26 newly qualified social workers who started the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment programme in September 2023. Again, the feedback so far is that this group of staff are hardworking, engaged and emotionally intelligent. They are also our most diverse cohort with over 30% being black, asian or minority ethnic practitioners.

Rate of Looked After Children (LAC) (per 10,000 children) and children on a child protection plan (CP Plan)

The rate of LAC (ref iii) has decreased in Q3, to 63.0 (671 children) from 64.4 (686 children) at Q2. This is in line with the target of 63.4 (676 children). Of the 671 children, 82 are unaccompanied asylum seeker children, an increase of five children from Q2. We are committed to enabling children to live with their families. To do this we work, where possible, through multi-agency support and planning.

There has been an increase in the rate of children with a CP Plan in Q3 from 63.0 per 10,000 (671 children) at Q2 to 70.6 (753 children). This is above the target of 62.0 (661 children). We continue to keep this under review with a range of actions to look at how this number can be safely managed down. The impact of such high numbers is significant on all agencies.

Education

What Next? Sussex Career Event

In October, the East Sussex Careers Hub hosted the online "What next?" event. "What Next?" connected young people and their families with careers experts and local employers. The event helped ensure that young people and their support networks have the information they need to make choices about their futures.

Employers joined educational, training and apprenticeship providers to highlight opportunities and explore all that Sussex has to offer to young people after GCSEs.

The "What Next" Sussex event included the chance to:

- speak to students and staff from sixth forms, colleges, and universities from across the region
- talk to a range of employers and apprenticeship providers from several industries and sectors
- discuss available options with qualified careers advisors

A sense of belonging - Supporting school leaders with Inclusion

Throughout Q3, the Education Division ran a series of training events. The events were aimed at school leaders and had a key focus on a sense of belonging. This provided an opportunity to focus on our collective ambition of inclusion, which is a key departmental priority. Our young people chose this theme, having told us that they feel most included at school when they experience a genuine sense of belonging.

The series included training events and the annual Schools Safeguarding conference. This was hosted in partnership with the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership. Various speakers addressed attendees on different topics relating to safeguarding. Topics included the role of different partners in safeguarding, and anti-poverty practice.

We also organised the annual Inclusion Conference. This conference was targeted at our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs). The SEND Young Ambassadors were among the keynote speakers, sharing their experiences. All attendees were able to access 3 workshops across the day. These topics included:

- supporting pupils experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance
- supporting LGBTQ+ pupils in schools
- how as an education community we can improve transition to secondary school

The training events aimed to ensure that school leaders at all levels are well equipped to create an inclusive culture in their schools. They also shared the latest information on, and best practices in, safeguarding and inclusion.

In October, we also facilitated a workshop on our new Inclusion Projects. The focus was on opportunities for schools to collaborate through these projects to enhance inclusive practices for children and young people with SEND. It brought together headteachers, School SENCOs, and Youth Voice Group members. The events were informative and an excellent platform for attendees to come together, share ideas and to shape the ongoing projects.

Ofsted outcomes for schools

The proportion of East Sussex special schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding is 91.7% (11/12) compared to the national average of 89.9%. There have been two new inspections published since Q2. The proportion of primary schools also remains above the national average at 91.9% (136/148), the national average is 90.7%.

The proportion of East Sussex secondary schools judged by Ofsted to be good or outstanding is 9.4 percentage points below the national average (ESCC: 73.1% (19/26) compared to the national average of 82.5%). As of 30 November 2023, there are seven secondary schools graded as requires improvement. Due to the Ofsted inspection cycle these schools will not be inspected for 2 1/2 years. The performance of academies in the Hastings and Bexhill area remains a significant concern. We continue to make strong representation to the Regional Director on the performance of these academy trusts.

The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 16 and academic age 17

4.1% of academic age 16 (Yr12) children were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Dec 2023 (**ref i**) compared to 3.4% in Dec 2022. Our target is less than 4%.

5.8% of academic age 17 (Yr13) children were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in Dec 2023 (**ref ii**) compared to 4.7% in Dec 2022. Our target is less than 6%.

We continue to have significant concerns about the lack of vocational/work-based learning offers for young people. We have raised this local and national concern with Ofsted, the DfE and the Education Skills and Funding Agency (ESFA).

The package of interim measures we are taking now includes:

- refocussing the newly re-commissioned Youth Employability Service Programme more closely on the NEET cohort
- encouraging existing providers to run January starts (where they have funded places remaining) to allow young people to start courses as soon as possible

- working with partner organisations on new programmes, including a targeted National Citizen Programme and a mentoring programme

By February 2024, ESFA, who fund 16-19 provision, will confirm if we have received funding for 250 plus additional places locally. We are meeting with local providers and potential new providers to deliver these new places.

Participation and strategic partnerships

Children and Young People's Partnership Trust

The East Sussex Children and Young People's Trust held an event with partners in November 2023. Partners heard from children and young people on the issues that matter to them. The event then focused on three key areas:

- climate change
- poverty proofing
- early help through social prescribing

The Children and Young People's Plan sets out how we will work together to improve outcomes for children and young people particularly those who are vulnerable to poor outcomes. The plan includes five priority areas. Overarching and cross cutting themes then run throughout all or most of the priority areas. The aim is for these to be clear in all our service delivery, commissioning and practice.

Youth Voice Groups

In Q3 our youth voice groups, Youth Cabinet and SEND Young Ambassadors, were supported to contribute to the Council's discussions as part of planning for 2024/25 onwards. They discussed what the Council is doing in two key priority areas for the young people:

- jobs, money and opportunities
- emotional wellbeing and mental health

This is part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process.

Revenue Budget Summary

The Departments net revenue budget is £119.772m, with a forecast overspend of £28.476m, an increase in the overspend of £5.462m from Q2 (**ref viii**).

The main area of projected overspend is in Early Help and Social Care of £27.924m, an increase of £4.602m from Q2 (**ref v**), this includes an internal transfer of £0.500m from Central Resources (**ref iv**) and £4.325m of COVID-19 funding.

There is an underspend within Central Resources of £0.076m, an increase of £0.441m from Q2, which includes the transfer of £0.500m to Early Help and Social Care.

There is an underspend of £0.497m in Education and ISEND, with a favourable movement of £0.517m from Q2 (**ref vi**) and an overspend of £1.125m in Communication, Planning and Performance, with an increase from Q2 of £0.936m (**ref vii**).

Central Resources reduction in underspend of £0.517m to £0.076m (ref iv)

This includes a movement of £0.500m from Central Resources to Early Help and Social Care to contribute to the increase in the National Minimum Allowances for foster carers and Special Guardianship Orders.

An additional £0.060m of brought forward departmental underspend has been given up in order to mitigate the departmental overspend at Q3.

Early Help and Social Care increased overspend of £4.602m to £27.924m (ref v)

The Home Office has confirmed additional funding for Asylum Seekers so this forecast has improved by £0.096m from Q2.

Early Help 0-19 is carrying some vacancies, which has improved the forecast by £0.064m from Q2.

Looked After Children (LAC) is projecting an additional £3.563m overspend from Q2 to £24.693m.

Children's Homes have decreased the projected overspend by £0.167m due to reducing the estimate of wraparound support required at Silver Birches.

The respite units at Dorset Road and Sorrel Drive are projecting additional pressure from Q2 of £0.520m, with Dorset Road having a reduction in staff costs following vacancies of £0.033m and Sorrel Drive projecting additional costs of £0.553m. Most of the Sorrel Drive costs are extensions to existing agency wraparound costs.

The main pressure is within External Residential costs, where an additional overspend of £2.799m is anticipated on top of that projected at Q2.

Q3 saw the numbers of children and young people requiring residential placements (which includes supported accommodation and secure accommodation) plateau at approx. 150 (this figure excludes Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC)). However, the complex care needs of a relatively small number of children mean that there are further pressures on this budget area (**refs xi and xii**). Several high-cost placements have been extended, causing the significant increase in forecast expenditure this quarter.

The projected underspend on Agency foster carers has reduced by £0.323m since Q2, as 16 new clients have been taken on during Q3, and 46 existing clients have increased cost changes. The in-house foster carers services underspend has increased by £0.187m since Q2, assuming current weekly payments remain constant for the remainder of 2023/24.

Further data quality improvements are being made and the service is working with Impower to support longer term placement sufficiency and identify opportunities for delivering improved care placement options for children and young people (i.e. foster care or reunifications with families) through the 'Valuing Care' approach and panels. This work will achieve actual cost savings of £299,692 in Q4 23/24 and has identified an estimated further £82,401 savings in the same period. Further savings have been identified in 2024/25 (£592,751 of actual savings and £2,367,077 of identified estimate savings).

Lansdowne is projecting an additional £0.254m overspend. Recruitment is progressing with the intention of opening the unit in Q4. A phased opening with increased occupancy rates was planned to start from 2nd January 2024, but this was delayed due to Ofsted registration timings. The unit is expected to reach breakeven point with six beds occupied at the pricing strategy agreed. It is expected to start to recover costs in 2024/25. Any further delay in opening will result in additional costs which cannot be recovered.

Localities is projecting an additional £1.090m of overspend:

The main reason for the increase is the higher projection for agency costs for long-term placements and other care of disabled children (£0.689m). The amount the agencies have been charging has increased and there is little alternative provision to choose from.

There is a forecast overspend of £309k within the Parent & Baby Placement service which is linked to the use of in-house fostering resources fall and the use of agency rise.

There has also been pressure within the St Leonards Family Support Team of £0.249m relating to court proceedings for one family.

Mitigations within Localities have included £0.283m of funding transferred from the Early Help 0-19 service to contribute to the increase in the National Minimum Allowance for SGOs.

CSD is exploring ways of mitigating the overall overspend budget projection including through efficient use of national grant funding and delaying filling vacancies where this would not impair cost avoidance. CSD is also reviewing whether all legitimate requests for NHS contributions to the funding of care packages have been made.

Communication, Planning and Performance: an increase in the overspend variance of £0.936m to £1.125m (ref vii):

There has been an increase of £0.064m within the Safeguarding service due to agency staff covering a permanent member of staff's long-term sickness plus relocation costs for a new staff member. This increase has been offset by a £0.070m decrease within the Planning & Performance Improvement service due to recruitment taking longer than expected.

There were other small movements within the Buzz Active, Organisational Development, and E Business services totalling £11k movement since Q2. Reductions of staff hours within Organisational Development has been offset by difficulty selling old kayak stock.

The major increase of £0.953m is within the Home to Schools Transport service. The new 2023/24 cohort started in September 2023, which also brought with it wage increases and higher fuel costs, resulting in increased contract costs. There is also a lack of market competition due to some operators leaving the market. The CSD team will be working closely with the CET transport service to explore all possible mitigations to reduce costs and to review further how CET forecasts produce the budget forecast.

Capital Programme Summary

The Capital Programme for 2023/24 is a £1.420m projected spend against a budget of £1.215m (**ref x**). The additional spend is the Council's contribution towards housing adaptations for disabled children's carers' homes (**ref ix**). These projects are funded by the disabled facilities grant managed by the districts and boroughs. This will be funded from Capital reserves.

Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)**Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth**

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 16	New Measure	Less than 4%	G	G	A		4.1%	i
The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 17	New Measure	Less than 6%	G	G	A		5.8%	ii

Priority – Keeping vulnerable people safe

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
Rate of Looked After Children (LAC) (per 10,000 children)	62.3 664 children	63.4 676 children	A	R	A		63.0 671 children	iii

Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	0	0	0	0	0	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	0	0	0	0	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	0	0	0	

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year; the saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

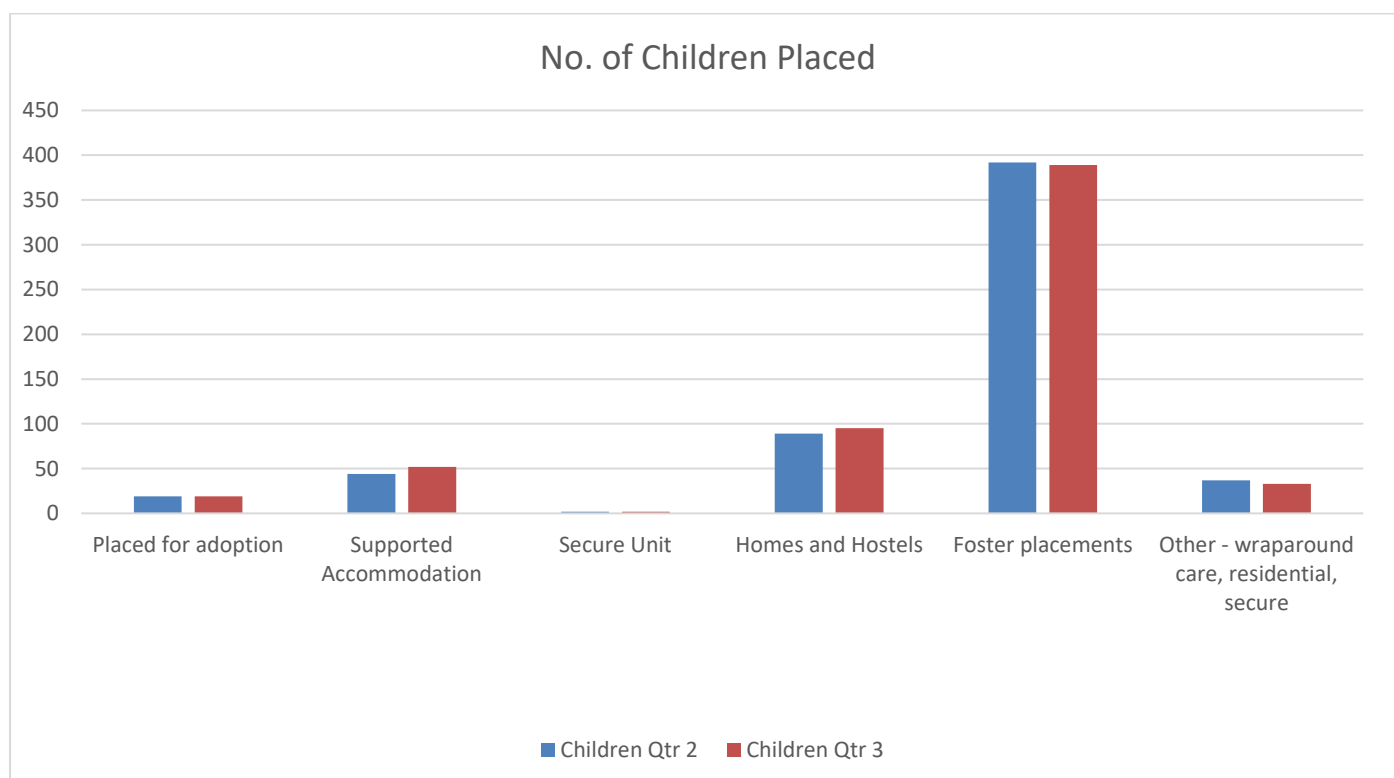
³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance - it will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)

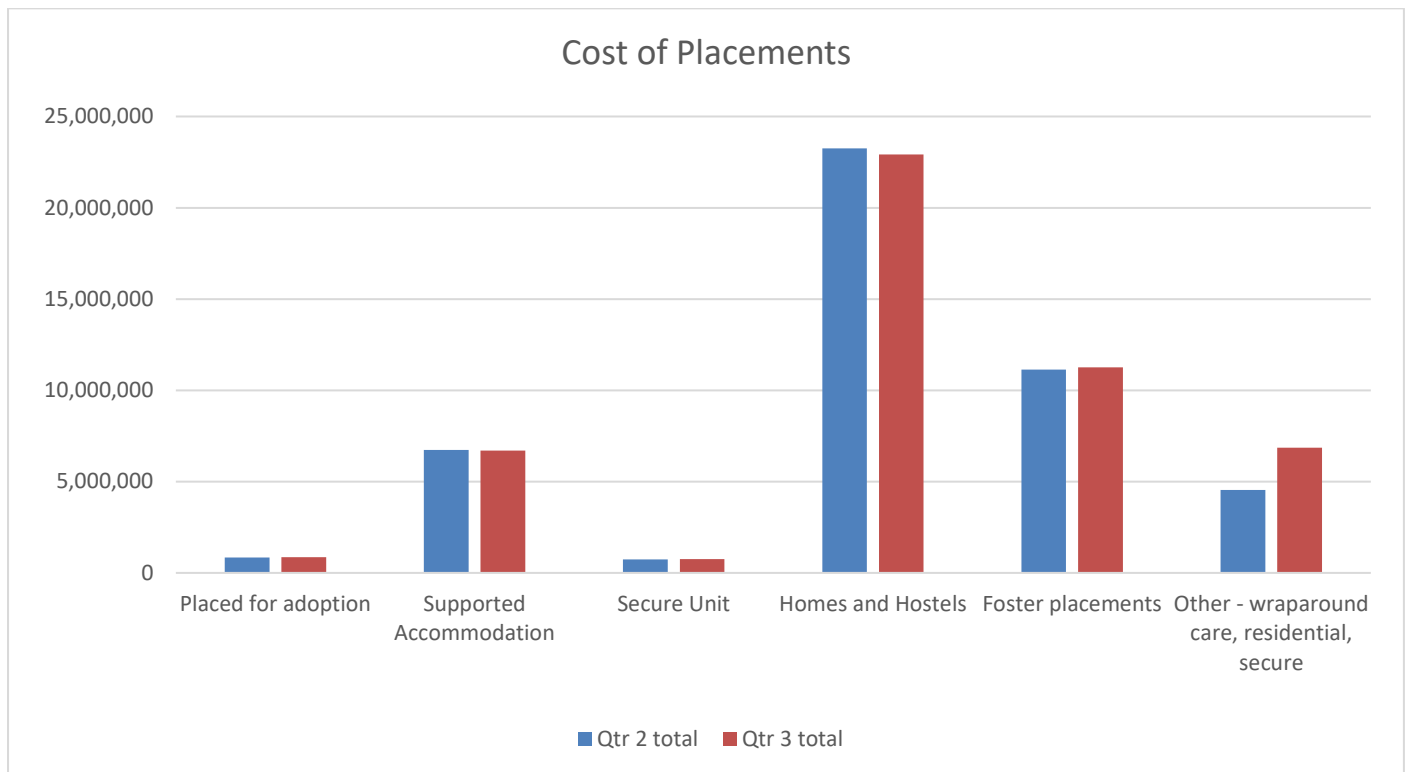
Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Central Resources	2,252	(1,332)	920	2,176	(1,332)	844	76	-	76	iv
Early Help and Social Care	100,583	(15,832)	84,751	128,912	(16,237)	112,675	(28,329)	405	(27,924)	v
Education and ISEND	111,792	(8,147)	103,645	113,249	(10,101)	103,148	(1,457)	1,954	497	vi
Communication, Planning and Performance	31,574	(4,340)	27,234	35,739	(7,380)	28,359	(4,165)	3,040	(1,125)	vii
DSG non Schools	-	(96,778)	(96,778)	-	(96,778)	(96,778)	-	-	-	
Schools	156,966	(156,966)	-	156,966	(156,966)	-	-	-	-	
Total CSD	403,167	(283,395)	119,772	437,042	(288,794)	148,248	(33,875)	5,399	(28,476)	viii

Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
House Adaptations for Disabled Children's Carers	1,090	1,295	50	45	255	(205)	(205)	-	-	ix
Schools Delegated Capital	29,673	29,673	1,150	1,130	1,150	-	-	-	-	
Conquest Centre redevelopment	356	356	15	-	15	-	-	-	-	
Youth Investment Fund	193	193	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total CSD	31,312	31,517	1,215	1,175	1,420	(205)	(205)	0	0	x

Numbers of LAC per placement type (xi)

Cost of LAC per placement type (xii)



Communities, Economy & Transport – Q3 2023/24

Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Economy and environment

Employability and Skills

Future Skills research was completed in Q3, to identify future local sector skills priorities and needs, focusing on automation and artificial intelligence. The Employment and Skills Team also secured £50,000 in Q3 which was used to develop a retrofit skills strategy for the county. Library services are now delivering a new 6-hour Step into Maths programme as part of the Multiply programme. A Maths and Medication course aimed at care workers is also being delivered, which focuses on medication, counting and measuring.

226 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q3. 882 pupils attended Open Doors workplace visits in Q3, supported by Industry Champions to gain experience of a real workplace.

Apprenticeships

At the end of Q3 100 new and existing staff have enrolled on an apprenticeship so far in 2023/24. This is higher than at this stage in previous years. Council schools are now being supported by trusted training providers, and this has allowed the team to focus more on corporate services, and working within departments to use apprenticeships as a tool to address recruitment and retention challenges. In addition, the work of the Pre-Employment Co-ordinator, who joined the team in March 2023, has helped to raise the profile of apprenticeships within the organisation; and to bring the focus to assisting managers in finding new members of staff from sections of the community previously underrepresented within the workforce. So far, this work has seen 15 people offered a role within the Council and its schools, with other candidates who worked with the team finding alternative employment within the county.

The team is also undertaking a mapping exercise to find apprenticeships that match as many individual roles within the Council as possible. This is the first time we have done this since the levy was launched in 2017, when the range of apprenticeships was very limited. Once we have mapped out the apprenticeships available to a specific department or team, we will then meet with those teams to present the options available. The first of these sessions will be happening in Q4 in Children's Services. In addition, the Council has spent over £1m on apprenticeship training in the calendar year and over a quarter of this spend was passed onto small and medium sized businesses within East Sussex to support their apprenticeships.

In November, the Council hosted the East Sussex Apprenticeship Graduation Ceremony. The ceremony celebrated apprentices across the county. It recognised the commitment and contribution of apprentices across all industry sectors. Before the ceremony, employers, colleagues, apprenticeship providers and apprentices made nominations for awards. The awards, presented at the ceremony, celebrated the achievements of all those involved in the apprenticeship journey.

Culture and Tourism investment and recovery

The first phase of the Sussex Story is being reviewed by stakeholders ahead of being published online. An invitation to quote for the second phase of the work where assets will be commissioned, will be shared with creative agencies in Sussex in Q4. VisitSussex has continued to promote Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) opportunities across Sussex in Q3, including hosting a Berg Hansen familiarisation trip, with 8 Norwegian members, and exhibiting at IBTM (Incentives, Business Travel and Meetings) in Barcelona in November. As a result, 284 new travel trade clients received a follow up on Sussex. Work will now include analysing where these clients are from and identifying potential future markets. There have been 750 MICE visitors to Sussex in Q3 equating to 2,250 nights of accommodation, with visitors coming from Norway,

Finland and the USA. Nine further MICE events are confirmed. The Turner Prize was awarded in a broadcast event on 5 December 2023, hosted across the Devonshire Quarter (the Towner, the Congress and the Winter Gardens) in Eastbourne.

Broadband

The Broadband Project has now completed its final build and is moving towards contract closure. The Broadband Team is continuing to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its centrally run Project Gigabit programme. The contract for East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove has been let and an announcement is expected in Q4. We understand that the Gigabit Voucher scheme, for which the Council provides a “top up”, is undergoing a review by BDUK. The Broadband Team is continuing to push BDUK for details of how they plan to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county.

Job creation

East Sussex Invest provides loans and grants to local businesses to help create local jobs and support businesses to become environmentally responsible. The independent Strategic and Operational Review of the scheme is due to be complete in Q4, and it is anticipated that the fund will now re-open in Q1 2024/25.

Environment and climate change

Teams in Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) have continued to work together with partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. In Q3 this has included:

- securing £245,000 from the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to develop a plan to provide people with the skills to enable the retrofit of domestic properties to reduce their carbon emissions. The plan is due to be developed by the end of March 2025
- completing stakeholder mapping for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy and engaging with key stakeholders, such as landowners and farmers
- holding the second annual climate change town hall event for staff

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined within the statutory determination period in Q3. 100% of County Council development applications were also determined within eight weeks or within an agreed extension of time during Q3.

Highways, transport and waste

Highways improvements and road condition

Work continued in Q3 using the additional funding for highways approved by the Council. 132 patches across 62 sites have been completed. Around 100 signs had been replaced at the end of Q3, with further signs scheduled to be replaced in Q4 and 2024/25. Further resources have been commissioned to focus on the repair and replacement of damaged or missing signs, as well as cleaning signs and clearing vegetation or obstructions where necessary. The focus for the additional drainage spend has been on delivering those schemes which are quick and simple to design and will address the most urgent drainage issues. Around 150 minor schemes have been completed. This includes replacing gully covers and clearing significant blockages. 50 larger schemes have been identified and will be delivered in Q4 2023/24 and 2024/25. The remaining budget for the refresh of road markings has now been fully allocated and will include renewing the lining along the A22 Hailsham bypass and around 600 further sites across the county. However due to recent weather conditions and the likelihood of continuing wet weather these works will not be delivered until the spring.

The road condition outturns (where a lower figure indicates better road condition), have now been published. These figures are only available at one point each year and are based on specialist laser surveys undertaken in summer 2023. The surveys identify roads that should be considered for maintenance, based on the Department for Transport's criteria. The percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance was 4%, meeting the target for the year. This is also an improvement on the 2022/23 outturn of 5%. The percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance was 5%, above the target of 4% (**ref i**). However, this is also an improvement from 2022/23 when the outturn was 6%. The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 17%, above the target of 14%, and also increasing from the 2022/23 outturn which was 13% (**ref ii**).

The road condition survey was undertaken before the additional road funding provided by Council, so the effect of these projects on road condition would not be reflected in the results. 2022/23 saw a wet winter and this has continued with a generally cool and wet summer and a wet start to winter 2023/24. The wet weather had a particular impact on Unclassified rural roads which generally don't have kerbing and often lack positive drainage systems. The survey results for unclassified roads reflected this with a noticeable increase in edge of carriageway defects identified. Road condition is influenced by a number of factors, including the make-up of the road, the volume of traffic, weather conditions and the level of investment in maintenance. The condition of our roads will vary from year to year depending on those factors. Our targets are based on modelling which tries to predict the rate of deterioration and therefore expected road condition. The targets are aligned to the Council's 10-year investment programme.

22 road improvement schemes were completed in Q3 to improve the condition of the roads. 5,194 potholes were repaired with 4,236 of these being carriageway potholes, the remainder were primarily footway potholes.

The Council has been allocated £4.4m through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund. The funding will support the delivery of on street electric vehicle chargepoints in the county. The funding is due to be released upon approval of a business plan and draft contract. The business plan was submitted on 23 November 2023, and this is currently under consideration by the Government's Office for Zero Emission Vehicles. Pending approval of the business case, it is expected that procurement of the contract will begin in Q4. Initial work to deliver the new chargepoints is scheduled to begin in late Q1 or early Q2 2024/25.

Road safety

10 road safety infrastructure schemes had been completed at the end of Q3. Balfour Beatty Living Places have scheduled a further 14 schemes to be completed by the end of Q4.

We delivered 160 Bikeability Courses to 1,196 individuals at participating Schools and the Cycle Centre at Eastbourne Sports Park during Q3. We have also delivered 99 'Wheels for All' sessions to 973 attendees at the sports park.

Transport and parking

A number of projects have continued to progress in Q3 as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP):

- Improvements have been made to the FlexiBus service which now covers nearly 90% of East Sussex. The FlexiBus app has been improved to make it easier for users. Several of the FlexiBus zones have also been merged, providing greater travel opportunities for residents. Details of the amended services have been [published](#) online. The improvements, together with promotion and marketing of the service, has helped there to be continued growth in passenger numbers during Q3.

- Improvements to bus stops in the county has also continued in Q3, with all bus stops now having QR plates, which enable people to scan the plate and receive information about the next bus due at that stop.

The recommended changes to parking restrictions as part of the Hastings Parking review were approved by the planning committee in Q3. The changes are expected to take effect in Q4 2023/24 and in early 2024/25.

Waste

The Government has amended the law, to allow small amounts of DIY waste to be deposited at Household Waste and Recycling Sites for free. Following this change, from 31 December 2023, residents of East Sussex now have an allowance of DIY waste they can dispose of free of charge. Charges for waste above these allowances have been increased.

The projected 2023/24 outturn for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially is 56.1% based on the outturn to the end of October 2023 (reported in arrears). There was more garden waste collected than expected due to the good growing conditions and high levels of rainfall.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

We completed 95% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q3. Due to the wet weather, rangers undertook both reactive and planned work, where access was possible.

Communities

Trading Standards

214 businesses and individuals received training and advice from Trading Standards in Q2. Trading Standards carried out a proactive project into second hand electrical goods, with over 100 businesses provided with bespoke advice.

Trading Standards made 854 positive interventions to protect vulnerable people in Q3. 805 of these were as part of support sessions and training delivered to vulnerable groups. 49 were direct interventions to protect vulnerable people which included installing call blockers to protect vulnerable people from scammers.

Libraries

The libraries team have worked with colleagues across the Council and schools to reintroduce work experience placements at libraries across the county. 49 young people have started work experience placements in libraries in Q1 – Q3. Feedback from the pupils and the employees supporting them has been very positive.

507 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q3. 269 of these were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes. 238 were in Wider Family Learning programmes.

28 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q3.

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget is £73.191m and is currently forecast to underspend by £1.335m. The largest underspend is in Transport and Operations where current market prices mean that electricity and recycling income is exceeding budget in the Waste Service and the budgeted draw down of £2.335m is not required (**ref vi**). The underspend in Communities is mostly due to staff vacancies in Trading Standards and Road Safety with additional income from Emergency Planning training (**ref v**). The largest overspend is in Highways and is due to the estimated increased cost of electricity for streetlighting (**ref vii**). The overspend in Planning and Environment is mostly within the Transport Development Control budget and can be attributed

to the lack of up-to-date Local Plans in the county, which has led to an increase in speculative planning applications for residential developments, which often have challenging transport issues that need addressing. Consequentially, we have seen a rise in the number of applications that have required specialist input (e.g. transport modelling) and/or have become subject to planning appeals, which are particularly resource intensive and have often required short-term consultancy support (**ref ix**). The overspend in Economy is mostly due the cost of consultants engaged to help transition SELEP funded projects back into Council control (**ref viii**). The Parking saving will not be achieved this year and is covered by a one-year budget increase (**ref iii**). The Environmental Services saving will not be achieved and will be addressed going forward (**ref iv**).

Capital Programme Summary

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £56.714m and there is slippage of £5.386m, overspend of £711k, and spend in advance of £308k. The slippage is mostly in the Highways Structural Maintenance programme where design work must be completed on larger drainage schemes before construction which will now take place in 2024/25 (**ref xiv**). There have been delays in progressing project briefs which has delayed construction on Other Integrated Transport Schemes (**ref xiii**). Slippage in the Bridge Strengthening programme is due to wet weather and delays in getting Environment Agency permits (**ref xvi**). The prioritisation of gangs onto carriageway patching works along with some wet weather has caused slippage in road signage and marking schemes (**ref xv**). The slippage in Climate Emergency Works is mostly due to the delay in installing solar PV as a supplier went into administration and a few schools will not allow installations to take place in term time (**ref xi**). Following the Bus Service Improvement Plan bus service public consultation, a number of schemes will require changes of scope before work can commence (**ref xii**). The Bexhill to Hastings Link Road overspend is due to the outstanding archaeology, ecology, and Part 1 compensation claims (**ref x**). There are a number of schemes with smaller variations to budget.

Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)

Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
Percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance	6%	4%	G	G	R		2023/24 road indicator result: 5%	i
Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance	13%	14%	G	G	R		2023/24 road indicator result: 17%	ii

Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Parking	-	745	-	745	-	iii
Libraries	105	105	105	-	-	
Environmental Services	-	60	-	-	60	iv
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	105	910	105	745	60	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	105	910	105	745	60	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
Parking	745	-	745	
Environmental Services	-	60	60	
Total	745	60	805	

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year; the saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance - it will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	7,597	(4,714)	2,883	7,675	(4,776)	2,899	(78)	62	(16)	
Customer, Library and Registration	9,958	(4,501)	5,457	9,688	(4,277)	5,411	270	(224)	46	
Communities	3,256	(877)	2,379	3,503	(1,433)	2,070	(247)	556	309	v
Transport & Operational Services	111,496	(69,356)	42,140	110,431	(70,283)	40,148	1,065	927	1,992	vi
Highways	21,087	(3,578)	17,509	21,831	(3,750)	18,081	(744)	172	(572)	vii
Economy	3,224	(1,512)	1,712	3,763	(1,902)	1,861	(539)	390	(149)	viii
Planning and Environment	4,351	(3,240)	1,111	5,613	(4,227)	1,386	(1,262)	987	(275)	ix
Total CET	160,969	(87,778)	73,191	162,504	(90,648)	71,856	(1,535)	2,870	1,335	

Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
The Keep	1,096	1,096	228	-	49	179	-	179	-	
Peacehaven Refurbishment and Conversion	70	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	580	685	564	16	-	16	-	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	160	(1,092)	160	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	472	538	(538)	(538)	-	-	x
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	100	48	82	18	-	18	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	75	59	72	3	-	3	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	80	53	53	27	-	27	-	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	13	13	13	-	-	-	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	206	150	206	-	-	-	-	
Climate Emergency Works	9,859	9,859	3,095	2,481	2,659	436	-	436	-	xi
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	963	963	905	614	1,003	(98)	-	-	(98)	
Flood Management SuDS	420	420	190	30	250	(60)	-	-	(60)	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	145	1	1	1	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	11	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	28	(45)	28	-	-	-	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	2,963	3,136	70	28	243	(173)	(173)	-	-	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	22,315	22,315	2,545	653	2,208	337	-	337	-	xii

APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	4	(2)	4	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	26	21	26	-	-	-	-	
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	(79)	(131)	(103)	24	-	24	-	
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	79	84	136	(57)	-	-	(57)	
Hailsham /Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	350	248	286	64	-	64	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	800	464	800	-	-	-	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	100	82	100	-	-	-	-	
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,753	66,753	2,802	1,036	1,851	951	-	951	-	xiii
A22 Corridor Package	1,143	1,143	100	202	100	-	-	-	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	95	15	17	78	-	78	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	64	116	56	8	-	8	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	37	-	37	-	-	-	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	1,259	454	1,259	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	104	(17)	-	104	-	104	-	
Core Programme - Highways Structural Maintenance	498,675	498,675	35,893	19,584	33,893	2,000	-	2,000	-	xiv
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	1,293	622	793	500	-	500	-	xv
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	2,740	684	2,099	641	-	641	-	xvi
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,561	39,561	2,000	1,327	2,093	(93)	-	-	(93)	
Core Programme - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme	2,961	2,961	219	220	219	-	-	-	-	
Core- Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement Programme	10,417	10,417	552	446	552	-	-	-	-	
Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)	951,700	953,973	56,714	29,616	52,347	4,367	(711)	5,386	(308)	

Governance Services – Q3 2023/24

Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

The Government's Autumn Budget Statement in Q3 contained no new funding for local authorities and contained updates which further increased our costs. The provisional Local Government Finance Settlement confirmed the lack of additional funding, indicating that authorities should instead draw on their reserves to set a balanced budget. Although some additional funding for social care in 2024/25 was subsequently announced as part of the final settlement, this was one-off and the size of our financial gap projected in the medium term remains unsustainable. 2024/25 will require a further fundamental look at what more can be done to address the sizeable deficit as far as possible. This task is made all the more difficult coming off the back of many years of austerity, and options are scarce, creating considerable risk for the future. The Council will continue to work through our networks and partnerships to lobby Government to robustly set out the challenges we face and the very real consequences of funding shortfalls for people, communities and businesses in the county.

We continued to develop the draft Council Plan and Portfolio Plans during Q3 in conjunction with our budget proposals. The Council Plan sets out our ambitions for the next three years. It includes our planned work to meet the challenges of the increased number of vulnerable children the Council is responsible for as well as our plans to help grow the local economy. It also sets out how we will look to support residents affected by cost-of-living pressures and our ongoing work to address the climate emergency. It has been informed by consultation and engagement events on our budget and business plans for 2024/25 with youth voice groups, wider strategic partners, Trade Unions, and business representatives, and responses to a public survey undertaken during Q3.

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

TfSE published a [State of the Region](#) Report in October 2023. The report sets a baseline position on a number of economic, social, and environmental indicators that the Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) are seeking to influence.

TfSE submitted our Business Plan for 2024/25 to the Department for Transport (DfT) in December 2023. The plan includes a case for investment and outlines the work we will deliver over the year ahead. The plan will be published on the TfSE website once it has been agreed by the DfT.

We have also developed an interactive [Story Map](#) of our region. The map enables users to easily search for the transport improvements we have identified across our region, which are included in our SIP. The Story Map was published on our website, alongside our Policy Position Statements, in October 2023.

Work on the TfSE Regional [Active Travel](#) Strategy has progressed during Q3. The Regional Active Travel Steering Group has met 3 times, and their input has been integral to shaping the work. Stage 2 of the work has included gathering data and evidence from local authorities across the region, drafting the Evidence Report, and developing a methodology to identify strategic corridors across the region.

In response to DfT's request to Statutory Transport Bodies to implement Regional Centres of Excellence, work is underway to develop a web-based platform to support local transport authorities. A steering group is helping to shape and inform the development of the platform, which will be delivered by March 2024. Through engagement with constituent authorities, partnerships are being established to understand what resources, tools, knowledge, and expertise are needed on the platform.

Work on the Transport Strategy refresh has commenced. During Q4, the focus will be on updating the Transport Strategy Evidence Base, including, the transport, land use, and economic evidence that underpinned the original [Transport Strategy](#). TfSE is establishing a series of expert Working

Groups to aid the evidence collection. The first Working Groups are taking place in Q4. Work has begun on understanding the needs of socially excluded people to ensure the Transport Strategy is inclusive.

Corporate Lobbying

During Q3, the Leader took opportunities to meet with local MPs, and has continued to raise issues and priorities for the county with them. This included a specific update on the November RPPR Cabinet report drawing attention to the significant pressure the Council was under due to increasing demand and complexity in statutory services, particularly children's social care and special educational needs and disabilities. The Leader highlighted the very challenging medium term financial outlook for the Council and sought MPs' support in lobbying for certainty of future funding for local government, that reflects local need, and to ensure that service reforms are sustainable and properly funded. Ahead of the Autumn Statement the Leader also took the opportunity to write jointly with other county Leaders in the South East to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing the urgent need for additional funding in children's services and home to school transport.

We continued to draw on broader partnerships and networks to lobby on current priorities, including via the County Councils Network (CCN) and through the Local Government Association (LGA). The Chief Finance Officer responded to surveys conducted by the LGA and CCN to assess the impact on local authorities of the Autumn Statement to inform their lobbying. Subsequently the Leader co-signed a letter with other CCN authorities to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities asking for additional funding to address pressures in children's services and home to school transport in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Chief Executive continues to be involved in national policy development as representative for the South East region on a national grouping of local authority Chief Executives. Other Chief Officers continue to influence service specific national policy developments through national professional associations and networks and responses to specific Government consultations.

Supporting democracy

During Q3 we supported 37 meetings including: 1 County Council meeting; 2 Cabinet meetings; 11 Lead Member meetings; 13 Scrutiny Committees and Review Boards and 10 other committees and panels. We also dispatched agendas for a further 5 meetings. The webcasts of meetings were viewed 1,920 times in Q3. The most viewed meeting was the Full Council meeting on 10 October 2023, which received 224 views.

In Q3 the Member Training and Development programme continued to deliver a range of courses and briefings in support of Members and the roles they hold. Courses delivered included sessions on Treasury Management, the East Sussex County Council Local Transport Plan, Climate Change and Race Equality in East Sussex.

The Scrutiny Committees completed two scrutiny reviews during Q3, on the topics of school exclusions and pothole management, making recommendations for consideration by Cabinet and Council. People and Place Scrutiny Committees continued their input to the RPPR process during Q3, culminating in agreeing comments to Cabinet on draft portfolio plans and the Council's financial outlook at their RPPR Board meetings in December. Place Scrutiny Committee also held a session with Southern Water in November to continue its scrutiny of the use of storm overflows and the reduction of sewage discharges into the county's rivers and sea. The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered changes to the paediatric services model at Eastbourne District General Hospital and agreed to undertake a review of the changes during Q4.

The Health and Wellbeing Board met in December to consider reports on the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership annual report for 2022/23, a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment update report, and a report on pan-Sussex and East Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategies and action plans. The Board also considered an update report on the NHS Sussex Shared Delivery Plan for integrated health and social care, which included progress in establishing Integrated

Community Teams and changes in governance arrangements to further enhance partnership working with district and borough councils on health, care and wellbeing priorities.

Legal Services

During Q3, Legal Services assisted Trading Standards to secure a successful conviction against a farm owner for 5 offences related to the treatment and disposal of carcasses. The farmer was ordered to pay fines of £2,000, a victim surcharge of £800 and costs of £2,034. The Service also supported Trading Standards to secure a successful conviction for fraudulent use of a disabled parking badge. The Service supported Children's Services to secure an Injunction to Prevent Nuisance and Annoyance against a parent, who had seriously threatened and intimidated social workers. The Service also assisted Children's Services to secure one 6 month conditional discharge and 9 fines (ranging from £65-£2,000) in 10 cases against parents for knowingly failing to ensure the regular attendance of their children at school. Legal Services obtained prosecution costs amounting to £5,008 for these cases. During Q3 the Service advised in relation to 66 Court of Protection cases (compared to 62 in Q3 2022/23) and 28 matters involving safeguarding vulnerable adults (compared to 13 in Q3 2022/23) and 65 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications in the Court of Protection (compared to 45 in Q3 2022/23).

In Q3, the Service continued to work closely with Children's Services, providing advice and representation, including in pre-proceedings and court applications for care proceedings. Our priority is to keep children within their family, when it is safe to do so, and for public law applications to be a necessary and proportionate response to achieve the best outcome for the child. In Q3 the Service advised in relation to 51 families in pre-proceedings compared to 45 in Q3 in 2022/23. The Service applied for care proceedings in respect of 15 families compared to 22 in Q3 2022/23. At the end of Q3, there were a total of 65 ongoing care proceedings compared to 72 proceedings at the end of Q3 in 2022/23. In Q3, the Service concluded 14 care proceedings compared to 12 in Q3 2022/23. In 2023/24 cumulatively to date, care proceedings have taken on average 51 weeks per child. A number of long running cases concluded in Q3, including a complex case which ran for 106 weeks due to a placement breakdown, but a number of cases required further assessment of parents and family members which led to delay. In Q3 the Service also advised and represented Children's Services in relation to 21 other matters, including, applications for adoption orders and discharge of care and placement orders.

The Service completed agreements to secure financial contributions to the Council of £2,544,897 together with the delivery of additions and improvements to the highway network across the county. A total of 23 legal agreements were completed to secure these provisions for the Council. The Service also advised on 47 new property matters and 60 contracts and procurement instructions. During Q3, the Service assisted Income Recovery in securing the recovery and repayment of debts totalling £15,993. The Service also assisted in recovering backdated payments in ordinary residence matters totalling £195,020.

Coroner Services

During Q3, 565 deaths were reported to the Coroner (compared to 660 in Q3 2022/23), averaging 187 deaths per month. Of those deaths reported in Q3, 246 post mortems were carried out (44%) compared to 253 (39%) in Q3 2022/23. Of the 565 deaths reported in Q3, 70 went to inquest compared to 84 in Q3 2022/23. In Q3, 73 inquests were closed compared to 66 in Q3 2022/23. Inquests, including jury inquests, are held in court with the option for family, interested persons and witnesses to attend court in person or remotely. Courts are limited to open/close cases during the festive season.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

A successful application for Directed Surveillance was made to the Magistrates Court in Q3. The application relates to an investigation into a number of retail premises in the East Sussex area, where the sale of illegal tobacco is suspected. It will run for a maximum of 3 months until 22

February 2024, unless renewed, subject to monthly review. The first review took place on 22 December 2023, which determined that the authorisation should continue without amendment.

Local Government Ombudsman complaints

The Ombudsman issued 20 decisions in Q3. 16 cases were closed before a full investigation for a variety of reasons. These reasons included insufficient evidence of fault, complaints being out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction because the complaint had not been through our internal complaint process, or an appropriate remedy had already been applied, of which 2 were recorded as upheld.

Of the 4 cases that were fully investigated, one case related to Adult Social Care (ASC) and 3 to Children's Services (CS). All 4 were closed with the complaint partly or fully upheld as follows:

ASC – The client complained about the way the Council provided care and support to her and how it charged her care fees. The Ombudsman found no evidence of fault in the way the Council provided care and support. However, fault was found in the way the Council charged for her care. The Council has agreed to apologise for the incorrect charges and remove them from her account. The Council has also agreed to pay the client £150 in recognition of the distress caused by the incorrect charges and her time and trouble in pursuing the matter.

CS – The client complained about how the Council handled her daughter's special educational needs and Education, Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). The Ombudsman found fault with the Council for delays in agreeing to 1-2-1 support, finalising the EHC Plan and providing the client with its Education Otherwise Than at School Policy. The Council has agreed to apologise to the client and her daughter for the faults identified, pay £600 for the avoidable distress, time and trouble caused by the Council's actions and issue written reminders within two months to relevant staff to ensure they are aware of the EHC Plan guidance.

CS – The client complained that the Council failed to ensure that all of the provision in her son's EHC Plan was in place promptly and in accordance with the plan. This caused her and her son distress and frustration. The Ombudsman found the Council delayed in meeting all the provision: including ensuring a personal laptop was provided and that motor skills and other support sessions took place. The Council has agreed to pay the client £300 for the benefit of her son's education and £200 for her own distress.

CS – The client complained that the Council failed to provide her child with the content of her EHC Plan between March 2023 and April 2023. She also complained the Council failed to provide alternative education to her between March 2022 and March 2023. The Ombudsman found the Council at fault for failing to properly consider whether it owed the alternative provision duty, and for failing to deliver the full content of the EHC Plan. The Council has agreed to apologise to the client and pay her £1,050 in recognition of her child's lost provision.

Web activity

The Council's main website had 2.25 million pageviews during Q3 and there were 1.5 million pageviews of the intranet. The most viewed page on the public site was the jobs section with more than 470,000 views. The school closures page also had 171,000 views. Customer satisfaction with the website was 64%.

Media and information work

There were 355 media stories about the Council in Q3. The press office issued 23 press releases, generating 35 stories. 89 media enquiries were handled.

The number of enquiries was lower than usual in Q3 due to the Christmas period. The single biggest issue raised related to highways defects. We received 21 enquiries about defects in specific locations, and several enquiries relating to the effects of storms on the county's roads.

Effective publicity and campaigns

Our public engagement exercise on our budget and priorities attracted 2,153 responses. Most of these were completed online with promotion through email and social media, but paper copies were also made available through libraries and on demand. Voluntary and community groups and local MPs also helped to share the survey widely.

A social media advertising campaign to promote reduced fares on FlexiBus (our on-demand bus service) in the approach to Christmas had more than 1.4 million potential viewings. FlexiBus passenger numbers reached 497 in December against a target of 500 passengers a week. Passenger numbers have more than doubled since early July. The campaign coincided with the 10,000th ride booking on the service. Continuing publicity includes targeted communication about refining the zones available for the service, so increasing the options for customers.

South East 7 (SE7)

SE7 Leaders and Chief Executives met jointly in Q3 and discussed latest asylum and migration issues and regional working with the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration Head of Partnership. At that meeting SE7 partners also agreed a new collective lobbying approach to emphasise the impact that underfunding of local government has on communities and residents in the South East and focused on key policy messages ahead of an expected General Election in 2024. They also discussed highways conditions, children's services pressures and devolution. SE7 Leaders also met without Chief Executives in Q3 and discussed latest developments and issues, including support for migrants and asylum seekers, budgets, children's services pressures and transition of Local Enterprise Partnership functions to upper tier authorities. SE7 Chief Executives also continue to meet regularly, and in Q3 discussed ongoing opportunities for joint work, local and national policy developments, and how to progress work agreed by the Leaders.

In Q3, SE7 partners also wrote to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Roads Minister about the impact of the activity of utility companies on local road networks. The letter suggested a number of policy changes to increase local authority oversight and enforcement powers against utility companies and a response to that letter is awaited.

Revenue Budget Summary

The Governance Service revenue budget is currently £8.314m and is forecast to overspend by £50k. Within the Corporate Governance division there is a large overspend in the Coroner budget. This is largely as a result of cumulative increases in the costs of mortuary provision, court hire, body removal, toxicology and staffing, as well as accumulative demands on the service. Budget earmarked for external legal fees is being used to offset in-house legal provision and along with smaller underspends in other services, will more than offset the Coroners Service overspend (**ref i**). The overspend in Corporate Support is due to the cost of covering maternity leave in Legal Services. This overspend is partially offset with staff vacancies elsewhere (**ref ii**).

Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q3 23/24 outturn	Note ref
No Council Plan exceptions in Q3								

Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	0	0	0	0	0	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	0	0	0	0	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	0	0	0	

¹ Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

² Temporary funding will only replace a slipped or unachieved saving for one year; the saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

³ The slipped or unachieved saving will form part of the department's overall variance - it will either increase an overspend or decrease an underspend. The saving will still need to be made in future years (or be replaced with something else).

Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Corporate Governance	5,257	(340)	4,917	5,259	(365)	4,894	(2)	25	23	i
Corporate Support	3,801	(404)	3,397	3,880	(410)	3,470	(79)	6	(73)	ii
Total Governance	9,058	(744)	8,314	9,139	(775)	8,364	(81)	31	(50)	

Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
No current programme for Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total GS Gross (Planned Programme)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Strategic Risk Register – Q3 2023/24

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
5	<p>RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE & RESOURCE</p> <p>There is ongoing uncertainty in relation to future funding levels, the longer-term local government funding regime, and the impact of national reforms, particularly across Children’s Social Care and Adult Social Care. The impact of a period of high inflation/cost of living are leading to higher demand for Council services and have increased the direct cost of providing services. Together these create a risk of insufficient resources being available to sustain service delivery at the agreed Core Offer level to meet the changing needs of the local community.</p> <p>The proposed budget for 2024/25 requires a draw from the Financial Management Reserve to balance the budget.</p>	<p>We employ a robust Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process for business planning, which ensures a strategic corporate response to resource reductions, demographic change, and regional and national economic challenges; and directs resources to priority areas. We take a commissioning approach to evaluating need and we consider all methods of service delivery. We work with partner organisations to deliver services and manage demand, making best use of our collective resources. We take a 'One Council' approach to delivering our priorities and set out our targets and objectives in the Council Plan. We monitor our progress and report it quarterly.</p> <p>Our plans take account of known risks and pressures, including social, economic, policy and demographic changes and financial risks. However, we continue to operate in changing and uncertain contexts. Current and forecast economic conditions continue to shape a very challenging financial outlook both for the Council itself and many of the county’s residents and businesses. Alongside this we continue to face ongoing challenges as a result of the persistent legacy of Covid, the increased cost of living and other national and international factors. We will continue to use the latest information available on these challenges to inform our business planning. We will also continually review our performance targets, priorities, service offers and financial plans, and will update these as required. As part of this we will continue to take action wherever we can to mitigate financial and service delivery pressures – making best use of new technology, investing in our workforce, seeking efficiencies, and checking that our services are effective and provide value for money. We will look to develop and implement further measures to address the funding challenges we face.</p> <p>We lobby, individually and in conjunction with our networks and partners, for a sustainable funding regime for local government in general and for children’s social care and adult social care specifically, to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
12	<p>CYBER ATTACK</p> <p>The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has highlighted the substantial risk to British web infrastructure, with elevated levels of Cyber Crime being reported against all areas of government, particularly in light of the current Ukrainian situation.</p> <p>Cyber attacks are growing more frequent, sophisticated, and damaging when they succeed. The COVID-19 pandemic has increased the need to carry out many additional functions virtually and remotely. Changes in working practice give rise to more requests to relax security controls, with services more likely to take risks on the technology they procure and how they use it. Controls have been enhanced to manage these requests.</p> <p>The impacts of a cyber attack are far-reaching, and it is difficult to put a figure on the cost, but authorities that have been subject to major attacks have calculated the disruption to have cost between £10m and £12m.</p>	<p>Most attacks leverage software flaws and gaps in boundary defences. IT&D use modern security tools to assure our security posture: Monitoring network activity and identifying security threats; Keeping software up to date with regular patching regimes; Continually monitoring evolving threats and re-evaluating the ability of our toolset to provide adequate defence against them; Ongoing communication with the Security industry to find the most suitable tools and systems to secure our infrastructure. IT&D continues to invest in new tools, which use pre-emptive technology to identify threats and patterns of abnormal behaviour. The Council achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation during 2022/23. Cyber Essentials Plus is the industry standard for the private and public sectors, underpinning safe sharing with partners and helping ensure sufficient controls are in place to minimise the risk of a cyber incident.</p> <p>Enhancing user awareness: Expanding E-Learning and policy delivery mechanisms to cover Cyber threat; educating staff around the techniques and methods used by active threats; and providing General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training and workshops to cascade vital skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under GDPR legislation. Business Continuity Scenario testing is currently being cascaded through Departmental Management Teams.</p> <p>Services hosted in ISO 27001 accredited Orbis Data Centres.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
9	<p>WORKFORCE</p> <p>An inability to attract and retain the high calibre staff needed could lead to a reduction in the expertise and capacity required to deliver statutory services to our residents, including to prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults at the required level and standards, impacting on the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives.</p>	<p>In September 2022 Cabinet agreed an investment of £270k across 2022/23 and 2023/24 to put in place a number of strategies to respond to the significant current recruitment and retention challenges. Work reported on in Q1 and Q2 is ongoing with some highlights being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Linking in with organisations that support people back into employment to extend our reach into sections of the labour market that are underrepresented or face significant barriers to employment. - On-going attendance at events such as careers fairs and shows to maximise our presence with job seekers. - Appointment to a new post of 'Pre-Employment Coordinator', with specific responsibility to link in with organisations that support people back into employment to extend our reach into sections of the labour market that are underrepresented or face significant barriers to employment. - Use of apprenticeships, traineeships, intern arrangements and more flexible work arrangements etc as a way of bringing in new talent to the Council. - Continued delivery of our two leadership development programmes to support our talent management strategies: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and 'Head of Service Masterclasses'. The second cohort of the Ladder to Leadership programme started in September 2023. <p>Additional work undertaken in Q3 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refreshing of recruitment guidance for managers with the inclusion of new 'top tips' to support efficient and inclusive recruitment practice. - Establishment of an exit interview pilot which will run for 3 months in the first instance to enable an assessment of success. - Delivery of 2 strategic workforce planning sessions to Head of Service by the Local Government Association. - Provision of information sessions and training around application and interview techniques for candidates, who want to apply for roles at East Sussex County Council (ESCC) - Engagement with employees at ESCC, who are under 25, to get feedback on what attracted them to the Council as an employer; and to begin establishing a forum for young people in the new year to highlight any issues, and to attract candidates from a younger demographic to the Council - Delivery of internal resilience training sessions for younger apprentices around what is expected from them at work and to prepare them for becoming an 'ambassador for apprenticeships' at the Council within schools. 	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
15	<p>CLIMATE</p> <p>Failure to limit global warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation levels, which requires global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) to be reduced by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' by 2050 at the latest. The predicted impacts of climate change in East Sussex include more frequent and intense flooding, drought, and episodes of extreme heat, as well as impacts from the effects of climate change overseas, such as on food supply. This will lead to an increase in heat-related deaths, particularly amongst the elderly, damage to essential infrastructure, increased cost of food, disruption to supply chains and service provision, and greater coastal erosion.</p>	<p>Climate change mitigation: the science-based target is to reduce scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 50% every 5 years (equating to 13% per year). The focus is on buildings, as they made up 79% of carbon emissions in 2020/21. Internal oversight of progress is by the corporate Climate Emergency Board.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation: we work with partners on some aspects of adaptation, including flood risk management plans and delivering a Heat Alert service during the summer months.</p> <p>In Quarter 3 2023/24:</p> <p>A) Mitigation:</p> <p>1) Carbon Reduction Target: the target for 2023-24 is a 13% carbon reduction compared with 2022-23 and a cumulative reduction of 42% against the baseline year of 2019-20. Energy usage data for Q1 and Q2 2023-24 indicates that we achieved an 8% reduction in energy usage compared with Q1 and Q2 in 2022-23. However, the carbon emissions from our energy usage increased because the national electricity grid has become temporarily more carbon intensive in 2023-24 due to an increase in fossil fuels and a reduction in renewables to run the system. This is beyond the control of the County Council. If energy usage in Q3 & 4 is similar to 2022-23 then the annual result for 2023-24 will be about a 1% overall increase in carbon emissions compared with 2022-23.</p> <p>2) Carbon Reduction Schemes: the target for 2023-24 is for the delivery of a further 23 capital schemes. Thirteen schemes were completed by the end of Q3. The RAG status for meeting the target is currently amber, primarily due to supply chain and site issues (e.g., a local solar PV contractor for the Council went into administration during Q2).</p> <p>B) Adaptation:</p> <p>1) Adaptation Plan: In August the Climate Emergency Board agreed to the procurement of consultancy support to produce a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment, to help inform the development of an adaptation plan. Subject to the evaluation of the quotes received, a consultant will be appointed in January to complete this work.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
20	<p>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE</p> <p>Inability to secure sufficient high quality placements for children in our care, suitable accommodation for care experienced young people and respite provision, leading to significant financial pressure leading to significant financial pressure and poorer outcomes for children/young people.</p>	<p>Effective demand management, robust management of front door</p> <p>Delivery of early help services, implementation of Family Hub programme throughout 2023-24, and Level 2 Family Keyworkers (Q3),</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Edge of Care 'Connected Families', Family Safeguarding programmes ('Connected Families in Partnership' launch planned for January 2024), enabling more children to live safely with their families.</p> <p>Further delivery of kinship/Special Guardianship Order placements.</p> <p>Capital bid for Sorrel Drive.</p> <p>Consultancy project-IMPOWER to determine forecast trajectory and development of evidence-based business case to further improve sufficiency of placements.</p> <p>Fostering Recruitment & Retention Strategy completed. East Sussex County Council is part of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme, Regional Fostering Strategy and piloting Mockingbird hub.</p> <p>Uplift to fostering allowance (for in house carers, Special Guardianship Orders, Kinship carers) approved by the Chief Management Team to help secure sufficient supply of in house foster carers as an alternative to more expensive care packages.</p> <p>In Q3, the valuing care tools have been embedded into the business as usual with a strong focus on reunification.</p> <p>Fostering allowance uplift has been made part of the recruitment drive. Both elements are attempting to mitigate the increased costs due to the lack of placements for Looked After Children.</p>	Red
19	<p>SCHOOLS AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (ISEND)</p> <p>For Children with Special Educational Needs. Inability to secure statutory provision due to lack of availability of specialist placement within the county and increasing demand for placements in this sector. This would put the Council at risk of judicial review and/or negative Local Government Ombudsman judgements for failing to meet our duties within the Children and Families Act 2014, with associated financial penalties and reputational damage.</p>	<p>Effective use of forecasting data to pre-empt issues.</p> <p>Work with statutory partners to develop contingency plans.</p> <p>Work with the market to increase provision where needed.</p> <p>Expanding internal interim offer for children.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
1	<p>ROADS</p> <p>Extreme weather events over recent years, including this winter, have caused significant damage to many of the county’s roads, adding to the backlog of maintenance in the County Council’s Asset Plan: and increasing the risk to the Council’s ability to stem the rate of deterioration and maintain road condition.</p> <p>The economic impacts of the pandemic and recent events in Ukraine have had some effects on service delivery during this year, particularly with increased costs and shortages of suitable contractors and materials.</p>	<p>The changing climate is now influencing the rate of road deterioration, with more extreme events such as warmer wetter winters; and drier summers punctuated by unseasonal heavy downpours (drying and shrinking the substructure of roads). Additional funding over the last few years has helped maintain road condition, however, the latest condition and funding modelling showed the potential for deterioration over the next 10 years. Additional carriageway patching, footway, signing and lining works were carried out with additional budget allocated through the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process in 2023 and Cabinet approved additional investment of £15.7m in June 2023 for highway maintenance. The improvements are well underway to provide greater network reliance. Deterioration in road surfaces in 2023/24 has continued with a generally cool and wet summer and wet start to winter.</p> <p>Road Condition Indicator (RCI) scores for this year indicate we are on target for principal roads but slightly below target for non-principal and unclassified roads, this is what we expected from the modelling given the current conditions. The evidence shows the current winter weather is taking its toll on the condition of many of the county’s roads, with large numbers of potholes forming daily and roads deteriorating. Mitigations include encouraging road users to report potholes so we can intervene as soon as possible in accordance with our policies and lobbying Government for additional investment as, without it, it will be increasingly difficult to manage the risks of further decline.</p>	Red
18	<p>DATA BREACH</p> <p>A breach of security/confidentiality leading to destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. This includes breaches that are the result of both accidental and deliberate causes. A personal data breach is a security incident that has affected the confidentiality, integrity, or availability of personal data regardless of whether information has been accessed, altered, or disclosed via electronic or manual means.</p> <p>Risks to individuals, reputational damage, fines from the Information Commissioner’s Officer (ICO), compensation claims.</p>	<p>Policy and guidance procedures in place to support practice.</p> <p>Data Protection Officer (DPO), Caldicott Guardians and Information Governance Officers monitor breach reporting and put in place mechanisms to minimise recurrence.</p> <p>Staff training to develop awareness. E-learning and policy delivery mechanism expanded to enhance skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under General Data Protection Regulation legislation.</p> <p>Technical security measures operated by Information Technology and Digital (IT&D), including access control and segregation of duties.</p>	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
8	<p>CAPITAL PROGRAMME</p> <p>There are risks and uncertainties regarding the capital programme over the current Medium Term Financial Plan period and beyond, which could impact on the ability to deliver the Council's priorities and set a balanced budget.</p> <p>Factors such as inflation, supply chain issues, unforeseen operational risks, and wider economic and geopolitical factors are likely to impact project deliverability and affordability.</p> <p>Additionally, if capital expenditure isn't profiled accurately, then significant slippage against the budgeted programme can undermine the planning process, particularly in relation to treasury management modelling and the impact of borrowing.</p> <p>Due to the complexity of factors and uncertainties impacting them, the level of government grants and other sources of capital programme funding such as developer contributions and capital receipts could be significantly reduced.</p> <p>A combination of the above risks, alongside a volatile interest rate environment, could significantly increase the cost of borrowing to fund the capital programme, increasing pressures on the Council's revenue budget in an already challenging financial environment.</p>	<p>The Council reviews and updates its 20-year Capital Strategy annually as part of the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, which sets the framework in which the capital programme is planned and allows the Council to prioritise investment to support its objectives. The development and delivery of the capital programme is overseen by a Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB), which is a cross departmental group, who also hear from Departmental Capital Board/Sub Boards who oversee priority areas.</p> <p>The capital programme includes an element of 'normal' level of inflation for ongoing target-based core programmes (as opposed to programmes that have cash limited envelopes). Additionally, a capital risk provision in the form of additional borrowing flexibility is in place to provide the ability to react to emerging risks such as supply chain issues and inflationary pressures. The level of provision is reviewed and approved on an annual basis as part of the RPPR process and is maintained by the CSAB in adherence to financial regulations.</p> <p>As part of the RPPR process, services are asked to provide a profiled programme based on best knowledge, which is reviewed and challenged by CSAB, to ensure the programme is profiled as accurately as possible. A corporate slippage risk factor can be applied to the programme to reflect likely programme spend to provide greater robustness to the planning and monitoring process.</p> <p>The CSAB have oversight of all sources of capital funding, including grants, capital receipts and developer contributions, to ensure that assumptions are prudent and realistic, and funds are used effectively and to minimise the need to borrow. Funding announcements are actively monitored, and funding targets reviewed to minimise the impact on delivery of the capital programme, ensuring that there is sufficient liquidity to meet funding requirements. The cost of borrowing for the capital programme has a direct impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan position, therefore capital investment decisions are considered as part of the RPPR process based on Treasury Management capacity and affordability in the context of the Council's wider financial position. The Council's approved Treasury Management Policy and Strategy has been prepared in the context of the current financial situation and seeks to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.</p>	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
6	<p>LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p>The transfer of South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) responsibilities and functions to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) does not successfully integrate the development of economic strategic planning, business support, and management of capital funded programmes, into Council operations as required by Government policy.</p> <p>Possible consequences if the transfer is not managed successfully include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Management, monitoring, and evaluation of the current capital programmes do not meet Government requirements, leading to potential clawback of £m funds; or an inability for ESCC to demonstrate it can manage funds successfully, affecting future allocations of growth funds. •Third parties with existing contracts may raise concerns if new / variation funding agreements are not put in place early from April 2024. •Loss of an effective 'business voice' through the current local economic growth board (Team East Sussex) and its various subgroups. •An inability to produce an agreed local economic strategy, which sets the ambitions, objectives, and key outcomes for East Sussex. 	<p>East Sussex County Council, working with partners, has successfully secured significant amounts of local growth funding totalling £127m since 2012 via the South East and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to deliver a wide range of infrastructure projects in East Sussex. In August 2023, Government formally announced that direct funding for LEPs will be removed from April 2024. Upper tier local authorities (UTLA's) will then be required to take on the current non-statutory LEP powers, responsibilities, and functions. These include strategy development, business support and oversight/management of capital programmes. We submitted our proposal to Government in November 2023 to become an UTLA per the guidance issued. East Sussex is eligible to be determined a 'functional economic area' to take on LEP responsibilities, but we await a formal decision on this from Government.</p> <p>The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and East Sussex County Council have produced draft integration plans to mitigate the transfer risks on current and future capital programmes; and the financial, legal and reputational risks. SELEP and our own Chief Management Team endorsed the draft integration plans in Q3, and the plans will be taken to Cabinet in March 2024 to seek approval. Further Government guidance and an Assurance Framework are due to be released in January 2024 to set out transition arrangements.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the lack of large-scale funding programmes to support economic growth across the county presents a big risk to us. Recent funds have been awarded directly to local Borough and District authorities (e.g., UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Funds) or funding has come from time-limited specific sources.</p> <p>The County Council and Team East Sussex, the local economic growth board, are jointly committed to producing a longer-term East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy to 2050. The strategy will set out our collective approach to take advantage of future funding sources as they become available. Significant work has been completed with consultants and stakeholder consultations. The draft strategy is scheduled for approval in 2024 and will help to mitigate economic strategic planning risks.</p> <p>The County Council is already in a good position to mitigate the risks on business support and ensuring business has a voice. We directly run the Business East Sussex Growth Hub services and Government have committed to fund this in 2024/25. We will also ensure the business voice continues to be heard through Team East Sussex, our local strategic advisory economic growth board for the county.</p>	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
4	<p>HEALTH</p> <p>Failure to secure maximum value from partnership working with the National Health Service (NHS). If not achieved, there will be impact on social care, public health and health outcomes and increased social care operational and cost pressures. This would add pressures on the Council's budget and/or risks to other Council objectives, as well as shared system objectives in the context of our Integrated Care System across workforce and patients who are medically ready for discharge (MRD) from hospital or community beds.</p>	<p>As part of planning for use of the discharge capacity investment funding, continuation of quarter 1 and 2 schemes was agreed with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and NHS Chief Executive Officers where these have evidenced patient and system benefit. This included East Sussex discharge to assess (D2A) beds; home care and agency staff to support flow through the system and free up capacity; and the transfer of care hub, in line with national requirements. Planning has also taken place as part of the winter planning process for 2023/24 to ensure additional funded schemes for Q3 and Q4 align across existing improvement plan actions, localised research activity, and the Discharge Frontrunner programme. This will also provide the basis for 2024/25 plans and Better Care Fund discharge allocations, which will enable the continued focus on Home First, reablement, and right sized bedded capacity, including schemes that support more complex care needs and target areas of greatest delay for people ready for discharge from mental health inpatient capacity.</p> <p>Work has also continued to progress in-year milestones in the 5-year Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Shared Delivery Plan (SDP), including a focus on the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Strategy priorities shared by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and NHS for children and young people, mental health, community, and improvements in health outcomes. This has included developing partnership plans for implementing Integrated Community Teams (ICTs), aligned with the borough and district footprints to ensure use of collective resources driven by locally focussed intelligence and insight and five profiles have now been produced to support the initial development phase of ICTs. Partnership work has taken place on a pan-Sussex footing to support delivery of improvements to elective and urgent care, hospital discharge, mental health and health inequalities set out in the SDP.</p>	Amber

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 05 March 2024

By: Director of Children’s Services

Title: Inspection of East Sussex local authority children’s services

Purpose: This report sets out the outcome of the Council’s Inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services in December 2023

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Welcome the findings of the inspection of the work of ESCC for children and young people which was published on 6 February 2024; and
 - 2) To note the action plan which is being developed to address the areas for improvement.
-

1 Background

1.1 East Sussex County Council was inspected by the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) under the framework and evaluation schedule for Inspections of Local Authority Children’s Services (ILACS) from 11 – 15 December 2023.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The outcome of the inspection was published 6 February and is attached at Appendix 1. The Council’s Children’s Services has been judged to be good overall and outstanding for the experiences and progress of children in care. This is a good outcome for the service and for the Council which has made keeping vulnerable people safe, a priority outcome. It is a very welcome recognition of all the hard, determined, and high-quality work we have done since our last inspection, through a time of pandemic, its continuing effects, and cost of living pressures. The judgement for each area of the inspection is set out below:

Judgement	Grade 2018 inspection	Grade 2023 inspection
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Outstanding	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care (and care leavers 2018)	Outstanding	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers (introduced in January 2023)	N/A	Good
Overall effectiveness	Outstanding	Good

2.2. The inspectors spend most of their time with frontline staff and the inspection outcome reflects the difference staff make to the lives of children and young people in East Sussex.

2.3 The report notes:

‘Children in East Sussex continue to receive consistently strong and effective support that helps them to improve their lives. Since the last ILACS inspection in 2018, the authority has responded well to the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing numbers of families experiencing financial hardship and the growing number children with complex needs who require help.’

2.4 The report highlighted key strengths including:

- Support for vulnerable children is a priority for leaders and cross-party leadership of the corporate parenting board demonstrates the collective will to do the right things for children and their families.
- Social workers are confident and experienced at identifying the range of risk factors impacting on children.
- Children’s identity and heritage are considered well in terms of planning for the right support, including their gender, sexuality and faith.
- Child-in-need and child protection plans focus on what matters most to children. They are reviewed in a timely way at multi-agency review meetings that are well attended.
- Disabled children with complex needs, supported by practitioners from the disabled children’s service, receive strong support.
- The oversight of elective home education is an area of strength. There is an effective system for the tracking of high numbers of pupils who are educated at home and staff seek to identify and support children who may be at increased risk of harm.
- Children in care, including disabled children, are well cared for and live in homes that meet their needs. Social workers consider children’s diversity needs very carefully so that they can support them to settle well with their careers and make progress in their education.
- Social workers know the children (*in care*) they support exceptionally well. They are insightful and attuned to children’s needs, helping them to express their views using individualised and bespoke communication methods.
- Governance of the virtual school is effective, and the virtual school makes a positive difference to children’s academic and personal development.
- (Care leavers) benefit from enduring and trusted relationships with workers who support them well..... The support provided to care leavers makes a positive difference as they move into adulthood.
- Care leavers are supported to maintain links with family members and other adults to ensure that they have access to a network of people who can offer them long-lasting support into adulthood.
- Leaders are taking appropriate action to expand the range of opportunities for care leavers, for example through access to council-led mentoring schemes, apprenticeships or work experience, or links to local businesses and the culture sector.
- Investment in early help services, and current work to establish a new multidisciplinary model for locality teams, as well as plans to enable the specialist SWIFT services to deliver support at an earlier point, demonstrate the corporate commitment to delivering sustainable and impactful support for children.

- The long-standing stability of the workforce enables well-rooted relationships to develop with children and care leavers in East Sussex. Leaders make no secret of the fact that the workforce is their most valuable asset.
- Workers stay in East Sussex because they feel valued and supported to do well.
- Inspectors had the pleasure of meeting a group of articulate, caring and kind young people, all of whom said that they felt safe and had someone to turn to as a trusted adult.

2.5 Ofsted provided a child friendly summary to inform children and young people about the inspection outcomes. This is attached at Appendix 2.

2.6 The report identifies three areas for improvement:

- The quality of plans for children and care leavers so that they are all specific, measurable and timebound.
- The recording of management oversight, supervision and direction.
- The oversight, timeliness and rigour of the response to children:
 - experiencing neglect, including children in Public Law Outline pre-proceedings, and
 - in private fostering arrangement

2.7 The draft post-inspection action plan in response to the report is attached at Appendix 3. The final action plan will be shared with Ofsted by 17 May 2024.

3 Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 East Sussex has maintained a focus on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe and responded well to the impact of the pandemic, increased demand and the challenging financial context for both families and the council. Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the inspection report and the draft action plan.

ALISON JEFFERY

Director of Children's Services

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Inspection of East Sussex local authority children's services

Inspection dates: 11 to 15 December 2023

Lead inspector: Tom Anthony, His Majesty's Inspector

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

Children in East Sussex continue to receive consistently strong and effective support that helps to improve their lives. Since the last ILACS inspection in 2018, the authority has responded well to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the increasing numbers of families experiencing financial hardship and the growing numbers of children with complex needs who require help. Support for vulnerable children is a priority for leaders, including the chief executive, lead member and director of children's services. Cross-party leadership of the corporate parenting board demonstrates the collective will to do the right things for children and their families.

In most areas, the quality and impact of practice have remained strong, and the stability of the workforce is impressive. However, records of management oversight and challenge, as well as the quality of practice in discrete areas, including the two areas for improvement that were identified at the last inspection, are not consistently robust.

What needs to improve?

- The quality of plans for children and care leavers so that they are all specific, measurable and timebound.
- The recording of management oversight, supervision and direction.
- The oversight, timeliness and rigour of the response to children:
 - experiencing neglect, including children in Public Law Outline pre-proceedings, and
 - in private fostering arrangements.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection: good

1. Staff at the single point of advice (SPoA) provide a timely response to initial contacts in East Sussex. Essential information is gathered to help inform appropriate threshold decisions at this stage. This helps workers to identify the right service in line with children's needs. Consent is understood, sought and dispensed with appropriately. Parents' views are taken into account in decision-making.
2. Although an increase in demand has led to delays in allocation for a small number of families, the majority of families receive effective early help at the right time for them. Once allocated to an early help key worker, children and their families benefit from a high level of support. This enables children and families to build relationships rapidly with workers who understand their needs and work effectively with them to reduce risk and make enduring change.
3. Most children and families move quickly into the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) when necessary. For the majority of children, proportionate decision-making reflects children's needs and is responsive to the level of risks that they face. For most children, social workers' analysis and recommendations are thorough and based on timely and comprehensive information-gathering.
4. Social workers are confident and experienced at identifying the range of risk factors impacting on children. They plan intervention to reduce risk and progress safety plans. They work closely with parents, sharing reports and safety plans so that children are safer.
5. Management oversight is captured well within MASH information-gathering records, and the rationale for decision-making is mainly clear in terms of next steps or prioritisation leading up to and following strategy discussions. Re-referral rates are low. Managers in the MASH provide clear advice on next steps for children moving into statutory assessment. However, indicative timescales for completing the assessment in accordance with the child's needs are not defined at the outset. Some assessments are taking many weeks, with the

rationale not being clear. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection.

6. Most assessments are analytical and thorough, and they are often informed by research and practice learning reviews. They take into account parents' own experiences, concerns and vulnerabilities. Direct work is undertaken with children during the assessment process. This captures their experiences well, and they are helped to share sensitive and difficult feelings. However, evidence of this work is not always uploaded onto children's records.
7. Children's identity and heritage are considered well in terms of planning for the right support, including their gender, sexuality and faith.
8. Decision-making is robust and leads appropriately to escalation when needed to safeguard children. Strategy meetings are well attended and are held in line with the level of perceived risk to children. During child protection enquiries, experienced social workers visit children quickly at a time and place where the child feels comfortable.
9. Domestic abuse specialist workers support practitioners and families, helping to create immediate safety plans for children who have been exposed to domestic abuse. Culturally matched community groups are identified to provide ongoing and sensitive support to victims.
10. Child-in-need and child protection plans focus on what matters most to children. They are reviewed in a timely way at multi-agency review meetings that are well attended. While practice itself is strong, plans are not consistently sharply focused on what tangible change is needed and by when, and many do not contain well-articulated contingency plans.
11. Children who have a child-in-need or child protection plan receive regular visits from practitioners who build relationships with them and their families to support change and improvements. Practitioners are skilled and knowledgeable, using a wide range of direct work tools in their one-to-one meetings with children.
12. Disabled children with complex needs, supported by practitioners from the disabled children's service, receive strong support. Well-managed caseloads allow workers to respond to children's needs and to work with multi-agency partners effectively. Creative use is made of visual tools to capture children's views and wishes and these feed into children's plans. Plans are dynamic and they are flexed as children and families make progress and their circumstances change.
13. The multidisciplinary specialist family service (SWIFT) works alongside social care services to provide highly valued expertise in assessment and intervention across a wide range of need, including parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, mental health, and assessment work for families before or during court proceedings. A waiting list to access some services creates short-term delays

for some children. Senior leaders are aware of this and plans are in place to frontload the use of SWIFT in the Public Law Outline (PLO) process.

14. Some children experience neglect for too long. Episodes of marginal improvement are followed by a return to significant and impactful neglect, and there is insufficient evidence of reflection on what has and has not worked in the past. A new neglect toolkit has recently been launched and is yet to have an impact.
15. Oversight and challenge to drive progress during PLO pre-proceedings are not sufficiently effective. Some children are subject to pre-proceedings for too long. Letters to parents, as was the case at the last inspection, are not written in a way that makes clear the concerns regarding children's experiences and what needs to change.
16. The dangers of harm by exploitation are understood well, and risks are reduced through effective support provided to children at risk of extra-familial harm. Mapping identifies links between children and the adults who are exploiting them. Police plan disruptive actions, including specialist operations, and 'connected coaches' offer a multidisciplinary approach, providing intensive and effective support to children aged 11 to 17 and their families.
17. Staff in East Sussex are creative and effective in the way in which they engage children and families to continually improve the impact of their work. A well-established collaboration against child exploitation (CACE) group for parents of children who are exploited supports parents well and is a vital resource for them. Parent mentors also provide key support to families who are going through family drug and alcohol court (FDAC) proceedings.
18. Well-established systems, underpinned by strong relationships with partner agencies, enable an effective response to out-of-hours concerns.
19. Concerns about adults working with children are dealt with thoroughly by a well-managed local authority designated officer service that has good systems in place for the management of allegations, concerns and complaints.
20. Once notified about children living in private fostering arrangements, not all children are visited swiftly in their homes as part of the assessment of their safety. This means that potential risks are not rigorously assessed.
21. Children aged 16 and 17 who present as homeless receive an appropriate and effective response. They are provided with advice and information to help them to make appropriate decisions about the support that they need.
22. The oversight of elective home education is an area of strength. There is an effective system for the tracking of high numbers of pupils who are educated at home and staff seek to identify and support children who may be at increased risk of harm. The local authority has clear procedures to identify and monitor

children who are missing education. They work positively with families and schools to determine and address the main barriers to accessing education.

The experiences and progress of children in care: outstanding

23. Most children come into care in East Sussex at the right time and after other family options have been explored. Providing children in care with consistent support and minimising changes of social worker are priorities from the outset. The strong relationships that children have with their workers have a positive impact on the progress that they make.
24. Children in care, including disabled children, are well cared for and live in homes that meet their needs. Social workers consider children's diversity needs very carefully so that they can support them to settle well with their carers and make progress in their education. Children have many opportunities to learn and to have fun, including through dancing, horse riding and cookery. Workers advocate effectively for resources, including holidays and activities.
25. Social workers know the children they support exceptionally well. They are insightful and attuned to children's needs, helping them to express their views using individualised and bespoke communication methods. They visit children regularly and keep in frequent contact, including in the evenings and at weekends, so that children have positive, long-term relationships with a trusted adult. The frequency of visits and contacts is increased when children need additional support.
26. Continuity of allocated social worker is prioritised and these long-standing relationships have a positive impact on children's progress and experiences. Social workers are able to understand children's experiences, the impact of trauma and significant life events. Provision is in place for therapy and bespoke emotional support when it cannot be accessed from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), and this supports children's evolving identity and independence.
27. Children's plans set out how their needs will be met, including for their health and education, and they identify what they need to thrive and to maintain important relationships. Care plans are updated in line with statutory timescales, but not routinely as situations change. Independent reviewing officers (IROs) are involved in placement decisions, assessments and care planning. Review records do not always provide the clarity to understand the journey of the children, but they are written sensitively to children who are encouraged to chair their own 'My Voice Matters' reviews. IROs escalate concerns promptly and appropriately.
28. Arrangements for early discussion of care and permanence plans for children, including, for example, with fostering and adoption colleagues, are unclear. There is no overall tracking to ensure that permanence plans and contingencies are in place, although this is not causing identifiable delay. Leaders are taking

appropriate action to establish a consistent method to record and track children's permanence plans.

29. The health needs of children in care are considered well. Health assessments, dental and optician checks are arranged for children, and strengths and difficulties questionnaires (SDQs) are completed as part of the health assessments. The findings are used to identify and plan for children's health and therapeutic care needs.
30. The importance of children maintaining connections with family and friends is fully recognised and prominent in the plans made for them. Consideration is given to brother and sister relationships and careful planning helps the children to live together whenever possible. Parents and wider family are enabled to spend positive time with their children.
31. Reunification is explored when this is realistic and in children's best interests. Placement with parents assessments are thorough; they analyse risk and represent the child's voice and health needs. They are appropriately reviewed and authorised by a senior manager.
32. A very small number of children with highly complex needs live in unregistered children's homes. The arrangements are closely monitored and the search to identify registered and suitable provision to meet children's needs is an ongoing process.
33. Supervising social workers provide regular supervision to foster carers, although this varies in quality. Training for foster carers has been enhanced, including a renewed focus on understanding diversity. Detailed and timely reports are provided for panel, which is overseen by a strong and knowledgeable panel chair. Decision-making and recommendations are timely and in line with the aim to promote the welfare of children in foster care.
34. Adoption for children, achieved through membership of the regional adoption agency (Adoption South East), is a strength. Governance arrangements are clear and effective. Early permanence for children is provided by fostering to adopt carers who are informed and well supported. The model of conducting virtual panels delivers a flexible and cost-efficient service that minimises delay for children's future planning.
35. Governance of the virtual school is effective, and the virtual school makes a positive difference to children's academic and personal development. Staff at the school provide helpful guides for designated teachers about personal education plans, as well as training and additional funding to support children accessing extra-curricular clubs. Schools are overwhelmingly positive about the support provided by the virtual school.

The experiences and progress of care leavers: good

36. Most care leavers are helped to make good progress in their lives. They benefit from enduring and trusted relationships with workers who support them well. Social workers and personal advisers keep in frequent contact with care leavers. These relationships continue in accordance with care leavers' needs, regardless of age. Personal advisers are committed and persistent in helping to improve care leavers' lives and experiences, and they encourage them to make changes, even when this is challenging and support is not welcomed. The support provided to care leavers makes a positive difference as they move into adulthood.
37. Care leavers are introduced to social workers and personal advisers at a time that is right for them and following their 14th birthday. Children are allocated a personal adviser by the time they are 17 and a half years old, and, when needed, social workers continue to support care leavers past their 18th birthday. This fluid approach provides an opportunity for joint working and the development of new relationships and reduces the impact of changes of worker and feelings of loss that could leave care leavers feeling unsupported.
38. The majority of pathway plans are created with care leavers but they are not consistently specific and timebound so that impact and progress can be tracked and measured. Stronger plans identify needs well and lead to relevant actions to help care leavers. Independence skills are mostly well considered via the passport to independence work as care leavers move towards adulthood. However, for a small number of care leavers, their voices are not sufficiently captured. Some pathway plans are not sufficiently ambitious or aspirational. Plans do not always reflect the depth of the support that is actually being provided and how this is helping care leavers to make positive progress and changes in their lives.
39. Care leavers are supported to maintain links with family members and other adults to ensure that they have access to a network of people who can offer them long-lasting support into adulthood.
40. Care leavers have good access to a range of health services that support their general physical health and emotional well-being. These include a dedicated mental health practitioner who works directly with them. Workers offer both practical and emotional support. However, not all pathway plans capture opportunities and activities that will help care leavers to stay healthy.
41. Many care leavers are helped to stay in education, employment and training and to achieve their career and further education goals. When things are difficult or they need help with future options, care leavers are appropriately signposted to youth employability services and weekly drop-in sessions that provide practical help, advice and guidance. Care leavers who are not in employment, training or education are supported to return at a time that is

right for them. Leaders are taking appropriate action to expand the range of opportunities for care leavers, for example through access to council-led mentoring schemes, apprenticeships or work experience, or links to local businesses and the culture sector.

42. The local offer, co-created with care leavers, contains helpful information about the wide range of financial and practical support, specialist advice and services that are available to them. A small number of aspects of the offer are not sufficiently explicit, including access to the dedicated mental health practitioner and prescriptions. Care leavers living in East Sussex receive council tax exemptions, but those living elsewhere do not.
43. Care leavers in custody are visited regularly and receive encouragement to access opportunities that will positively support them on their return to their community. Personal advisers work well with families and other professionals to plan in advance for their return.
44. Former unaccompanied asylum-seeking care leavers are well supported by a specialist team of practitioners who are experienced and skilled in understanding the impact of earlier life experiences and trauma and supporting them with their asylum applications.
45. Care leavers who are young parents receive good levels of support, practical help and guidance on becoming a new parent. There is also appropriate support for care leavers who live separately from their child.
46. The needs and vulnerabilities of care leavers aged over 21 are identified and addressed within visits and other contact, but the records of these activities are not sufficiently clear. Their progress and development are not captured well at regular intervals. This makes it difficult for care leavers to look back and see their progress when reading their records.
47. Most care leavers live in accommodation that meets their needs and where they feel safe. This includes staying with former carers, returning to family, or living in supported accommodation or in private or council-rented homes. A small number of care leavers live in unsuitable accommodation; they are being provided with support to help them move into something more suitable.
48. Good use is made of the annual children in care and care leavers survey to understand the experiences of care leavers and identify areas for development, especially around emotional well-being and loneliness. Managers acknowledge the need to improve engagement and to strengthen direct opportunities for the voices and experiences of care leavers to influence service development.

The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families: good

49. Services that support vulnerable children are a shared and unifying priority in East Sussex. The chief executive, lead member and director of children's services are well informed by the frequent and varied occasions when they meet with children and care leavers to hear them talk about their experiences. This feedback helps to shape services and plans. Leaders are exploring how they can better enable children to contribute routinely to corporate parenting board meetings.
50. Investment in early help services, and current work to establish a new multidisciplinary model for locality teams, as well as plans to enable the specialist SWIFT services to deliver support at an earlier point, demonstrate the corporate commitment to delivering sustainable and impactful support for children.
51. Regular reporting to the chief executive when children are placed in unregistered children's homes, and the monthly review of the children who are assessed as being at the highest risk or highly vulnerable, mean that the challenges that children and families experience are understood at a senior level.
52. Leaders are realistic in their self-evaluation and are clear about the areas where improvements are needed. For example, they are aware that children's and care leavers' plans are not consistently SMART and they are taking appropriate action to improve quality.
53. Positive reports from the judiciary and the Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), along with feedback from designated safeguarding leads in schools, confirm senior managers' commitment to delivering effective partnership working. The highly valued and effective FDAC service is an example of their determination to work collaboratively to provide the right support to children and families.
54. Leaders have created a range of effective specialist services, including connected coaches, who provide intensive support to children on the edge of care or who are returning to live with their families, in response to the escalating volume and complexity of children's needs.
55. A wide range of performance information is reported and analysed to help to identify trends in demand and assess the impact of the support provided. However, in a small number of areas, incomplete data inhibits an up-to-date understanding of the needs of children and care leavers. Leaders know this and have plans to improve the data available to them.

56. For some of the most vulnerable children, including those subject to PLO pre-proceedings, there is insufficiently rigorous tracking and oversight of progress to ensure that plans are implemented at the right pace for children.
57. An extensive quality assurance framework helps leaders to maintain clear oversight of activity. Audits provide leaders with a line of sight to frontline practice and are well received by the workforce as an opportunity to pause and reflect on their practice.
58. The quality and impact of supervision are very variable and mean that practitioners, and thereby children, do not always benefit from effective management direction and challenge. Records of supervision are not consistently detailed.
59. The long-standing stability of the workforce enables well-rooted relationships to develop with children and care leavers in East Sussex. Leaders make no secret of the fact that the workforce is their most valuable asset. Staff retention rates are impressive, and time after time inspectors saw children and care leavers who have developed trust and confidence in workers, many of whom have supported them for long periods of time.
60. Workers stay in East Sussex because they feel valued and supported to do well. They hold manageable caseloads and are able to visit children regularly to build effective relationships. They speak highly of the support that they receive from practice managers and they value the range and frequency of learning and development opportunities. These opportunities help workers to develop their professional skills, as well as those who want to progress their careers into more senior roles.
61. Inspectors had the pleasure of meeting a group of articulate, caring and kind young people, all of whom said that they felt safe and had someone to turn to as a trusted adult.

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6 February 2024

Add recipient details (local authority to complete)

To the children and young people in East Sussex

Inspection of children's services

In December 2023, Ofsted inspectors visited your area. They looked at children and young people's experiences of the help, protection and care given to them by workers at the local authority. They also looked at what leaders at the local authority do to make these services better.

We have asked the workers at the local authority to share this letter with you. It tells you the main things that inspectors found. There is a more detailed report on our website that you can read if you would like to.

What grades did inspectors give the local authority?

Judgement	Grade
The impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families	Good
The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection	Good
The experiences and progress of children in care	Outstanding
The experiences and progress of care leavers	Good
Overall effectiveness	Good

What did the inspectors find?

- Children in East Sussex continue to receive consistently strong and effective support that helps to improve their lives. When children or families need help, this is provided as soon as possible. If children are at risk, social workers and other professionals take action to make them safer.
- Children are helped by experienced social workers who visit them regularly and know them well. Sometimes specialist workers also become involved, so that the right additional support is provided. Specialist services, such as connected coaches and the collaboration against child exploitation (CACE) group for parents, make a big difference to children's lives.
- For a small number of children, the plans created to support them and their families are not clear enough.
- When children are unable to live with their parents or other family members, they live with local foster families or in other homes, where they feel safe and supported.
- Children who cannot live with their families are often supported by the same social worker for a long time. Children get to know and trust their workers, who help them to keep in touch with their friends and family, because they know this is important.
- Older children leaving care are supported to get to know and trust their personal advisers, who provide them with ongoing help as they become adults. Most care leavers receive good support, although sometimes it is not ambitious enough.
- Children in care and care leavers participate in forums and have a voice. Managers look carefully at the feedback completed by children in care and care leavers, and they are looking for more opportunities to increase involvement in discussions about how they can provide the best support.
- Leaders in the council want to do the right things for children and their families. Social workers and personal advisers love working in East Sussex because they feel valued and supported.
- Inspectors had the pleasure of meeting a group of articulate, caring and kind children and young people, all of whom said that they feel safe and have someone to turn to as a trusted adult.

Yours faithfully

Tom Anthony
Lead inspector
His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted ILACS Action Plan 2024

Improvement Area	Actions	Lead(s)	Timescale
The quality of plans for children and care leavers so that they are all specific, measurable and timebound	<p>Child's Plan and Care Leavers Pathway plan steering group to develop enhanced guidance and implement workforce development plan to strengthen consistency of SMART plans.</p> <p>Case audits to include greater focus on plans being specific, measurable and timebound.</p>	<p>Nicola McGeown (Principal Social Worker)</p> <p>Chris Jackson (HoS Locality)</p> <p>Sally Carnie (HoS Looked After Children)</p>	May 2024
The recording of management oversight, supervision and direction.	<p>Relaunch of Supervision policy across all Practice Managers and Operational Managers.</p> <p>Further development of guidance on recording with mandatory attendance at training.</p> <p>Supervision audit redesigned to include sharper focus on recording of management oversight and challenge</p>	Nicola McGeown, (Principal Social Worker)	June 2024
The oversight, timeliness and rigour of the response to children:	<p>Roll out of Neglect Toolkit across teams</p> <p>Implementation of multi-agency neglect forum.</p>	Nicola McGeown, (Principal Social Worker)	In progress
(i) experiencing neglect, including children in the Public Law Outline pre proceedings and	<p>Implement improvements to Public Outline Tracker and include in performance reporting dashboard.</p> <p>Deliver targeted training on parental assessments to improve timeliness.</p>	<p>Chris Jackson, (HoS Locality)</p> <p>Chris Jackson, (HoS Locality)</p>	<p>March 2024</p> <p>June 2024</p>
(ii) in private fostering arrangements.	Revise and implement procedures regarding visits in private fostering cases (language schools).	Jo Nash, Strategic Lead MASH & DAT	April 2024

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 5 March 2024

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) transition arrangements and transfer of responsibilities to East Sussex County Council

Purpose: To advise Cabinet of the dissolution of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and the transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership responsibilities to Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs) from April 2024 with the inclusion of the SELEP Integration Plan and the approach, to date, on the draft East Sussex County Council Integration Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- (1) Note that the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) will be drawn to a close on 31 March 2024;**
- (2) Agree that Team East Sussex continues to operate after 31 March 2024 in an advisory capacity as the recognised business-led strategic economic growth board for East Sussex;**
- (3) Approve the final SELEP Integration Plan, set out in Appendix 1 of this report; and**
- (4) Approve the final East Sussex Integration Plan set out in Appendix 2 of this report.**

1 Background

1.1 In 2010, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) was constituted. SELEP covers the administrative geography of six Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLAs): East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Essex County Council, Kent County Council, Medway Council, Southend-on-Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.

1.2 SELEP has overseen the investment of over £650m in capital funding to improve road and housing infrastructure, commercial enterprise, skills and research and innovation which have supported its four strategic priorities of Business resilience and growth; UK's global gateway; Communities for the future, and Coastal Catalyst.

1.3 Through SELEP and Coast2Capital LEP funding programmes, East Sussex has benefited from the following secured investment:

- Over £100m of Local Growth Fund (LGF) capital grant funding has been secured and invested towards 23 economic growth and infrastructure projects.

- Over £23.5m of Growing Places Fund (GPF) capital loan funding has been secured and invested in eight projects in the county.
- Over £6m of Getting Building Fund (GBF) capital grant funding has been secured and invested in eight projects.
- SELEP Sector Support Fund provided small scale revenue funding for 21 innovative projects that derived from the SELEP working groups.
- SELEP has also supported numerous other East Sussex initiatives during its lifetime. Highlights include working on the EU funded European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF) programmes which helped deliver multi-million pound investment into projects like South East Business Boost (SEBB), South East Invest (SEI), South East Creative, Cultural and Digital Support (SECCADS) and numerous ESF skills projects which all supported significant outcomes in East Sussex.

1.4 The Government's Levelling Up White Paper published in 2022 set out its commitment to extending devolution across England, empowering local leaders and integrating non statutory LEP functions into local democratic institutions. In March 2023, Government announced that it was 'minded to' not continue to fund LEP's from April 2024 onwards. In light of this, on 7 July 2023, SELEP's Strategic Board made the decision to close operations. In the LEP transition Government guidance issued on 4 August 2023, Government announced it would not continue to fund the national network of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) from 2024/25 stating that their functions should be integrated into UTLAs. As a result, SELEP operations are scheduled to close by 31 March 2024, with responsibilities transitioning to UTLAs from April 2024. The Company Directors of SELEP Ltd, including the Leader of the County Council, will therefore cease their Directorships on 31 March 2024. Moreover, the county council's role with all other upper tier authorities in the Joint Committee Agreement will cease on 31 March 2024.

1.5 Since August's decision, SELEP has focused on integration planning to enable a smooth and thorough transition to UTLAs. This has been broken down into five main workstreams: (1) Governance & Capital Programme; (2) Data & Intelligence; (3) Partnerships & Networks; (4) Growth Hub & Business Support and (5) Resourcing. In addition, a communications transition plan is in development.

1.6 In conjunction with SELEP's integration planning, the County Council has developed an East Sussex Integration Plan which aligns with SELEP's strategic approach but provides a localised transfer process for the responsibilities the council will assume.

1.7 Guidance was issued by Government around future arrangements and processes agreed for delivering LEP functions, in their technical guidance note of 4 August 2023 and complementary guidance note of 19 December 2023.

2 Supporting information

2.1 Officers of the Council have worked with SELEP towards the adoption (or continuation) of, broadly, the following three functions as, outlined by Government:

- **Business representation** – Government is encouraging UTLAs to create or continue to engage with an Economic Growth Board made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies. In East Sussex, Team East Sussex (TES) is a body already

established that substantially meets the brief set out in the Government guidance. The expectation, subject to any further guidance, is therefore for TES to continue to operate beyond the life of SELEP in an advisory capacity as the business-led strategic economic growth board for the county, providing the voice of business in steering the economic growth agenda for the county.

- **Strategic economic planning** - Government is encouraging areas to produce or update economic strategies to support local decision making. A new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy, is currently being jointly developed by the Council and TES and will, fulfil this requirement. The new Economic Growth Strategy will put the Council in a strong position to make the case for future access to government programmes.
- **The delivery of government programmes (where directed)** – This will require the Council to take on the role of ‘accountable body’ to oversee the future management and monitoring of the GPF capital loan programme as well as oversight of ongoing LGF and GBF capital grant programmes.

2.2 In order to successfully transfer functions from SELEP to UTLAs, a number of actions needed to be planned for and completed. To meet this objective, SELEP produced an integration plan which sets out the proposed programme for transferring these functions to each of the UTLAs, as well as the overall risks, assumptions, dependencies and milestones. The SELEP integration plan is attached at Appendix 1.

2.3 The County Council’s Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure service has co-ordinated ESCC’s overall response. Working closely with other teams including Legal, Finance, Audit, Communications, HR, Research & Information and, externally, the Chair of Team East Sussex, the service has developed the East Sussex Integration Plan reflecting the roles and responsibilities of both the County Council and Team East Sussex. This report is available at Appendix 2 and will be supported by a live version of the plan to ensure that that progress against actions continuing beyond the cessation of SELEP and into 2024/25 are recorded. An earlier draft version of the report was approved by the Leader of the Council at the 15 January Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development meeting and the final version has been endorsed by TES at their meeting on 29 January 2024.

2.4 To support the transition process and to inform the direction of any future government funding, the Government’s Cities and Local Growth Unit issued a request to UTLA’s to complete a LA/LEP functions integration plan by 30 Nov 2023. A copy of the ESCC response is available at Appendix 3. Confirmation from Government that our request to be an UTLA to transition the LEP functions is expected imminently.

Financial Implications

2.5 There is a need for resources to support the LEP transition process and to fulfil the responsibilities as programmes continue beyond April 2024. The Government has confirmed it would provide some revenue funding to UTLAs in 2024/25 to support the transition of functions. Government announced in January that each approved UTLA will be able to access up to £240,000. Although this amount will be welcomed it is expected that delivery of the transferred functions cannot be delivered with this amount and will require existing staff resources to be applied to support the transition of LEP functions. It will therefore be necessary to consider the resource requirements as part of the annual budget setting process.

2.6 At the SELEP Strategic Board meeting on 13 October 2023 it was agreed to support and endorse the option that the Growing Places Fund (circa £39m) would be disaggregated to each UTLA. Final GPF allocations are intended to be agreed and confirmed at the SELEP Accountability Board meeting on 16 February 2024. Subject to outstanding loan repayments being made this will positively support a future locally led East Sussex GPF recyclable loan programme. However, should these existing loans not be repaid, there will be an impact on the Council's ability to support any future loans that may benefit other organisations.

Legal implications

2.7 In order to record the practical arrangements of the transition process, legal agreements are being prepared by SELEP/Essex County Council, with support from the County Council's legal and governance services and will be finalised over the coming weeks. These will include the novation of accountable body funding agreements for capital programmes, and confirmation that the existing arrangements with loan and grant recipients will not be adversely affected by the transfer of Accountable Body responsibility to the County Council.

2.8 A new assurance framework will be required to provide local scrutiny, checks, balances, accountability to the public and to the Government (as outlined in 2.13) . The Team East Sussex (TES) Terms of Reference will also need to be updated.

Equalities Impact Assessment

2.9 It is not anticipated that there will be any negative equalities and diversity impacts resulting from the transition of SELEP responsibilities to the county council. All programmes, activities and policies adopted at a local level will adhere to Public Sector Equality Duty requirements. A final Equalities Impact Assessment will be produced alongside the East Sussex Integration Plan.

Corporate Resourcing

2.10 The County Council's Economy Division, working alongside external partners and internal colleagues across the council, will continue to lead the integration process through 2024/25, allocating programme management resources from existing teams to ensure a smooth transition.

2.11 Support from finance and legal colleagues will be required to ensure the County Council's interests are protected as ongoing responsibilities are transferred and future arrangements and processes are established.

Governance and Reporting

2.12 Reporting arrangements for existing programmes are expected to report directly to relevant government departments rather than SELEP from April 2024. Ongoing oversight of the GPF loans programme will follow in accordance with the council's new Corporate Loans and Grants Statement and Framework. We intend to establish an internal Oversight Programme Board to provide reports and seek any major approvals and work is currently underway to establish appropriate oversight and governance processes.

2.13 As outlined above, guidance from Government on the LEP transition, has been issued in [their guidance note of 4 August 2023](#) and [complementary guidance note of 19 December 2023](#). We have been informed that information on the assurance of legacy funds will be sent before end of March and is expected to be risk based without any additional monitoring requirements. As

such, the monitoring requirements will include two biannual monitoring reports from the accountable bodies until March 2025.

3 Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 The government's decision to allocate non statutory LEP responsibilities to Upper Tier Local Authorities by 31 March 2024 will provide a range of opportunities for the County Council and its stakeholder partners across East Sussex to have more freedom in setting strategic priorities and accelerating programmes of activity to support local economic growth.

3.2 The County Council is ideally placed to take on former LEP responsibilities with our very successful track record in developing, delivering and evaluating impactful economic growth initiatives in the county and with a proven ability to convene partners and stakeholders to work together for the benefit of local businesses and residents. The LEP transition will give the council the opportunity to build on the existing management and oversight of the capital programme, through which it has successfully met ongoing financial, legal and reporting requirements since SELEP was formed, whilst enabling a more localised oversight and decision-making process through the introduction and maintenance of additional governance and programme management functions.

3.3 As such, Cabinet is asked to note that SELEP will draw to close on 31 March 2024 and to approve both the SELEP and East Sussex Integration Plans. Cabinet is also asked to approve, subject to Government guidance, the proposal that Team East Sussex will continue to operate in an advisory capacity as the recognised business-led strategic economic growth board for East Sussex.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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SOUTH EAST
LOCAL ENTERPRISE
PARTNERSHIP

INTEGRATION PLAN

December 2023

SELEP INTEGRATION PLAN

DECEMBER 2023

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Section 1: Introduction and Context

Section 2: Current and Proposed Position

Section 3: Risks, Assumptions and Dependencies

Section 4: Work Plan for Integrating LEP Functions

Section 5: Governance Timeline

Section 6: Communications Plan

1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) was constituted in 2010 covering the administrative geography of six Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLA) and twenty-nine District, Borough and City Councils. It has been built on a foundation of strong governance and assurance processes, supported by Essex County Council (ECC) as the Accountable Body. Governance evolved further, as Government required the partnership to formally constitute as a Company Limited by Guarantee. SELEP Ltd was formed in 2020 and our 20 Directors offering political, business and academic representation provide a truly collaborative partnership of the public and private sector, alongside Government, to drive economic growth across the region.

Over more than 10 years, SELEP has successfully overseen the investment of over £650m in capital grants to improve road and housing infrastructure, commercial enterprise, skills and research and innovation and has strengthened the business voice to work strategically on sectoral and thematic opportunities across the region. It has been driven by robust data and intelligence and collaborative strategic planning to ensure focus and effective prioritisation.

In August 2023, Government announced it would not continue to fund LEPs from 2024/25 and that their functions should be integrated into UTLAs. This evolution of policy, as part of the Government's devolution agenda, has led to the SELEP Strategic Board taking the decision, in July 2023, to integrate the LEP functions and resource into the UTLAs by 31st March 2024. This is to provide the greatest clarity and continuity to all partners, and in particular the business community and the SELEP team.

SELEP has therefore embarked on integration planning and to structure the process, the work has been broken down into five workstreams, each led by a member of the SELEP team:

- Governance & Capital Programme
- Data & Intelligence
- Partnerships & Networks
- Growth Hub & Business Support
- Resourcing

Following the draft plan being agreed by Strategic Board in October, we have evolved the final plan to set out the following:

- work completed and decisions already made;
- specific tasks still to undertake and timelines;
- remaining decisions, risks and updated critical path.

Please note that this document is designed to provide an overall LEP wide plan for integration. Local authority areas are developing their own integration plans that will detail the local context, implications, resources and decision making, including future ways of working e.g. Business/Local Economic Growth Boards and partnership arrangements.

OVERALL AIMS AND OUTCOMES

Aim: To fully integrate LEP functions within UTLAs by 31st March 2024.

Outcomes: A successful integration will mean that from 1st April 2024:

- ✓ Current SELEP accountability arrangements are concluded, with ongoing responsibilities transferred to UTLAs under new agreements¹.
- ✓ Future arrangements and processes are agreed for delivering LEP functions, as set out in Governments letter of 4th August and subsequent guidance.
- ✓ New Growth Hub accountable bodies are agreed and fully prepared for taking on functions that will enable delivery of business navigation services across Greater Essex, Kent & Medway, and East Sussex (subject to funding allocations being confirmed by the Department for Business and Trade).
- ✓ SELEP generated reports, data and analysis are shared and an agreed archive is in place, enabling UTLAs to take the lead in data analysis for their areas with ongoing access to sources used by the LEP.
- ✓ All current SELEP partnerships have a clear future direction with new support arrangements in place where required.
- ✓ UTLAs are resourced to undertake LEP functions and successful integration of SELEP resource to the UTLAs has taken place, where agreed.
- ✓ Closure activities in relation to SELEP Ltd are in progress.

¹ Please note this is subject to further clarification and may only be applicable to funding.

2. CURRENT AND PROPOSED POSITION

This section headlines the current and proposed positions for integration of the main areas of LEP functions. Section 4 supports this by outlining the areas of work, tasks and actions to be taken to achieve integration. **Please note** that these are all subject to ongoing local discussions, as well as central and local decision making.

	CURRENT	PROPOSED (2024/25 onward)
Governance and Capital Programme	Management and administration of LGF, GBF and GPF by SELEP, supported by ECC as the Accountable Body for the funding and underpinned by the SELEP Assurance Framework.	Management of LGF, GBF and GPF ² by UTLAs for their own projects. The UTLAs will assume Accountable Body status and report directly to Government, where required, on their projects. Local Governance arrangements in place and will work to a new Assurance Framework, an amendment of the English Devolution Framework, which will be supplied by Government.
Growth Hub	Central strategic co-ordination of Growth Hub operations and administration of funding, supported by ECC as the Accountable Body for the funding.	Three independent Growth Hubs ³ , each having an Accountable Body for administration of funding and reporting directly to Government.
Partnerships	Sectoral/thematic independent working groups convened and supported by the SELEP secretariat ⁴ , with membership from a wide range of partners, both public and private sector. SELEP is a member of the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENGH) Board of 11 consortia LEPs, responsible for providing strategic steer, maintaining a governance structure and making recommendations for funding allocations.	The following groups will continue to be offered secretariat support by UTLAs: SECEN; Major Projects Group (MPG); and Housing and Development. It is proposed this is initially committed to for a 12 month period to enable the integration and future ways of working to embed. (To note, the Skills sub-group of MPG will also continue; supported by the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB)). Three UTLA representatives to replace SELEP on the GSENGH Board, representing functional economic areas. This change to current arrangements is subject to evolving Hub governance arrangements.
Resources & Information	SELEP resources, including the Secretariat (the team), websites, information, data, data tools held and funded by SELEP, all residing with ECC as Accountable Body.	Members of the SELEP secretariat will transition to UTLAs, where possible, to continue to support integrated functions and potentially wider, in line with the agreed SELEP and local integration plans, as will any other resources that have ongoing application.

² GPF decision taken at Strategic Board, October 2023 but remains subject to a subsequent decision by the SELEP Accountability Board in February 2024 to approve funding allocations.

³ Working proposal is that lead authorities will be East Sussex County Council, Essex County Council and Kent County Council and will be subject to 2024/25 funding allocations being received from DBT.

⁴ Please note the structure and operating models of the working groups differ, and as such the level of support provided by SELEP and the engagement by UTLAs has varied across groups.

3. RISKS, ASSUMPTIONS AND DEPENDENCIES

INTEGRATION RISK REGISTER

KEY RISK	MITIGATIONS	OWNER
Delay of further Government guidance to UTLAs and the quality, coverage and completeness of that guidance (<i>current expectation is that it will be released in January 2024</i>).	Planning will continue to take place, so we are in the strongest place to progress once guidance is received. Development of back up proposal ('Plan B') that could be implemented if guidance and approvals were not received in time to undertake work to meet the 29/03/24 deadline.	SELEP
Lack of formal response from Government regarding future accountable body arrangements and how these will be implemented.	As above. Further clarifications have been received from DLUHC (3/11/23) which indicate Government is comfortable with having more than one AB across the LEP. This presents an indication that a swift formal response would be received with further clarification on how it should be achieved.	AB
Agreement between Government and all partners cannot be reached on future accountable body status.	ECC, as current AB, would remain accountable under current arrangements until March 2025. Funding would need to be agreed to support this work and may include a requirement for continuation of the Accountability Board supported by a revised Assurance Framework and Partnership Agreement. ECC could challenge this directly with Government.	AB
Late confirmation of funding arrangements for the Growth Hub and impact on continuity of service.	Continue with planning and preparation, including progressing market engagement, procurement and/or waivers as far as possible, on the basis that funding is forthcoming. Seek alternative means to temporarily underwrite the cost of the service to enable continuity ⁵ . Prepare holding communications including signposting in the event of a temporary break in service.	UTLAs
Reduction in/insufficient capacity within Secretariat to progress the integration in a timely manner.	Continue to support staff and monitor workload. Undertake staff consultation (informally or formally as required) in a robust and orderly way to provide clarity about future opportunities at the earliest opportunity. Seek secondment or external support should capacity reduce any further.	SELEP
Reduction in/insufficient capacity within UTLAs.	Closely monitor progress across the LEP and UTLAs to flag any capacity issues that may impede our ability to progress.	UTLAs

⁵ such costs can be claimed back on receipt of Growth Hub grant where this is in line with the Grant Agreement with DBT.

Reduction/insufficient capacity within the accountable body to undertake tasks to facilitate integration in a timely manner.	Continue to identify additional activities that the AB will need to undertake aligned to integration. Continue to monitor workload. Seek additional internal support if required.	AB
Speed and timings of formal decision-making processes within individual UTLAs impedes ability to meet March deadline.	Governance timeline continues to be monitored and updated to ensure a collective understanding of when and how decisions are being taken by all partners. If these cannot be met due to external delays, then Plan B may need to be implemented and governance timelines reset.	UTLAs
Misalignment of decision-making processes within all UTLAs to the SELEP timetable and 31st March 2024 deadline.	As above.	SELEP
Uncertainties over future Government support and funding.	Continue to push Government on timely funding decisions for LAs to undertake LEP functions including 2024/25 GH funding allocations.	All
Difficulty accessing information and data relating to SELEP activities following integration.	Future reporting requirements to be kept under review as part of Governance workstream. SELEP website to be retained for an agreed period post March 2024 as a key source of SELEP reports, data and decision-making. AB and UTLAs to retain and archive relevant information as required. Specific data and contacts to be reviewed and shared with UTLAs in line with GDPR guidance.	SELEP
Reputational risk of poor or disjointed communications, both within the partnership (SELEP and UTLAs) and with external stakeholders.	Continued development and monitoring of our communications plan. Facilitation of a virtual comms group between SELEP and UTLAs to ensure timely and consistent communications. Updating and sharing of the key messages paper.	SELEP
Retaining/securing the appropriate capacity and structures to complete residual LEP activity post SELEP Ltd closure.	Ascertain as soon as possible what the residual activities are and who is required to undertake them, noting that this may include additional internal resource to deliver. The costs for delivering this service will need to be funded from the residual SELEP budget, subject to approval by the Accountability Board.	AB

ASSUMPTIONS

To ensure successful integration, the work is progressing based on the following assumptions:

- There is sufficient resource in place within UTLAs, including the Accountable Body, to support the integration process.
- Sufficient Growth Hub funding will be forthcoming for 2024/25 service delivery.
- Government advice and funding commitments will be made in good time to allow preparation, implementation and, where needed, procurement of new delivery arrangements (especially for the Growth Hubs).
- UTLAs, where applicable, will accept and accommodate any delays caused by late receipt of Growth Hub funding confirmation, to administration of that funding, and procurement and/or recruitment for ongoing service delivery.
- That SELEP Boards remain quorate and can take all necessary and timely decisions to complete the integration plan.

DEPENDENCIES

A successful and timely integration will require:

- Early confirmation of geographical coverage of new Accountable Body arrangements.
- Government advice being received at the right time.
- Government function and funding confirmations for UTLAs received by January 2024.
- All local authority formal decision making concluded by March 2024, ahead of March SELEP Strategic Board.

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

There are a number of themes that cut across the workstreams:

- **Communications** – SELEP will need to communicate clearly with stakeholders during the integration process and provide links/sign posting to UTLAs that will be taking on LEP functions so that the UTLAs are able to undertake their own communications activity.
- **Resourcing** - An additional workstream convenes around resourcing to understand requirements for the integration phase as well as for each UTLA post integration. This includes confirming the resource and revenue needs and the proposed use of residual LEP funds (this will be subject to a decision by the Accountability Board).
- **Information** –Agreement will need to be reached regarding the information currently held by the LEP, such as that on its website and other documentation, on whether and how to retain, integrate or discard.
- **Governance** – Mapping the timelines for decision making across the LEP and 6 UTLAs is crucial to understanding the overall integration timetable.

CRITICAL PATH

Below is a programme which articulates the critical dependencies and milestones. A delay to these dates could put the Board objective of achieving integration by the 31st March 2024 at risk. The timeline has been developed with the following dependencies and assumptions:

- The completion dates are the dates by which the activity needs to be fully concluded, enabling integration.
- The critical milestones need to be achieved to secure a successful transition of LEP functions to UTLAs by the 31st March. Any delay to these critical milestones will put this date at risk.
- Growth Hub funding allocations and grant offer letters for 2024/25 are required for provision of the Growth Hub service.
- There are statutory timescales that cannot be shortened.
- If it is possible to commence activity prior to the start date shown in the programme then we should do so to help resource management.
- Key meeting dates for UTLAs have been identified by officers. Maintaining these dates for key decisions on LEP integration will be vital to ensure the 31st March 2024 date for integration is achieved.
- That there will be residual activities, such as audits and accounting that will need to take place post transition, regardless of the timeline.

Key:

Activity
Statutory or Contractual Period
Critical Dependency/Milestone

Milestone	Comments	Who	Start Date	Completion Date	18-Sep	25-Sep	02-Oct	09-Oct	16-Oct	23-Oct	30-Oct	06-Nov	13-Nov	20-Nov	27-Nov	04-Dec	11-Dec	18-Dec	25-Dec	01-Jan	08-Jan	15-Jan	22-Jan	29-Jan	05-Feb	12-Feb	19-Feb	26-Feb	04-Mar	11-Mar	18-Mar	25-Mar	01-Apr					
Governance and Capital Programme																																						
Future AB arrangements agreed by all UTLAs		UTLA	18-Sep-23	13-Oct-23	■	■																																
Proposals for new AB arrangements sent to Gov't	Supported by new or updated legal agreements	SS, UTLA	16-Oct-23	20-Oct-23				■																														
Decision from Gov't on AB status		DLUHC	23-Oct-23	01-Dec-23						■	■	■	■	■	■																							
Formal decision making in relation to UTLA and AB function	UTLAs identified meeting dates	UTLA	19-Dec-23	14-Feb-24														■			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
Determine future for GPF	Paper at 13/10 SELEP Board	SS	13-Oct-23	08-Dec-23	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Implement selected option for GPF	Final Decision SELEP Board 8/12/23	SS, UTLA	11-Dec-23	29-Mar-24																	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Submission of LEP integration template to DLUHC	Confirming geography, functions, resourcing etc.	UTLA	16-Oct-23	30-Nov-23					■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Formal Decision to close Joint Committee		UTLA	19-Dec-23	14-Feb-24															■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	
Receipt of new Assurance Framework for 2024/25	Amended English Devolution Framework.	DLUHC	31-Jan-24	31-Jan-24																					■													
Process for transfer of projects to new AB arrangements		SS, UTLA	08-Jan-24	29-Mar-24																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Post Transition requirements	Preparation of accounts and Audit	AB	25-Mar-24																																			
Resourcing																																						
Confirmation of future role profiles	Critical for all resourcing activity	UTLA	18-Sep-23	29-Sep-23	■	■	■																															
45 Day consultation	Statutory timescale	AB	02-Oct-23	24-Nov-23			■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Confirm outcomes and moves to new posts		SS, AB, UTLA	27-Nov-23	15-Dec-23											■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Notice Periods	Contractual timescale	SS, AB	08-Jan-24	31-Mar-24																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Growth Hub																																						
Confirm service delivery approach and Accountable Body x3	Determine if in house or procured service	UTLA	18-Sep-23	24-Nov-23	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Indication of Government Funding for 2024/25	Autumn Statement confirmed 2024/25 funding	Government		22-Nov-23																																		
Pre-procurement market engagement	Engage market prior to procurement	UTLA	27-Nov-23	12-Jan-24																																		
Procurement	Accelerated by pre-procurement engagement	UTLA	08-Jan-24	19-Feb-24																				■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Confirmation of Government funding	Notional allocations and grant offer letter	DBT		19-Feb-24																																		
Provider Selection and Mobilisation		UTLA	26-Feb-24	25-Mar-24																																		
Post Transition requirements	2023/24 Annual Report and financial Audit	AB	25-Mar-24																																			
Partnerships & Networks																																						
Greater South East Net Zero Hub - develop preferred option	Confirm options with GSENZH	SS, UTLA	23-Oct-23	22-Dec-23																																		
Greater South East Net Zero Hub - implement process																																						
Process to transition selected working groups	Establish new support resource as required	SS, UTLA	05-Feb-24	22-Mar-24																																		
SELEP Board Meetings																																						
SELEP Accountability Board	Budget considerations, High risk reporting	SELEP		22-Sep-23	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SELEP Strategic Board	Draft Transition Plan, GPF options	SELEP		13-Oct-23				■																														
SELEP Strategic Board	Final Integration Plan	SELEP		08-Dec-23												■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
SELEP Accountability Board	Transition of agreements. Decision for GBF.	SELEP		12-Jan-24																																		
SELEP Accountability Board	Wrap up Capital Programme (High Risk)	SELEP		16-Feb-24																																		
SELEP Strategic Board	Company closure. Exit of Framework Agreement	SELEP		22-Mar-24																																		
Key External Dates																																						
Autumn Statement 2023				22-Nov-23																																		
Publication of further Government guidance & funding to LAs	No firm date from Government			08-Jan-24																																		

4. WORK PLAN FOR INTEGRATING LEP FUNCTIONS

The SELEP team have worked to fully scope each core functional area of work. Five workstreams were established in August for each function to share information, knowledge and expertise with UTLAs. UTLAs nominated relevant colleagues to join these workstreams and in addition there have been monthly meetings of the LEP Senior Officers Group to monitor overall progress in drafting the plan.

The section below sets out the key milestones, deliverables and decisions needed to fully integrate LEP functions into local authorities by March 2024. This is set out by quarter and by party. Monthly monitoring of this plan takes place to understand progress and to review risks and actions.

Key

Accountable Body (AB); Accountable Body Finance (ABF); Accountable Body Legal (ABL); SELEP Accountability Board (ACB); East Sussex County Council (ESCC); Essex County Council (ECC); Growth Hub (GH); Kent County Council (KCC); Medway Council (MC); SELEP Secretariat (SS); Southend-on-Sea City Council (SCC); SELEP Strategic Board (SB); Thurrock Council (TC); Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLA); SELEP Based Working Groups (WG).

Workstreams: Governance and Capital Programmes (G&CP); Growth Hub and Business Support (GH&BS); Data and Intelligence (D&I); Partnerships and Networks (P&N); Resourcing (RS).

2023/24 QUARTER 3: OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2023 (CURRENT)

	WORK-STREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	WORK COMPLETED/ DECISIONS TAKEN	WORK TO BE COMPLETED/DECISIONS TAKEN BEFORE 31 ST DECEMBER
Milestones	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement reached between the AB, the UTLAs and with Government as to the AB arrangements for 2024/25 onwards. 	Formal letter submitted to Government from SELEP and the AB to confirm the proposed future AB arrangements.	Chase for letter response if not received. SELEP (ECC as AB) to hold a meeting with UTLA Monitoring Officers.
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified all data and intelligence resources. 	Summary of all data products and sources shared with UTLAs.	UTLAs to establish local needs for economic data analysis and reporting.
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all partnerships and networks that SELEP manages and/or provides secretariat and project management support. 	Comprehensive spreadsheet of all existing partnerships and networks that are managed/supported by SELEP was shared with UTLAs.	UTLAs to assess their local partnerships and networks and consider how to utilise existing SELEP contacts moving forward.
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirmation of Accountable Bodies informed by 2023/24 grant documentation. 	2023/24 grant documentation shared. ESCC, KCC and ECC in principle agreed as new ABs for 2024/25 GH funding. 2024/25 GH funding confirmed in Autumn Statement. Future usage and access arrangements for three independent CRMs with Alcium confirmed. GH Steering Groups appraised of integration work.	Ongoing engagement with Government by all, requesting notional funding allocations and grant offer letters.
	RS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence staff consultation. 	UTLA job profiles received. Mapping exercise near completion.	Staff consultation documents issued/ process through which staff to be redeployed agreed. Staff engagement meetings.
Deliverables	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assembly of all project and programme information for novation/handover/archiving. SELEP website retention. 	SELEP has provided UTLAs with copies of the LGF and GBF SLAs. Costs identified for retaining SELEP website for 12 months.	Completion of the contracts' tracker. Process and timeline set out for novation/termination of grant agreements, incl. governance required to complete. ⁶

⁶ In preparation of and assuming agreement from Government on new AB arrangements.

	WORK-STREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	WORK COMPLETED/ DECISIONS TAKEN	WORK TO BE COMPLETED/DECISIONS TAKEN BEFORE 31ST DECEMBER
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing access and use of data. 	SELEP website updated with existing data products.	SELEP/AB to develop approach to GDPR and website legacy arrangements.
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing role and support arrangements (as required). 	Workstream identified three groups to continue to actively support and manage: SECEN, MPG, and HDG.	Agree UTLA hosts for each group that there will be ongoing support for. Begin assessment of what funding and support would be needed.
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing service delivery, including pre-market testing and procurement documents as required. 	ESIF Lessons Learnt and Knowledge Sharing webinar for business support and skills delivered, as part of SELEP's Legacy Programme.	Pre-procurement market testing and development of procurement material where required.
Decisions	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic coverage of new AB arrangements for the capital programme. Future deployment of Growing Places Fund. 	<p>Agreed that the 6 UTLAs will each have AB status for their capital programme.</p> <p>Strategic Board endorsed the approach to deployment of GPF on 13/10/23 to achieve best parity across UTLAs without ongoing arrangements post April 24 and further decision is sought at December Board.</p>	<p>Geographical coverage confirmed by UTLAs through DLUHC template submission 30/11/23.</p> <p>Further work to develop the GPF deployment will take place ahead of the decision by ACB to allocate the funding.</p> <p>Timeline for grant agreement amendments to be determined and shared.</p>
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agree optimum approach to management of data. Agree approach for ongoing subscriptions. 	<p>SELEP confirmed that existing licenses will cease at the end of 2023/24.</p> <p>SELEP provided UTLAs with costings and demos for future subscriptions as required.</p>	<p>UTLAs to establish local needs for economic data analysis and reporting.</p> <p>UTLAs to consider whether there will be an individual or collective approach to data management and analysis.</p> <p>UTLAs to confirm individual/collective needs for ongoing subscriptions.</p>
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each Group to confirm ongoing activities and way of working. 	All working group Chairs informed of the workstream decision on the provision of ongoing support.	Plan final meetings for groups that are closing. Continue to engage with groups that will continue without ongoing support and connect these to UTLA contacts.

WORK-STREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	WORK COMPLETED/ DECISIONS TAKEN	WORK TO BE COMPLETED/DECISIONS TAKEN BEFORE 31 ST DECEMBER
		Groups that will not receive ongoing support post-March 2024 but have a continued wish to operate will be supported by SELEP until the end of the financial year.	Continue transition work and planning for groups that will be receiving ongoing support from the UTLAs, bringing in the UTLAs where they are not currently present.
GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm preferred delivery mechanism for Growth Hub functions, and procurement route. 	<p>ESCC to (continue to) deliver service in-house, no procurement or recruitment required. ECC confirmed in principle GH delivery mechanism for Essex, Southend and Thurrock.</p> <p>DBT and CLGU officials notified of proposed changes (new model and Accountable Bodies etc.) to secure support.</p>	<p>KCC to seek agreement from MC and KMPEP for GH delivery model and implementation plan.</p> <p>DBT to confirm that ongoing access to GH CRM by area Hubs complies with Knowledge management in line with Govt guidance.</p>

PROGRESS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CRITICAL PATH

The table below sets out any milestones on the critical path that were missed, along with the implications and actions.

ITEM	DEADLINE	ACTUAL	IMPLICATIONS
Proposals for new AB arrangements sent to Government.	16/10/23	TBC	The letter still requests a response deadline that, if met, would leave the critical path unaffected. The clarifications received in November give some assurance that the proposal will be agreed. The response to the letter will hopefully clarify how we enact this, which we are already working towards.
Confirmation of future resourcing demand in UTLAs and HR process.	29/09/23	31/10/23	Consultation timeline has been delayed as role profiles have taken a little longer and HR discussions are ongoing as to the best route of consultation. It is noted that for any members of staff that do not have secured positions, notice period would now go beyond 31 st March 2024.

2023/24 QUARTER 4: JANUARY – MARCH 2024

	WORKS TREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
Milestones	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New accountability arrangements in place with UTLAs. SELEP resource transfers agreed. Receipt of new Assurance Framework from Government. Establish ongoing reporting requirements 	Chase for Government letter response, if not received. Compile and share an overarching agreement to novate capital programme agreements to UTLAs ⁷	16/01/24	Consideration and sign off of draft agreement.	29/02/24
			Complete staff consultation, if required.	31/01/24	Confirmation of resource transfer, as required.	29/2/24
			Understand new Assurance Framework arrangements for 2024/25 from Government. Consideration of 'Plan B' in case March deadline cannot be met.	29/02/24 16/02/24	Understand and agree internal requirements to ensure adherence to the new Framework.	29/03/24
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New subscriptions in place for access to datasets, where desired. 	E-introductions and provider contact details to be shared with UTLAs where required.	31/01/24	Individual or collective license agreements in place where required.	29/03/24
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New arrangements in place for each partnership and network. 	Confirm host UTLA and ongoing resource provision – ideally a named individual – for SECEN, HDG and MPG.	17/01/24	UTLAS to confirm host organisation and resource provision for groups in the local integration plans.	31/01/24
			Confirm updated ToRs for SECEN, HDG and MPG.	15/03/24	Relevant UTLA officers engaged with SECEN, HDG and MPG in preparation for new arrangements.	15/03/24
Confirm three seats for our region on the updated GSENZH Board.			31/01/24	UTLAS nominate representatives to the new GSENZH Board.	28/02/24	

⁷ Exact actions are dependent on agreement from Government on how to enact new AB arrangements.

	WORKS TREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding allocations confirmed by DBT and Grant Offer Letters received. Ongoing service delivery plans concluded. 	Retire SEBH website and cease paying for current BEST and BES websites.	29/03/24	ECC and KCC to secure service providers/ staff where required, either at risk or delayed subject to receipt of grant offer letter from DBT. ECC, ESCC and KCC to arrange to keep or replace area GH web sites.	29/03/24
	RS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete staff consultation, if required. 	Process concluded in timings set.	31/01/24	UTLAs conclude any further actions needed re transition of resources.	29/02/24
Deliverables	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated or termination of grant agreements and Framework Agreement. New AB agreements for each UTLA. Preparations to wind up SELEP Ltd. Prepare documents for closure of Joint Committee/ACB. Revised agreements prepared (if required). Agree future of SELEP information (e.g. website content). SELEP investments impact. 	Grant agreement amendments undertaken ⁸ .	31/01/24	Internal preparation for grant agreement amendments.	15/01/24
			Grant amendments/ terminations to UTLAs	16/02/24	Review and sign off of grant amendments	15/03/24
			Identify any residual AB responsibilities needed post April.	31/01/24		
			Clear process for wind up activities developed.	31/01/24	Process agreed and factored into decision making, as required.	29/02/24
			Core paper for closure of Joint Committee (ACB) presented to SB and ACB.	22/03/24	Consideration and sign off of closure documents.	01/03/24
			Determine what information needs to be retained, how and by who.	29/02/24	Agree the approach to retention of SELEP information/ website.	
			Complete work to articulate the impact of SELEP investments.	29/02/24		
			15/03/24			

⁸ Specific tasks required are dependent on response from Government.

	WORKS TREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital programme position statement 	Prepare and submit a position statement to Government on the status of the capital programme prior to transition.			
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of updated data by SELEP at UTLA level, where required. Data sharing agreements in place, as required. 	Updated State of the Region report and supporting UTLA level data to be shared.	29/02/24	Data sharing agreements to be put in place with GH leads to enable GH data to be shared between relevant UTLAs. Additional data sharing agreements to be put in place where required to support economic data analysis.	29/03/24
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish updated terms of reference and details of ongoing resource support from UTLAs. Hold Partnerships Best Practice Webinar. Hold a Roundtable event re the future role of businesses in local growth. 	<p>Draft updated Terms of Reference, in partnership with UTLAs, for confirmation by each group of the new operating model.</p> <p>Online webinar to highlight learnings and best practice of successful partnership working.</p> <p>In person event, hosted by SELEP for LAs and businesses.</p>	<p>31/01/24</p> <p>29/02/24</p> <p>22/03/24</p>	<p>Confirm ongoing resource support and engagement for SECEN, HDG and MPG – for inclusion in ToRs.</p> <p>Active engagement in and support for event.</p> <p>Active engagement in and support for event.</p>	31/01/24
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UTLA communications strategy. Data sharing agreements (as required). 	<p>Cease SELEP CRM licence and access to SELEP GH CRM. SELEP GH data to be deleted by Alcium in line with GDPR.</p> <p>Download 2023/24 monitoring data (on 28 March 2024) required for GH Annual Report.</p> <p>Stand down SEBH Steering Group.</p> <p>Revoke Data Sharing Protocol.</p> <p>Handover Southeast GH Cluster and GH Network seats to UTLA GH leads.</p>	29/03/24	<p>Purchase 2024/25 CRM licences.</p> <p>Establish data sharing agreements as required between UTLAs.</p> <p>Review membership and ToRs of current GH Steering Groups and make fit for purpose in line with Government guidance.</p> <p>Launch of ‘new’ GH service and/or websites and contact information as required.</p>	29/03/24

	WORKS TREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
			Share national/regional business support contacts with UTLA GH leads as appropriate. Announce GH services/ funding for 2024/25 (as per SELEP comms plan)		Develop local approaches to secure match funding and resources/funding from third parties to enhance/support the GH service.	
Decisions	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal decision making to support new AB arrangements. Agree retention of SELEP information and data and any future host authority. Finalise the process for deploying GPF. Wind up SELEP Ltd. 	SB to agree closure process and documentation.	22/03/24	Decision making completed for new AB arrangements.	29/02/24
			Proposal completed for use and host of SELEP information.	16/02/24	Agreement of proposal.	29/02/24
			Decision taken by ACB.	16/02/24		
			Key decisions taken by SB and ACB.	22/03/24		
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm way forward for Greater South East Net Zero Hub. Confirm which UTLA/s will host the ongoing resource support for groups. 	Consult with the GSENGH as they draft their ToR. Noting expectation of three seats on the new Board.	29/03/24	Confirm membership of the new GSENGH, including any governance processes that need to take place for formal nominations.	29/03/24
			Consult with the UTLAs and update ToR to reflect new lead and ongoing resource support for SECEN, HDG and MPG. Transfer existing group resources to new lead LA.	31/01/24	Confirm lead organisations and specific resources for groups that will receive ongoing support. Host working group resources on website/database.	31/01/24
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service providers secured. Business support ecosystem maintenance. 			Maintain the business support ecosystem at the greater Essex, Kent and Medway, and East Sussex level, including cross-county collaboration.	29/03/24

2024/25 QUARTER 1: APRIL 2024+

	WORK STREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
Milestones	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New UTLA arrangements in place, supported by transferred resources, where agreed. ECC cease as SELEP's AB. Archiving of information. 	All closure tasks completed. AB to ensure all required and relevant information is appropriate archived.	April-June 24	Staff transition, where agreed. UTLAs take over management and monitoring under new AB arrangements, operating to requirements of new assurance framework.	April 24
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy arrangements in place for partners to access existing data. 	Agreed archive to be in place with confirmed timescales.	April 2024	UTLAS to access required data/reports and transfer to local systems.	April 2024-
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourced groups continue operating. 			SECEN, HDG and MPG are provided ongoing resource and support from host UTLA.	April 2024-
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Growth Hub services in delivery. 			Funding and resource in place (or being put in place) for continuation of GH service. Greater Essex, Kent and Medway, and East Sussex GH Steering Groups reviewed and operational. GH CRMs compliant with 2024/25 GH grant funding conditions and Monitoring and Evaluation guidance. Approaches developed to secure match funding and resources/funding from third parties to enhance/support the GH service.	April-June 2024

	WORK STREAM	OUTPUTS/ OUTCOMES	SELEP	DATE BY	UTLAS	DATE BY
Deliverables	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of Accounts and Audit requirements. Filing at Companies House with respect to wind-up of the company. Archiving of all SELEP based data and documentation. 	Completion and submission of accounts and audit for 2023/24 complete by AB. All required paperwork completed and filed with Companies House by AB.	June 2024? June 2024?	Local administration of new GPF funding.	April 2024 onwards
	D&I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative approaches to data and intelligence to be determined on a case-by-case basis. 			Collaboration and data sharing between UTLAs to enable economic analysis for functional economic areas. Ongoing engagement with wider regional partners and working groups (e.g. U9) to be set out in local integration plans.	
	P&N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing resource support in place to support continued operation of select groups. 			Host UTLAs and partner UTLAs continue to actively engage and support the ongoing work of SECEN, HDG and MPG.	April 2024-
	GH&BS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete outstanding 2023/24 grant funding obligations. 	Undertake Independent Audit of 2023/24 GH funding. Submit 2023/24 GH Annual Report.	June 2024	Input to 2023/24 GH Annual Report.	June 2024
Decisions	G&CP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future administration of Growing Places Fund. 	GPF monies transferred to UTLAs.	April 2024	Administration processes in place for receipt and use of GPF monies	April 2024

5. GOVERNANCE TIMELINE

Below is the Governance timeline which outlines the key points for integration. Included within here are key dates where we have them to indicate the timescales for UTLA decision making. This is based on the information we have at this point in time and may be subject to change.

Meeting	Key Decisions	Who	Date	2023												2024																					
				18-Sep	25-Sep	02-Oct	09-Oct	16-Oct	23-Oct	30-Oct	06-Nov	13-Nov	20-Nov	27-Nov	04-Dec	11-Dec	18-Dec	25-Dec	01-Jan	08-Jan	15-Jan	22-Jan	29-Jan	05-Feb	12-Feb	19-Feb	26-Feb	04-Mar	11-Mar	18-Mar	25-Mar						
SELEP Accountability Board meeting	Budget considerations, High risk reporting	SELEP	22-Sep-23																																		
KCC Growth & Economic Development Cabinet Committee	To seek agreement for KCC to adopt LEP functions from April 2024.	KCC	26-Sep-23																																		
TES Board meeting	To discuss and endorse the draft SELEP Integration Plan, possibly with early sight of the East Sussex Integration Plan headlines	TES/ESCC	09-Oct-23																																		
Southend Directorate Leadership Team meeting		SCC	12-Oct-23																																		
SELEP Strategic Board meeting	Draft Transition Plan, GPF Options	SELEP	13-Oct-23																																		
Southend Corporate Leadership Team meeting		SCC	25-Oct-23																																		
Thurrock Senior Leadership Team Meeting	To consider the Draft January Cabinet report	TC	08-Nov-23																																		
Southend Executive Briefing		SCC	13-Nov-23																																		
SELEP Accountability Board meeting	Meeting deferred to January 2024	SELEP	17-Nov-23																																		
ESCC Corporate Management meeting	To approve the draft SELEP Integration Plan, with the draft East Sussex Integration Plan provided as additional information.	ESCC	22-Nov-23																																		
SELEP Investment Panel meeting	Prioritisation of GBF	SELEP	01-Dec-23																																		
TES Board meeting	To discuss and endorse the final version SELEP Transition Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan (depending on its progress).	TES/ESCC	04-Dec-23																																		
Southend City Council Pre-Cabinet scrutiny		SCC	4-7 Dec 23 TBC																																		
Thurrock SLT meeting	To consider the Draft February Cabinet report	TC	06-Dec-23																																		
Thurrock Overview and Scrutiny Committee		TC	07-Dec-23																																		
SELEP Strategic Board meeting	Final Transition Plan	SELEP	08-Dec-23																																		
ECC Cabinet Meeting	CMA approval for Growth Hub new arrangements and additional functions ECC propose to pick up	ECC	19-Dec-23																																		
ESCC Cabinet Briefing meeting	To approve the final version SELEP Transition Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan.	ESCC	10-Jan-24																																		
Thurrock Council Cabinet meeting		TC	10-Jan-24																																		
Southend City Council Cabinet meeting		SCC	11-Jan-24																																		
SELEP Accountability Board meeting	Transition of agreements, Funding decision for GBF	SELEP	12-Jan-24																																		
ECC Cabinet Meeting	Cabinet Report approval for LEP and Accountable Body Transition arrangements	ECC	16-Jan-24																																		
ESCC Cabinet meeting	To approve the final version SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan	ESCC	23-Jan-24																																		
TES Workshop	To endorse the final version SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan	TES/ESCC	29-Jan-24																																		
ESCC Full Council meeting	To approve the final version SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan	ESCC	06-Feb-24																																		
Southend City Council Full Council		SCC	08-Feb-24																																		
Thurrock Council Cabinet Meeting		TC	14-Feb-24																																		
SELEP Accountability Board meeting	Wrap up Capital Programme (High Risk)	SELEP	16-Feb-24																																		
SELEP Strategic Board meeting	Company closure, Exit of Framework Agreement	SELEP	22-Mar-24																																		

6. COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Successful communication around integration looks like:

- Partners and organisations involved in the work of the LEP are aware of what activities are continuing and how these will be undertaken beyond March 2024.
- Levels of engagement with key partners and organisations is retained for those activities which will be continuing beyond March 2024.
- There is clear and consistent messaging across all UTLAs and representatives as to what ‘integration’ means for the area, focussing on the positive transfer of knowledge, expertise, and networks.

COMMUNICATION PRINCIPLES

Communications around integration need to be focussed on the functions and where there will be continuation of activity rather than the administrative background to the delivery of these. It is important to share messages around timelines and to manage expectation of partners. There is a risk around levels of engagement of existing partners and continuing work if communications are not careful in the terminology used.

Headline messages have been developed and following each Board meeting these will be revisited, tweaked and reshared with Board members and other partners to ensure clear and consistent messaging for all, across the area.

As part of the workstream communications considerations are being discussed, particularly around the channels, such as the website and continuation of our network and database.

General communications and messages do not include sharing of future arrangements and responsibilities with funders and those where SELEP holds contracts. This is more detailed work covered by each workstream.

EXTERNAL VS INTERNAL AUDIENCE

In our approach to communications, we anticipate most of the messages around integration will be aimed at our ‘internal’ audience. This means all those partners and organisations who are part of the LEP partnership and network.

APPROACH

As a cross cutting area of work, there is not a communications workstream but a more detailed Communications plan is being developed which flows out of the discussions and covers *what we need to say, to who, by when and how* and this will be shared with all workstream leads and a communications task and finish group will be brought together when needed to discuss key issues and agree a way forward.

WHAT DO WE NEED TO SAY - HEADLINE	TO WHO	BY WHEN	HOW	NOTES
Awareness that we are working to integrate LEP functions into UTLAS as required by government and further detail will follow.	Existing SELEP network	Summer 2023	Lines to take have been shared with Board members and included in the SELEP newsletter to the network.	Messaging shared in August 2023.
Further headlines regarding the approach and agreement of plan for integration.	Existing SELEP network	Post each Board meeting until March 2024	<p>Revised lines to take will be shared.</p> <p>Virtual comms group with leads for each UTLA is being established to make sure all areas are aware of the messages and terminology and to build relationships for creation of 'combined' messages which will be needed for March 2024.</p>	<p>Revised messaging shared at end of October following Strategic Board meeting with further detail for stakeholders as to how the future arrangements will look.</p> <p>Lines will be drafted after each key decision point.</p> <p>Ongoing correspondence with the communications group, the group will convene virtually when required</p>
Future arrangements for economic growth strategy, business voice and funding in each area, following further guidance from Government and progression of LA planning.	Existing SELEP network, wider business community, local networks	January/February 2024	Agreed messaging to be developed with the local areas which can be used by SELEP representatives and included on SELEP website and newsletter etc.	UTLAs to share their own messages – developed in collaboration for consistency.

Announcement of Growth Hub services/funding for 2024/25.				LEP supporting comms on ECC devolution plans with businesses.
Clarity of approach and arrangements for future accountability and management of economic growth funding.	Existing SELEP network	February 2024	Agreed messaging to be developed with the local areas which can be used by SELEP representatives and included on SELEP website and newsletter etc.	
Post March 2024 signposting to alternative contact details in each area. Closure of SELEP Ltd and thanks and appreciation to all those involved etc.	Existing SELEP network	Developed by February 2024 for use at end of March 2024	Message to be developed for use on SELEP website.	
Message to go to the existing Network data base to make them aware that another organisation will be looking after the Local Economic Growth agenda and type of work and do they wish to 'opt in'.	Existing SELEP network	To take place in January/February 2024	A message to be drafted and shared through the E-Shot software. Advice on process to be sought from Information Governance Team.	
Plan for activity to demonstrate impact and legacy of the work of SELEP and to ensure that the expertise, knowledge, networks, and partnerships that have been created are not lost.	Existing SELEP network and wider partnership	From November 2023 – March 2024	November 2023 - ESIF Learning Webinar. January 2024 - Capital Programme Impact. February 2024 - Partnerships best practice webinar and video. March 2024 – South East, Future of Local Growth, in person roundtable.	See Legacy Plan for further details. ESIF Webinar delivered 8 th November 2023.

East Sussex Integration Plan

Final draft, January 2024

(to be read in conjunction with the SELEP Integration Plan)



1. Introduction and context

Background to the LEP

The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) was constituted in 2010 covering the administrative geography of six Upper Tier Local Authorities (UTLA) and twenty-nine District, Borough and City Councils. It has been built on a foundation of strong governance and assurance processes, supported by Essex County Council (ECC) as the Accountable Body and each of the UTLAs acting as local accountable bodies (LABs).

Governance arrangements have evolved over the life of the LEP, with SELEP introducing a 'federated' structure in 2013 to enable decision-making at an even more localised level. More recently, as Government required the partnership to formally constitute as a Company Limited by Guarantee, 'SELEP Ltd' was formed in 2020 comprised of twenty Directors offering political, business and academic representation, providing for a collaborative partnership of the public and private sector alongside Government, to drive economic growth across the region. Throughout all of this, SELEP's governance has strictly adhered to Government's National Local Growth Assurance Framework.

Over more than a decade, SELEP has successfully overseen the investment of over £650m in capital grants to improve road and housing infrastructure, commercial enterprise, skills and research and innovation, and has strengthened the business voice to work strategically on sectoral and thematic opportunities across the region. It has been driven by robust data and intelligence and collaborative strategic planning to ensure focus and effective prioritisation.

The story in East Sussex

Working within the established SELEP governance structures, here in East Sussex our local accountable body is East Sussex County Council (ESCC). The Council is responsible for overseeing and managing the £130m of SELEP funded capital programmes received in the county, alongside working with regional partners on the wider SELEP activities that have been undertaken. As part of the agreed federated structure, *Team East Sussex* (TES) was established in 2014 as the federated East Sussex sub-board of SELEP, allowing for decision-making and project prioritisation at a local level.

TES is a business-led, private/public body, consisting of representation from all local authority leaders, further education, higher education, the voluntary and community sector, business representative bodies and business representatives. As well as being a federated SELEP sub-board, TES is also the strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, with a primary objective to drive forward economic growth and prosperity in the county of East Sussex. In pursuit of this aim, TES currently has the following key functions: Strategic direction and oversight; Pipeline development and capital programme oversight; Project consideration (prioritisation); Lobbying and promotion; Engagement; and SELEP activities. TES is supported by ESCC officers in a secretariat capacity.

Moving forward, TES has the ongoing support of the County Council and partners to continue to be the business-led, strategic advisory economic growth board for East Sussex and provide the voice of business in steering the economic growth agenda for the county.

A change of Government position on LEPs

Published in February 2022, the Government's Levelling Up White Paper (LUWP) set out its "pathway to devolution", signalling that LEP functions should be integrated into local democratic institutions across the country by 2030. In the short/medium term, LEPs were given a remit to continue in areas where Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) or Devolution Deals do not presently exist, indicating that LEPs would be maintained until devolution deals are agreed. However, as part of the Budget statement in March 2023, the Chancellor unexpectedly announced that the Government was "minded to" end core funding for LEPs from April 2024.

This evolution of policy, as part of the Government's devolution agenda, led to the SELEP Strategic Board taking the decision in July 2023 to work towards full integration of all LEP functions and resource into UTLAs by 31 March 2024, to provide the greatest clarity and continuity to all partners, and in particular the business community. On 4 August 2023, LEPs and UTLAs received a letter from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) affirming their previous "minded to" position, thereby confirming that Government sponsorship and funding of LEPs will cease from April 2024.

SELEP transition

Through the summer of 2023, in consultation with the Senior Officers Group (SOG), SELEP established the following key workstreams to facilitate integration planning:

- Governance and Capital Programme
- Data and Intelligence
- Partnership and Networks
- Growth Hub and Business Support
- Resourcing

This has culminated in an overall *SELEP Integration Plan* being developed. ESCC made resource available across departments to ensure full engagement in each of the workstreams, including its Economic Development, Major Projects and Growth, Finance, Human Resources and Legal teams. In addition there have been monthly meetings of the SELEP Senior Officers Group (SOG), attended by the Assistant Director Economy and Head of Service for Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure, to monitor overall progress in drafting the SELEP Integration Plan. A clear timeline for the local approvals process has been set out, ensuring the SELEP Integration Plan receives the approval of ESCC's Corporate Management Team, Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development, and Cabinet, plus TES engagement throughout.

Furthering the work of the SELEP Integration Plan, ESCC has developed this *East Sussex Integration Plan*, arranging the activities of the SELEP plan into county-specific actions. We have chosen to mirror the above workstreams and have carefully considered each and every activity of the overarching SELEP plan, providing our response to how the relevant roles, functions and responsibilities will be absorbed locally, and also ensuring the strategic involvement of the business voice from TES is recognised, as per the expectations from Government set out in its guidance in August and December 2023.

2. Overall aims and outcomes

The primary aims of this East Sussex Integration Plan are:

- To integrate relevant SELEP functions into East Sussex County Council, primarily by 31 March 2024, and to implement and embed them through 2024/25.
- To maintain the connection and relationship between East Sussex County Council and Team East Sussex as the county's business-led, strategic advisory economic growth board.

A successful integration will mean that from 1 April 2024:

- Current SELEP accountability arrangements are concluded, with ongoing responsibilities transferred to UTLAs, including to East Sussex County Council, under new agreements (subject to DLUHC confirmation).
- Future arrangements and processes are agreed for delivering SELEP functions, as set out in Government's letter of 4 August 2023 and any subsequent guidance from Government.
- Continued management and administration of current SELEP capital programmes (LGF, GBF and GPF) by UTLAs, including East Sussex County Council, for their own projects, with the UTLAs to assume accountable body status and report directly to Government, where required, on their projects.
- New Growth Hub accountable bodies are agreed and fully prepared for taking on functions that will enable delivery of business navigation services in East Sussex, subject to funding being confirmed by the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) or other alternative sources secured.
- SELEP generated reports, data and analysis are shared and an agreed archive is in place, enabling UTLAs to take the lead in data analysis for their areas with ongoing access to sources used by the LEP.
- All current SELEP sector partnerships have a clear future direction with new support arrangements in place where required.
- ESCC resourcing implications are addressed.
- SELEP Ltd has been closed.
- Team East Sussex (TES) is recognised as the business-led strategic economic growth board for East Sussex, acting as the voice of business to provide oversight, strategic direction and set the future priorities for the county and endorse activities undertaken at TES and through any TES subgroups.

3. Overall risks, assumptions and dependencies

Risks

Headline risks associated with implementation of the overall East Sussex Integration Plan are:

- Timeliness of any further/additional Government guidance.
- Quality, coverage and completeness of Government guidance.
- Late confirmation of funding arrangements from Government for the Growth Hub and the impact on continuity of service.
- Capacity within the SELEP Secretariat to progress the integration in a timely manner.
- Capacity within the current accountable body, Essex CC, to undertake tasks to facilitate integration in a timely manner.
- Capacity within East Sussex County Council as the UTLA responsible to take on the LEP functions.
- Speed and timing of formal decision-making processes within East Sussex County Council.
- Agreement between Government and all partners on future accountable body status.
- Alignment of decision-making processes within East Sussex County Council to match the SELEP timetable and 31 March 2024 critical milestone.
- Uncertainties over future Government support and funding.
- Breaks in service continuity because of late confirmation of Government funding.
- Implications of General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).
- Reputational risk of poor or disjointed communications, both within the partnership (SELEP, local authorities and federated boards) and with external stakeholders.
- Support and endorsement from Team East Sussex on the East Sussex Integration Plan.

Assumptions

To ensure successful integration of the East Sussex Integration Plan, work is progressing based on the following assumptions:

- Sufficient resources have been put in place within East Sussex County Council, and within the current Accountable Body (Essex CC) and SELEP, to support the integration process.
- Growth Hub funding will be forthcoming for 2024/25 service delivery.
- Government advice and funding commitments will be made in good time to allow preparation and implementation of the current East Sussex in-house service delivery of the Growth Hub. This includes providing a clear position in terms of Growth Hub funding for 2024/25 to ensure there is no break in Growth Hub service.
- Where applicable, East Sussex County Council will accept and accommodate any delays caused by late notification of Growth Hub funding, from administration of that funding to consideration of the ongoing viability of service delivery.

Dependencies

A successful and timely integration will require:

- Confirmation of the geographical coverage across the county of East Sussex for the new Accountable Body arrangements.
- Government advice being received at the right time.
- Government function and funding confirmations for UTLAs received at the right time.
- All other local authority formal decision making concluded by March 2024, ahead of the March 2024 SELEP Strategic Board meeting (for East Sussex County Council the formal decision making will conclude in February 2024).

The SELEP Integration Plan articulates the critical dependencies and milestones, at an overarching SELEP level, in the form of a Gantt chart. Any delay to those dates could put the shared objective of achieving integration by 31 March 2024 at risk. In East Sussex, meeting dates for the approvals process have been identified, and maintaining these dates for decision-making on LEP integration is a key dependency to ensure the 31 March 2024 milestone is achieved. The key meeting dates for East Sussex are as follows:

- Mon 9 Oct 2023: TES Board meeting (to endorse the draft SELEP Integration Plan).
- Fri 13 Oct 2023: SELEP Strategic Board meeting (to approve the draft SELEP Integration Plan).
- Wed 22 Nov 2023: ESCC CMT meeting (to approve the draft SELEP Integration Plan, with the draft East Sussex Integration Plan provided as additional information).
- Mon 4 Dec 2023: TES Board meeting (to endorse the final version SELEP Integration Plan and review the draft East Sussex Integration Plan).
- Fri 8 Dec 2023: SELEP Strategic Board meeting (to approve the final version SELEP Integration Plan).
- Wed 10 Jan 2024: ESCC Cabinet Briefing meeting (to approve the final version SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan).
- Mon 15 Jan 2024: ESCC Lead Member meeting (to approve the draft East Sussex Integration Plan).
- Mon 29 Jan 2024: TES Workshop (to endorse the final version East Sussex Integration Plan).
- Tue 5 Mar 2024: ESCC Cabinet meeting (to approve the final version SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan).

4. Maintaining the voice of business

Government guidance is clear that they encourage UTLAs to create, or continue to engage with, an *Economic Growth Board* (or similar) made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies, in order to provide the view of local businesses as part of regional decision making, and to work with local leaders to create a broad economic strategy for the area.

The guidance states that business representative boards should follow a series of principles for ensuring business representation in local decision-making. These include: Involving business representative organisations (such as a local Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, or the designated Employer Representative Body developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)); Including a diverse range of businesses related to local economic strengths and priorities (including businesses of all sizes and which are geographically diverse, e.g. urban, rural, coastal businesses as appropriate to the local area); Ensuring a diversity of voices; and Having a clear conflict of interest policy. *In East Sussex, Team East Sussex (TES) already fully meets that brief.*

Before the LEP transition work even began, and with the support of the County Council, Team East Sussex agreed that it will continue to operate beyond the life of SELEP as the business-led, strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, providing the voice of business in steering the economic growth agenda for the county. TES has the ongoing support of the County Council and partners, and is already overseeing the development of a new Economic Growth Strategy for 2024+.

5. Detailed Action Plan for integrating SELEP functions into East Sussex

The SELEP Integration Plan has fully scoped each core functional area of SELEP's work, and the *East Sussex Integration Plan* identifies those functions that the County Council and partners agree to retain and integrate in East Sussex.

SELEP established five key workstreams to facilitate integration planning, and in developing this East Sussex Integration Plan we have chosen to mirror those workstreams, carefully considering each activity of the overarching SELEP plan and expanding them into county-specific actions.

The below **Action Plan** sets out each East Sussex task with associated risks, dependencies and resources, arranged by workstream. For reference, each workstream also contains a separate summary table of the expected "milestones, deliverables and decisions", as projected at the start of the process. Expected timescales are also included for each action: some of the more immediate tasks will aim for completion by the end of March 2024, but many will continue beyond the actual cessation of SELEP into 2024/25, as the activities are completed, implemented and embedded. ESCC officers will maintain a 'live' version of the Action Plan throughout 2024/25 to ensure that progress against each action is recorded.

Workstream 1 – Governance and Capital Programme

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreement reached between Essex CC as the Accountable Body (AB) and East Sussex CC as the Upper Tier Local Authority (UTLA) and with Government as to the AB arrangements for 2024/25 onwards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government guidance expected to be released in January 2024 on LEP transition functions and responsibilities specially on Government expectations on managing the capital funded programmes and assurance frameworks to be followed. New accountability arrangements in place with East Sussex CC. SELEP resource transfers agreed for continued activities and SELEP staff (should TUPE apply). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Sussex CC arrangements in place to oversee and programme manage the capital funded programmes of LGF, GBF and GPF. New arrangements established and agreed within ESCC to monitor and report on the capital programmes. Essex CC cease as SELEP’s AB.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Core paper for closure of Joint Committee / SELEP Accountability Board – East Sussex CC review, comment and agree approval. SELEP and Essex CC as AB to assemble all project and programme information for novation/handover/archiving. East Sussex CC start to receive project and programme information. SELEP and Essex CC as AB prepare revised agreements (if required). East Sussex CC to review agreements and propose any changes. East Sussex CC to submit to Government the Local Authority/ LEP transition integration plan template issued on 16 October and to be submitted by 30 November 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated or termination of current grant agreements and Framework Agreement. New AB agreements for each UTLA. Preparation and issuing of amendments/updates to current contract funding agreements with third parties. Preparations to wind up SELEP Ltd. Revisions to Assurance Framework to be applied to East Sussex CC following Government guidance expected in January 2024. Prepare revisions to Team East Sussex terms of reference to reflect new remit and functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of Accounts and Audit requirements by Essex CC as the previous AB. Essex CC as the previous AB - filing at Companies House with respect to wind-up of the company. Preparation of regular monitoring and reporting on capital projects internally and to Government. TES adopt new terms of reference post LEP integration.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Geographic coverage of new AB arrangements confirmed by East Sussex CC. Future options and endorsement on the deployment of Growing Places Fund – SELEP Strategic Board and Essex CC as the current Accountable Body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wind up SELEP Ltd with approval from current Essex CC Accountable Body and SELEP Strategic Board. Formal decision making to support new AB arrangements (UTLA). Agreement by SELEP Accountability Board at its meeting on 12 Jan 2024 as to the approved approach to the deployment / allocation of funds on the Growing Places Fund. East Sussex CC to prepare arrangements to manage the outstanding GPF loan funds. Agree retention of SELEP website and host authority – agreed by SELEP team and East Sussex CC with other SELEP partners. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future administration of Growing Places Fund to be undertaken by East Sussex CC. To agree arrangements on the role of Team East Sussex (TES) as a strategic advisory business board to support and endorse the approach taken to capital programme management and support any future Government grant funding streams.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
1	Workstream 1 - Governance and Capital Programme					
1.1	Grants - Local Growth Fund & Getting Building Fund (including ongoing monitoring) <i>Confirm the mechanism to establish new agreements under new AB arrangements; establish ongoing reporting requirements and resource required.</i>					
1.1.1	Accountability arrangements for East Sussex projects and ongoing responsibilities to be transferred to East Sussex County Council.	New grant funding agreements drawn up by ESCC and implemented with third parties. ESCC as the UTLA to assume Accountable Body status and report directly to Government, where required, on our East Sussex LGF and GBF projects. Ongoing management of LGF and GBF, for our East Sussex projects, by ESCC.	ESCC Major Projects & Growth, Legal and Finance Teams	Team East Sussex (role to be confirmed)	Initially by end of March 2024, continuing through 2024/25	Requires input and decisions from SELEP, plus a new framework from Government (expected by end of March 2024).
1.1.2	Agree future role of Team East Sussex (TES) in regard to current SELEP grant funding streams and any future Government grant funding streams.	Capital programme oversight. TES's role is to provide support, strategic advice, recommendations on project prioritisation and ultimately endorsement of decisions made by the accountable body on LGF, GBF and any future Government grant funding streams.	ESCC Major Projects & Growth, Legal and Finance Teams	Team East Sussex (role to be confirmed)	Post April 2024	Related to actions 1.5 and 3.1 on updating the TES Terms of Reference.
1.2	Loan Fund - Growing Places Fund (incl. monitoring) <i>Determine the future model for administration of GPF monies for Board decision; amend loan agreements as per agreed future arrangements; establish ongoing reporting requirements and resource required.</i>					
1.2.1	Confirm arrangements for future deployment of returned GPF loan funding.	ESCC expected to be allocated existing GPF provision, pending final approval and decisions on Barnhorn Green and Sovereign Harbour Innovation Mall. With decisions expected to be made by the SELEP Accountability Board in January and February 2024.	ESCC Major Projects & Growth, Legal and Finance Teams, and ESCC Lead Member SMED	Team East Sussex (role to be confirmed)	By end of March 2024	Requires input and decisions from SELEP, plus a new framework from Government (expected by end of March 2024).
1.2.2	Accountability arrangements for East Sussex projects and ongoing responsibilities to be transferred to East Sussex County Council.	New loan funding agreements drawn up by ESCC and implemented with third parties. ESCC as the UTLA to assume Accountable Body status and report directly to Government, where required, on our East Sussex GPF projects. Ongoing management of GPF, for our East Sussex projects, by ESCC.	ESCC Major Projects & Growth, Legal and Finance Teams, ESCC CMT, Cabinet and Full Council	Team East Sussex (role to be confirmed)	Initially by end of March 2024, continuing through 2024/25	Requires input and decisions from SELEP, plus a new framework from Government (expected by end of March 2024).
1.2.3	Agree future role of Team East Sussex (TES) in regard to current SELEP loan funding streams and any future Government loan funding streams.	Capital programme oversight. TES's role is to provide support, strategic advice, recommendations on project prioritisation and ultimately endorsement of decisions made by the accountable body on GPF and any future Government loan funding streams.	ESCC Major Projects & Growth, Legal and Finance Teams	Team East Sussex (role to be confirmed)	Post April 2024	Related to actions 1.5 and 3.1 on updating the TES Terms of Reference.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
1.3	Framework Agreement/Joint Committee Agreement <i>Identify any residual considerations prior to cessation of the agreement; report preparation to support closure of Joint Committee.</i>					
1.3.1	East Sussex County Council to withdraw from the SELEP Framework Agreement (Joint Committee Agreement).	A Joint Committee Agreement is in place between SELEP Ltd and each of SELEP's six constituent local authorities, including ESCC. SELEP to make the formal decision to dissolve the Joint Committee (SELEP Accountability Board), and thereby nullify the Joint Committee Agreement, as part of the cessation of SELEP Ltd.	ESCC Legal Team, ESCC CMT, Cabinet and Full Council decision	SELEP's six constituent local authorities	By end of March 2024	Internal approval required.
1.4	SELEP Ltd <i>Wind up SELEP Ltd; identify actions to be taken on behalf of Directors during/post wind up process; establish any residual AB responsibilities.</i>					
1.4.1	East Sussex members of the SELEP Strategic Board (SELEP Ltd Directors), including the Leader of the County Council and other TES business members, to rescind their Directorship of SELEP Ltd.	All SELEP company directorships to be terminated as part of the cessation of SELEP Ltd.	ESCC Leader, Legal and Major Projects & Growth Teams	TES Board members who are our SELEP Strategic Board representatives	By end of March 2024	Internal approval required.
1.5	Assurance Framework <i>Clarification of Assurance requirements post March 2024.</i>					
1.5.1	Address the removal of the National Local Growth Assurance Framework in the Team East Sussex (TES) Terms of Reference.	TES to continue as the strategic advisory economic growth board for East Sussex beyond the life of SELEP, but the current Assurance Framework will no longer apply. The TES Terms of Reference to be updated to remove references to the Assurance Framework. Existing standards set by the Assurance Framework should be retained in the TES Terms of Reference moving forward. Seek clarification on any new/replacement 'framework' from Government, and integrate into the TES Terms of Reference as applicable.	ESCC Economic Development Team (as secretariat to TES), ESCC CMT, Cabinet and Full Council decisions	Team East Sussex	Q1 of 2024/25	Related to action 3.1 on updating the TES Terms of Reference. Possible dependency on the English Devolution Accountability Framework (EDAF) or another government framework TBC.
1.6	Accountable body role, as defined by DLUHC <i>Conclude the current AB role as undertaken by ECC for SELEP; ensure all transfers in place to relevant UTLA.</i>					
1.6.1	Confirm formal decisions, with ESCC support, for Essex CC to cease its role as Accountable Body for SELEP, and confirm the formal decision for ESCC to take on the Accountable Body role for East Sussex.	ESCC as the approved UTLA to assume Accountable Body functions, including Government reporting (including monitoring, evaluation, audits, FOIs).	ESCC Legal, Finance and Major Projects & Growth Teams, ESCC CMT, Cabinet and Full Council	Team East Sussex (to be made aware)	Initially by end of March 2024, with structure and processes embedded through 2024/25	Agreement from Government on future Accountable Body arrangements with ESCC approved as UTLA. Speed and timings

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
						of formal decision-making processes within ESCC. New structure arrangements to be in place with ESCC.
1.7	Data Handling (incl. GDPR and archiving on SELEP records) <i>Establish data ownership, rights and ability to store/use; clarify data handling requirements.</i>					
1.7.1	<i>No further action:</i> a SELEP activity, with the East Sussex elements covered in action 2.4.	A plan for the transfer of data to be developed and implemented where possible (see action 2.4).	SELEP	N/A	N/A	N/A
1.8	SELEP Website <i>Determine any future role for the SELEP website.</i>					
1.8.1	All historic papers on the SELEP website to be shared with East Sussex County Council.	All historic papers for SELEP Strategic Board, Accountability Board and Investment Panel meetings (minutes, agenda packs etc), plus any other relevant reports (such as from the SELEP working groups) to be shared with ESCC. All historic Team East Sussex (TES) meeting papers and minutes dating back to 2014, currently housed on the SELEP website, to continue to be made publicly available, e.g. on the SELEP website should funding be secured for a further year, ahead of ESCC working through an arrangement that will see TES papers made publicly accessible either on a new ESCC webpage or another website (TBC).	(1) ESCC Major Projects & Growth Team responsible for SELEP Acct Board and Investment Panel information held on the SELEP website. (2) ESCC Economic Development Team responsible for SELEP Strategic Board and Team East Sussex information held on the SELEP website. (3) The development of any new webpages/microsites will require involvement of ESCC Information Governance, ICT and Accessibility Teams.	SELEP and Essex CC; Team East Sussex (to be made aware)	Initially by end of March 2024, implemented in Q1/Q2 of 2024/25	This is all publicly available information (currently on the SELEP website) so GDPR should not be a factor. Will require some resource to gather, compile and (possibly) upload the information onto our own ESCC website. Will need to be mindful of accessibility regulations for any information being uploaded to the ESCC website. Related to action 2.4 on data and reports.

Workstream 2 – Data and Intelligence

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Sussex CC has worked with SELEP and Essex CC who have identified all data and intelligence resources. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New subscriptions for access to datasets considered but only carried provided that residual funds are awarded by the LEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legacy arrangements in place for partners to access existing data. East Sussex CC will manage ongoing data and intelligence requests for county wide reports and county wide strategies.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing access and use of data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of updated data by SELEP at East Sussex CC level, where required. Data sharing agreements (DSA) in place, as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborative approaches to data and intelligence to be determined on a case-by-case basis.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed optimum approach to management of data with East Sussex CC. Ongoing subscriptions considered. 		

	East Sussex Action	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Partner/Stakeholder Involvement	Timescale	Risks and Dependencies
2	Workstream 2 - Data and Intelligence					
2.1	Routine reporting and data analysis <i>Confirm current reporting regime and identify ongoing requirements.</i>					
2.1.1	<i>No further action:</i> no further data and intelligence information sought from SELEP, and where this is required, collaborative approaches to data and intelligence will be determined on a case-by-case basis with resources applied (subject to funding).	Have reviewed SELEP's current routine reporting in relation to data and intelligence, and for East Sussex we are content that our Research and Information Team have strong data and intelligence information contained within East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) and other databases that will support our immediate requirements and needs locally. Economic Profile reports are provided on a quarterly basis to Team East Sussex (TES) and equally reported through the ESCC State of the County reports.	ESCC Research & Intelligence, Economic Development and Major Projects & Growth Teams	Team East Sussex (reports shared)	From April 2024	New East Sussex in Figures website to be launched by Spring 2024. ESiF will include an economy, skills and employment area profile.
2.2	Ad hoc Data Requests <i>Capture current activity and potential future requirements.</i>					
2.2.1	<i>No further action:</i> ESCC will respond to ad hoc data requests as appropriate.	Ad hoc data requests dealt with.	ESCC R&I, Eco Development, Major Projects & Growth and Information Governance Teams (if request made via FOI or complaint)	N/A	From April 2024	New East Sussex in Figures website to be launched by Spring 2024.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
2.3	Bespoke Data and Analysis <i>Capture current activity and potential future requirements.</i>					
2.3.1	<i>No further action:</i> ESCC will produce reports as and when required, responding to requests made.	ESCC has been made aware of SELEP's previous bespoke data and analysis work, and our assessment is that the ESCC Research and Intelligence Team can meet our immediate requirements for data and analysis through East Sussex in Figures (ESiF) and access to other databases.	ESCC R&I, Economic Development, Major Projects & Growth and Information Governance Teams (if request made via FOI or complaint)	N/A	From April 2024	New East Sussex in Figures website to be launched by Spring 2024.
2.4	Existing data and reports <i>Identify all current data and options for future access.</i>					
2.4.1	All SELEP-generated reports, data and analysis to be shared with East Sussex County Council.	Reports, data and analysis to be shared with ESCC, or an agreed 'archive' to be set up with legacy arrangements in place for ESCC and partners to access the data.	SELEP, liaising with ESCC Research & Intelligence, Economic Development, Major Projects & Growth and Information Governance Teams	Team East Sussex, TES sub-boards and partners (share suitable information)	Initially by end of March 2024, implemented in Q1/Q2 of 2024/25	General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) may have an impact on this, or a possible requirement for data sharing agreements if the data continues to be housed elsewhere. Related to action 1.8 on the SELEP website.
2.5	Networks <i>Confirm the data held in relation to networks.</i>					
2.5.1	All existing data held through SELEP networks to be reviewed and, where possible, shared with East Sussex County Council.	Reports, data and analysis to be shared with ESCC, or an agreed 'archive' to be set up with legacy arrangements in place for ESCC and partners to access the data.	ESCC Information Governance and Legal Teams (should data sharing agreements be required - not currently envisaged)	SELEP networks	Initially by end of March 2024, implemented in Q1/Q2 of 2024/25	Reports, data and analysis not shared

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
2.6	State of the Region Report <i>Review report and provide a 2023/24 update at UTLA level where required.</i>					
2.6.1	<i>No further action:</i> SELEP report not required going forward as ESCC produces its own State of the County report.	ESCC to continue to produce its State of the County report, which is publicly available and covers the UTLA area, with any regional information to be presented if and when required subject to resources applied.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2.7	Skills Data <i>Capacity for UTLA production to be confirmed; identify approach to purchased datasets.</i>					
2.7.1	<i>No further action:</i> the two datasets, Lightcast and Datacity, will not be available, so ESCC and Skills East Sussex (SES) will make use of other publicly available skills datasets and LSIP generated skills data.	ESCC considered the current named datasets and the SELEP paid-for subscriptions, and how these are used by ESCC and SES (the county's employment and skills board). The cost of the subscriptions is high and until further funding is secured, future access to these datasets will not be available to provide information and intelligence. Subject to obtaining funding, ad hoc commissioning will occur to obtain data that will provide evidence to inform bid preparation and intelligence on particular skills sectors or themes.	ESCC Employability & Skills and Research & Intelligence Teams	Skills East Sussex (SES) and SES subgroups	From April 2024	N/A
2.8	Growth Hub Data <i>Identify current data available via local GH administrators.</i>					
2.8.1	<i>No further action:</i> see Growth Hub Data in Workstream 4.	See Growth Hub Data in Workstream 4.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Workstream 3 – Partnerships and Networks

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify all partnerships and networks that SELEP manages and/or provides secretariat and project management support. TES agreed to be maintained as an informal partnership of strategic stakeholders acting as the local strategic oversight/ advisory economic growth board for the county, providing the local business voice in responding to the county’s priorities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New arrangements in place for each SELEP partnership and network with some decided to continue (subject to resources) and other proposed to end or be reduced. Terms of Reference for TES and TES subgroups (including Business East Sussex, Culture ES, Developers ES, Environment ES and Skills ES) to be reviewed and updated to reflect any revised functions and responsibilities (as initially agreed by TES in December 2022). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourced groups continue operating. TES confirmed and acting as the local strategic economic growth board for East Sussex with Terms of Reference approved and in place. TES subgroups continue to be supported as part of the critical infrastructure to support TES and ESCC priorities.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing role and support arrangements (as required). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP team, ESCC, TES and other UTLA’s to establish updated terms of reference and details of ongoing resource support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing resource support in place from UTLA’s agreeing to taking on those functions to support continued operation of selected working groups. ESCC has not directly offered support to oversee/ manage any current SELEP working groups but is proposing to continue involvement as a working group member. TES and TES subgroups’ relationships enhanced, and each of the subgroups’ interconnectivity strengthened.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each SELEP working group to confirm ongoing activities and way of working. CMT approve the proposed remit of TES and ESCC proposed involvement in the working groups/partnerships to be continued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The SELEP team working with UTLA partners confirm way forward for Greater South East Net Zero Hub. Confirm which UTLA/s will host the ongoing resource support for groups. Cabinet and Full Council approve the proposed remit of TES and ESCC involvement in the proposed working groups/partnerships to be continued. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to provide officer resource to attend meetings and support joint actions agreed in the GSENZH, SECEN, Housing and Development Group and Major Projects Group (where appropriate). Continue to provide ESCC officer resource to be the secretariat for TES and TES subgroups, attending meetings and support joint actions agreed.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
3	Workstream 3 - Partnerships and Networks					
3.1	Next steps for SELEP Partnership and Network groups <i>Confirm groups in scope; identify options for continuance beyond March 2024; develop plans as required; implementation.</i>					
3.1.1	Retain Team East Sussex (TES) as an informal partnership acting as the strategic advisory economic growth board for the county of East Sussex, providing the voice of business.	TES to be recognised as the strategic advisory economic growth board for East Sussex, to provide strategic oversight and help set the future direction and priorities for the county (e.g. East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy). TES to continue to be a business-led partnership and be recognised as the voice of business as per Government's expectations in its LEP transition guidance, August 2023. The relationship between East Sussex County Council and TES to be maintained. TES to perform a strategic oversight role in supporting ESCC as the accountable body for capital funding programmes.	ESCC and Team East Sussex	Team East Sussex	Agreed in principle with response to Government on LEP transition template by 30 November 2023; formal approval from ESCC Cabinet on 5 March 2024	Government guidance changes. Cabinet does not approve the role of TES.
3.1.2	Address all necessary changes to the Team East Sussex (TES) Terms of Reference to enable TES to continue as the strategic advisory economic growth board for East Sussex.	TES Terms of Reference to be updated to remove all SELEP dependencies and to clarify TES's strategic oversight / advisory role in supporting ESCC as the accountable body for capital funding programmes.	ESCC Economic Development Team	Team East Sussex	Initially by end of March 2024, with further revisions expected in Q1 2024/25	Related to actions 1.1 and 1.2 on agreeing TES's role in overseeing capital funding streams, and action 1.5 on updating the TES Terms of Reference.
3.1.3	Strengthen the roles and relationships of the TES subgroups.	TES and the subgroups' relationships enhanced, and each of the subgroups' interconnectivity strengthened, including Business East Sussex (BES), Culture East Sussex (CES), Developers East Sussex (DES), Environment East Sussex (EES) and Skills East Sussex (SES). Each of the subgroups' Terms of Reference reviewed and updated, ensuring alignment with the updated TES Terms of Reference. Subgroup activity to be regularly reported to TES for information and endorsement. Consideration given to creating new subgroups for areas of particular interest or need (e.g. Tourism).	ESCC supporting officers to each of the TES subgroups: Economic Development Team (BES and DES); Culture & Tourism Team (CES); Environment Team (EES); and Employability & Skills Team (SES)	Team East Sussex and TES subgroups	Throughout 2024/25	Capacity and resource within the ESCC teams.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
3.1.4	Consider East Sussex involvement in the continuing SELEP working groups.	Consider whether East Sussex CC and/or other East Sussex representatives' involvement will be wanted/needed in any of the SELEP working groups that are proposed to continue with partnership and funding support. These include the following three working groups (i) South East Creative Economy Network (SECEN) for which ESCC has been an active partner and contributor; (ii) Housing and Development Group for which ESCC has been a partner and contributor; and (iii) Major Projects Group for which ESCC has not been a partner as we do not have the significant scale of infrastructure investments planned (but we have and would want to continue having information shared from the group on its actions and outcomes). Commit officer or local partner involvement as required.	ESCC Culture & Tourism Team for SECEN, Economic Development and Planning Teams for Housing and Development Group, and other team involvement to be confirmed if required for Major Projects Group	Other local authorities, maybe the secretariat leads for each of these working groups, alongside any current and future public and private sector partners	By end of March 2024	Capacity and resource within the ESCC teams.
3.2	Town Boards <i>Ensure smooth exit for SELEP, ensuring UTLA's enable ongoing input.</i>					
3.2.1	Ensure appropriate representation on Town Deal Boards.	Representation on Hastings and Newhaven Town Deal Boards to be achieved through nominated TES business members.	ESCC Economic Development Team with TES	Team East Sussex	By end of March 2024	Willingness of TES business members to participate.
3.3	Greater South East Net Zero Hub <i>Multi-LEP consortium.</i>					
3.3.1	Consider East Sussex representation on the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) Board.	To replace the current SELEP member on the GSENZH Board, and for the GSENZH board to consider an East Sussex representation post April 2024, or any other suitable alternative officer representation that will support several authorities in the south east.	ESCC Environment Team	Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) Board	From April 2024	No direct ESCC representation on the GSENZH Board (but an officer representing several authorities is agreeable).

Workstream 4 – Growth Hub and Business Support

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub is delivered in house by ESCC and no change proposed/required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding Agreement confirmed by DBT. Ongoing service delivery plans concluded. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued BES Growth Hub services delivered across county.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan for ongoing service delivery as required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> East Sussex CC continued communications strategy on BES Growth Hub. Data sharing agreements (as required). South East Business Hub (SEBH) website ending by March 2024 and will be replaced by a Growth Hub webpage on ESCC website. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Future arrangement for BES Growth Hub data collection and use agreed and applied.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confirm current BES Growth Hub delivery mechanism to SELEP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If Government funding not confirmed agree to allocate funds to BES Growth Hub in 2024/25. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of BES Growth Hub delivery and future options for delivery subject to funds secured.

	East Sussex Action	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Partner/Stakeholder Involvement	Timescale	Risks and Dependencies
4	Workstream 4 - Growth Hub and Business Support					
4.1	South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub <i>End current SELEP hub-and-spoke delivery model and complete all requirements of 2023/24 GH funding agreement.</i>					
4.1.1	The SELEP South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub to be drawn to a close.	The current overarching SELEP hub-and-spoke Growth Hub delivery model to be discontinued.	SELEP Secretariat, Essex CC (as Accountable Body)	Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	By end of March 2024	None
4.2	Greater Essex, Kent and Medway, and East Sussex Growth Hubs <i>Instate three independent Growth Hubs, mirroring BEST, KMGH and BES geographies.</i>					
4.2.1	The Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub to continue to deliver independent of SELEP.	The BES Growth Hub to continue operating fully independent of SELEP from April 2024. The BES Growth Hub to contract with and report directly to the Government Department for Business and Trade (DBT).	ESCC Economic Development Team	Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	By end of March 2024	DBT approval for proposed model of independent Growth Hubs. Dependant on DBT future funding for 2024/25. BES Growth Hub is already an in-house resource not subject to ongoing issues of outsourced GHs (in terms of procurement, TUPE etc).

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
4.3	GH funding for 2024/25 <i>Request receipt of official funding documents (allocation, letter of comfort, grant offer letter) as early as possible.</i>					
4.3.1	Prepare the BES Growth Hub for the scenarios of (i) receiving Government funding from the Department for Business and Trade (DBT), and (ii) how to proceed should Government funding not be forthcoming.	In the case of DBT funding, continue local delivery of Growth Hub services in 2024/25. In the event of no DBT funding, continue local delivery of Growth Hub services with alternate funding for 2024/25 (since Growth Hub activity was highlighted to be supported with investment in the recent ESCC Peer Review undertaken in 2023).	ESCC Economic Development Team	Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub, Government Department for Business and Trade (DBT)	Initially by end of March 2024, and through 2024/25	Risk of no DBT funding for 2024/25, awaiting Government decision (has been as late as 31 March in previous years).
4.4	Growth Hub websites <i>Develop plan for future of the Growth Hub websites.</i>					
4.4.1	Prepare a BES Growth Hub website page and ensure an online presence is in place.	SELEP Growth Hub websites to be discontinued in March 2024, to be replaced in East Sussex by a BES Growth Hub page on the ESCC website. Webpage to be compliant with Public Sector Accessibility requirements.	ESCC Economic Development Team	Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	Initially by end of March 2024, fully implemented in Q1 2024/25	BES Growth Hub webpage will not require as much updating as the South East Business Hub (SEBH) website which was far more complicated.
4.5	Growth Hub data <i>Identify future arrangement for GH data collection and use.</i>					
4.5.1	Ensure historical Growth Hub data is secured, and an improved longer-term system for collecting data is in place.	Move on from the current Evolutive Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system and use an appropriate alternative method to collect, analyse and maintain Growth Hub data. Historic data to be downloaded before the end of the current Evolutive contract.	ESCC Economic Development Team	Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	Initially by end of March 2024, and through 2024/25	Growth Hub activity is predominantly diagnostic and signposting since resources do not allow a greater range of activity, such as that delivered by the other federated area Growth Hubs.
4.6	Growth Hub Steering Groups <i>Review SEBH and Area Growth Hub Steering Groups.</i>					
4.6.1	Ensure the Business East Sussex (BES) Steering Group continues, with a review or refresh of its Terms of Reference.	The need for a 'Steering Group' to be reviewed (as the BES Growth Hub is very small, by far the smallest of the federated areas' Growth Hubs). The BES Chair (newly in post) to consider how the	ESCC Economic Development Team	BES Steering Group	During Q1 2024/25	Related to action 3.1 on the roles and relationships

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
		group functions and what its role should be in future. BES Terms of Reference to be reviewed and refreshed, ensuring alignment with the updated TES Terms of Reference.				of the TES subgroups.
4.7 Match and other funding commitments <i>Put in place approaches for additional funding to enhance/support the GH.</i>						
4.7.1	Explore options for alternative or additional sources of funding for a possible enhanced Growth Hub offer.	Alternate funding sources to be explored to mitigate the risk of no Government funding forthcoming and/or to enhance the existing business support service (e.g. working with Borough and District Councils through their UK Shared Prosperity Fund and/or other allocations). Where alternative funding is required, consider the terms and conditions of the grant to ensure the additional funding is supporting and enhancing the Growth Hub.	ESCC Economic Development Team	Borough and District Councils	By end of March 2024	None
4.8 Business Support <i>Oversee and develop the local business support ecosystem.</i>						
4.8.1	<i>No further action:</i> continue oversight and ongoing development of the local business support ecosystem.	This has always been a local responsibility, and will continue through the BES Steering Group, BES Providers Group, and the activities of the BES Growth Hub and wider ESCC Economic Development Team.	ESCC Economic Development Team	N/A	N/A	N/A

Workstream 5 – Resourcing

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the posts that are affected in the SELEP team. Receive advice from Essex CC on whether TUPE applies. Job profile(s) and job description questionnaire(s) completed on roles sought to support the ES integration plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP team secure new roles within authorities or elsewhere. Job role(s) advertised and filled. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff employed supporting ES integration plan.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TUPE advice provided by Essex CC and considered by ESCC. If TUPE applies follow requirements and timeframes. If TUPE applies consultation pack issued by Essex CC to SELEP team with all partner authority roles available. If TUPE doesn't apply follow ESCC recruitment process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If TUPE applies - consultation period ends by Essex CC. Decisions made on posts to be filled, staff accept or reject and potential for redundancies to be made by Essex CC. If TUPE doesn't apply – ESCC recruitment process concluded with appointment(s) made. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New staff employed supporting ES integration plan.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP Strategic Board 13 October 2023 review of draft SELEP integration plan. SELEP Strategic Board 8 December 2023 review of final draft SELEP integration plan. On 22 November 2023 ESCC CMT decision on resources to be applied to the SELEP and ES integration plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP Strategic Board and SELEP Accountability boards make decisions on the remaining financial reserves to support the resources into 2024/25. ESCC Cabinet 23 January 2024 and Full Council 6 February 2024 decision on resources to be applied to the SELEP and ES integration plans. Decisions on accepting the remaining SELEP financial reserves and Government funding made available to support capacity/ resource needs in 2024/25. 	

	East Sussex Action	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Partner/Stakeholder Involvement	Timescale	Risks and Dependencies
5	Workstream 5 - Resourcing					
5.1	No specific activities set out in the SELEP Integration Plan <i>Any actions here will involve bringing SELEP Secretariat staff into upper tier local authorities</i>					
5.1.1	Continue to work with the SELEP Resourcing workstream and SELEP partners.	ESCC colleagues, including ESCC HR lead, to attend regular monthly meetings, addressing any actions requested.	ESCC HR and HoS EDSCI	SELEP, Essex CC and SELEP partner authorities	By end of March 2024	SELEP partners (including ESCC) not engaged and supporting process.

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
5.1.2	Review Essex CC legal advice for their position on whether TUPE applies, seek further legal advice to determine whether ESCC agrees, and confirm whether TUPE is applicable to ESCC for any SELEP roles.	To be confirmed, either TUPE applies and relevant procedures are to be followed or TUPE does not apply and ESCC recruitment processes are followed.	ESCC HR and Legal Teams	Essex CC HR and Legal Teams	By end of March 2024	TUPE advice not provided by Essex CC leading to a decision by ESCC on whether to share role(s) created with SELEP team / Essex CC ahead of recruitment. Mitigated by own internal HR/Legal advice on whether TUPE applies.
5.1.3	Determine what roles are required to support continued and/or additional duties for integration of SELEP functions and responsibilities into ESCC procedures.	(1) Have identified resource needed to manage capital programme in ESCC Major Projects and Growth Team and have considered TES resourcing, but at this stage as the expectation is the partnership continues to be an informal structure, we are indicating this can be addressed within existing base budgeted resources. Should TES need to move towards a more formal structure of Governance then resource implications will need to be raised. (2) ESCC Finance to determine support to be provided. (3) ESCC Legal to determine support to be provided.	(1) HoS EDSCI, with Team Manager Major Projects & Growth and Team Manager Economic Development; (2) HoS Finance; (3) HoS Legal	N/A	By end of March 2024	Clarity on requirements sought from LEP transition may lead to initial capacity constraints before correct allocation of resources provided to meet requirements within timeframes.
5.1.4	Produce a Job Profile and JDQ, and undertake a job evaluation with funding committed to an 'East Sussex Growth Programme Manager' post.	Job profile to be approved.	ESCC HR Job Evaluation Team and Panel, with HoS EDSCI and Team Manager Major Projects & Growth	N/A	By end of March 2024	Capacity constraints to produce. Any issues arising with job evaluation assessment. Subsequent TUPE advice will determine which route to recruitment undertaken leading to time delay in person in post (this will increase the

	<i>East Sussex Action</i>	<i>Expected Outcome</i>	<i>Responsible</i>	<i>Partner/Stakeholder Involvement</i>	<i>Timescale</i>	<i>Risks and Dependencies</i>
						requirements in the Major Projects & Growth Team to deliver work).
5.1.5	Subject to 5.1.2 above: if TUPE does not apply, follow ESCC Recruitment process; if TUPE does apply, follow due process working with Essex CC and SELEP team, to include consultation.	To be confirmed depending upon whether TUPE applies or not.	ESCC HR Team, HoS EDSCI and Team Manager Major Projects & Growth	N/A	By end of March 2024, and maybe post April 2024 (depending on timeframes applied by Essex CC)	As above under 5.1.4
5.1.6	Seek clarity from SELEP / Essex CC as to the application of its own remaining financial reserves.	Discuss and determine with SELEP partners and with ESCC internally (Major Projects & Growth and Finance Teams) the proposed recommendation to use SELEP reserves on SELEP salaried staff (where TUPE applies), a redundancy pot for SELEP permanent staff being transferred, other current SELEP activities to receive extended funding (e.g. partnership working groups, databases to be confirmed) and any other funding to support the resourcing of upper tier authorities to implement the transition plan. Provide advice to the Leader to support decision making at SELEP Accountability Board meetings in January and February 2024.	ESCC HoS EDSCI and HoS Finance	Essex CC and SELEP team, and Team East Sussex (to share proposals with)	By end of March 2024	The determination of the remaining financial reserves will have a minor impact on ESCC as we have the internal teams, resources and external partnerships established to address the majority of the LEP transition requirements, but this may impact the speed at which the actions can be delivered.
5.1.7	Seek clarity from Government on its proposed allocation to each Upper Tier Local Authority in 2024-25 to support transition/integration, as stated in the Government guidance on LEP transition issued 3 August 2023.	Information expected to be provided in the additional Government guidance, expected January 2024.	ESCC HoS EDSCI, HoS Finance and HoS Legal	Government, SELEP team and Essex CC as the current Accountable body	By end of March 2024	Awaiting Government decision on allocation to ESCC. Mitigated as we have a level of staff resource that can be applied across internal teams to address LEP

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					transition requirements. The pace at which these can be transitioned may be impacted without the additional resource secured.

Other – Communications

	October – December 2023	January – March 2024	April 2024 Onward
Milestones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP Communications plan reviewed and produced with input from all SELEP partners. TES reviews its communication approach to reach business audience and determines approach to take. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to agreement, resources and funding allocated TES considers draft commission to work up communications approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communications plan produced and actions implemented and plan monitored.
Deliverables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> SELEP communication plan. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCC Communications plan. TES commission consultant to work on plan with sub group of TES members involved. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication plan actions delivered by partners on behalf of TES. Clear voice of business raised in East Sussex.
Decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ESCC Communications team review SELEP communications plan and provide comments. TES starts to consider principals of communication approach at TES meetings held on 9 October and 4 December 2023. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> TES meetings held to review communications plan approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing review of communication plan and resources applied to support.

	East Sussex Action	Expected Outcome	Responsible	Partner/Stakeholder Involvement	Timescale	Risks and Dependencies
6	Other					
6.1	Activities not covered in the SELEP Integration Plan <i>Any additional actions that have not already been covered above</i>					
6.1.1	Liaise with the SELEP team on their SELEP Communications Plan to ensure a consistent narrative when issuing communications on LEP transition.	ESCC Communications Team to review the SELEP Communications Plan with the SELEP lead officer to ensure narrative is consistent. Comms updates to be released by both parties as appropriate. ESCC Communication Plan to be developed in partnership with TES, SELEP and Essex CC (as the current Accountable Body).	ESCC Communications Team working with HoS EDSCI	SELEP team and Essex CC (as the current Accountable Body)	Initially up to April 2024; possibly beyond during Q1 and Q2 of 2024	None
6.1.2	Consider producing a Team East Sussex (TES) Communications Strategy.	TES Board members to approve an initial approach to developing a communications strategy, with agreed interventions and actions that are taken forward by TES members and partners (subject to support and funding). Post April 2024, consider engaging an external consultant to support TES in further developing its communications strategy.	TES partners in conjunction with the TES secretariat (ESCC Economic Development Team)	Team East Sussex	Initially by end of March 2024; post April 2024 TES Communications Strategy developed and implemented.	None

LA / LEP INTEGRATION PLAN TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDANCE

Government has [confirmed](#) that Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) core functions – namely, business representation, local economic planning, and the delivery of Government programmes where directed – from April 2024 should be delivered by local authorities.

This template is intended to aid the process of integration and inform the direction of any future government funding. This document should be read in parallel with the [guidance](#) published on the integration of LEP functions into local and combined authorities on 4 August 2023. Government expects decisions on the transfer and delivery of current LEP functions to be made locally.

Government expects functions to be delivered over current or potential devolution deal geographies so far as possible. Outside of areas with an agreed devolution deal, it is expected that functions will be exercised by the upper tier local authority, working with other upper tier local authorities as appropriate. Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate within an area, only one return is necessary. The authority which submits the return on behalf of the whole area should ensure all upper tier local authorities have agreed to the return and copy it to the LEP Chair.

It is recognised that the formal process of transferring any assets, loans, investments, or liabilities between existing LEP(s) and local democratic institutions will require agreement between both parties. All parties must follow the relevant laws and regulations that apply, including having due regard for the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Any commercially sensitive information may be submitted in parallel to the main integration plan. The use of annexes is also recommended for non-sensitive issues where more detail is required.

Completed plans should be sent to the central LEP Integration inbox (LEP.Integration@levellingup.gov.uk), copying all relevant parties (all upper tier local authorities and LEP Chair) and the relevant Area Lead in the Cities and Local Growth Unit.

The deadline for submission of this plan to Government is **23:59hrs on Thursday 30 November 2023** or earlier if possible, to help inform future funding decisions.

SECTION 1: CORE INFORMATION

Core details and current arrangements	
1.1 Name of LEP which is to be integrated.	South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).
1.2 Name(s) of upper tier authority or authorities into which LEP functions are being integrated.	<p>East Sussex County Council (ESCC)</p> <p>SELEP contains six upper tier local authorities (UTLAs): East Sussex County Council, Essex County Council, Kent County Council, Medway Council, Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council.</p> <p>LEP functions are being integrated into the three larger UTLAs as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - East Sussex County Council. - Kent County Council (to include Medway Council). - Essex County Council (to include Southend on Sea City Council and Thurrock Council).
1.3 Current relationship with the LEP	<p>Each of the six UTLAs listed above are members of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership, acting as local accountable body for the projects and programmes in their respective areas (Essex CC is the overall Accountable Body for the LEP). East Sussex collates information for East Sussex based LGF, GBF and GPF projects on behalf of SELEP.</p> <p>A joint partnership agreement is in place between SELEP Ltd and the six UTLAs, with each UTLA having a seat on the SELEP Accountability Board, responsible for approving all major funding decisions and ensuring those investment decisions are made in a democratic, transparent and public forum with full due process.</p> <p>Each UTLA Leader, including the Leader of ESCC, is also a Company Director of SELEP Ltd, with a seat at the SELEP Strategic Board.</p> <p>ESCC provides a secretariat function to Team East Sussex (TES), one of SELEP's four federated boards (see section 3 below).</p> <p>ESCC also manages the contract for the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub on behalf of SELEP.</p> <p>Senior officers from East Sussex County Council meet regularly with SELEP to discuss and agree activities and priorities and ensure a two-way flow of information between SELEP and the federated area of East Sussex. They also ensure that the area is fully represented in SELEP's network and partnership groups.</p>
Integration leads	
1.4 Contact details for integration leads	<p>East Sussex County Council: Richard Dawson, Head of Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure 07917 210721 Richard.Dawson@eastsussex.gov.uk</p>

SELEP:
Helen Russell, Chief Executive Officer
07795 257810 | Helen.Russell@Southeastlep.com

SECTION 2: GEOGRAPHY

Geography

2. Please set out the proposed geography for the delivery of LEP functions from April 2024. Answers should confirm whether the proposed geography is coterminous with the current LEP geography. If not, answers should confirm that the proposed geography constitutes a functional economic area (FEA), with reference to the size of population, local travel to work areas (TTWAs) and any other relevant drivers of the local economy.

Where multiple upper tier local authorities operate across the proposed geography, you should confirm the governance arrangements and that service provision will be ensured across the whole geography – no authority should be left out and all parties should agree the arrangements.

From April 2024, LEP functions will be delivered by the three larger UTLA areas of SELEP – East Sussex, Essex and Kent – each constituting a functional economic area.

Essex is to include Southend on Sea and Thurrock, and so Essex CC will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to continue service provision across all three authorities. Similarly, Kent is to include Medway, so Kent CC will ensure that appropriate governance arrangements are in place to continue service provision across both authorities.

East Sussex will continue to include the geographical area covered by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), with continued alignment to the current Team East Sussex (TES) federated board arrangement. Governance will sit with ESCC. Note that the total population of East Sussex is 545,900*.

Overall, this proposed geography is coterminous with the current geography of the South East LEP, as all of the constituent authorities are included.

*ONS Census 2021

SECTION 3: BUSINESS VOICE

Current and future activity

3. Please set out how you intend to embed a strong, independent, and diverse local business voice into local decision-making across the area. Answers should cover the following points:

- (a) Proposed model & governance structure** (e.g., a stand-alone business board, sub-board, or other structure)
- (b) Membership** (including the mix, balance and diversity of independent business members and any other partners drawn from outside of the business community)

SELEP currently operates a 'federated' model of governance, with four sub-boards across its geography allowing for even more localised decision making. The federated sub-board for the county of East Sussex is *Team East Sussex* (TES).

Team East Sussex mirrors the LEP in that it is a *business-led*, private/public body, with representation from business members and business representative bodies (including the FSB and Chambers of Commerce), the voluntary and community sector, further education, higher education and the local authority leaders of all of the county, borough and district councils. TES Board membership is currently 59% private to 41% public sector.

As well as being a federated SELEP sub-board, TES is also the strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, with a primary aim to drive forward economic growth and prosperity in the county of East Sussex. In pursuit of this aim, TES currently has the following key functions: Strategic direction and oversight; Pipeline development and capital programme oversight; Project consideration (prioritisation); Lobbying and promotion; Engagement; and SELEP activities. TES is supported by East Sussex County Council officers in a secretariat capacity.

Moving forward, TES has the ongoing support of the County Council and partners *to continue to operate beyond the life of SELEP as the independent, business-led, strategic oversight/advisory economic growth board for the county, providing the voice of business in steering our economic growth agenda*. TES will continue to review its membership to ensure as broad a representation as possible across business sectors and the local geography, and when the government issues a new framework in early 2024 (to replace the National Local Growth Assurance Framework), the TES Terms of Reference will be updated accordingly.

TES has also established a series of thematic subgroups to help drive forward activity in some of its key sectors, including Business, Culture and Tourism, Housing and Commercial Development, Environment, and Skills. Similar to TES, these active working groups are partnerships of private and public sector, plus social enterprise, education providers and more, ensuring all of the key stakeholders for each sector are represented, with a strong business voice. The Business subgroup in particular enables even broader business engagement, exploring key economic issues affecting the private sector in the county, as well as acting as a steering group to our local Growth Hub. Subgroup activity is regularly reported to TES for information and endorsement, and TES will continue to give consideration to creating new subgroups for areas of particular interest or need.

Government guidance is clear that UTLAs are encouraged to create, or continue to engage with, an Economic Growth Board (or similar) made up of local business leaders and relevant representative bodies, in order to provide the view of local businesses as part of regional decision making, and to work with local leaders to create a broad economic strategy for the area.

The guidance states that business representative boards should follow a series of principles for ensuring business representation in local decision-making. These include: Involving business representative organisations (such as a local Chamber of Commerce, the Federation of Small Businesses, or the designated Employer Representative Body developing the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP)); Including a diverse range of businesses related to local economic strengths and priorities (including businesses of all sizes and which are geographically diverse, e.g. urban, rural, coastal businesses as appropriate to the local area); Ensuring a diversity of voices; and Having a clear conflict of interest policy. *In East Sussex, Team East Sussex already fully meets that brief, with representation on all the above from business representative organisations and businesses on its board, and with established terms of reference and policies in place.*

TES has previously overseen the development of the county's Growth Strategy for 2014-20, the post-pandemic Economy Recovery Plan in 2020, and is currently overseeing the development of a new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy for 2024+.

SECTION 4: PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES AND SERVICES

Current and future activity			
<p>4.1 Please list the projects, programmes and services currently delivered by the local LEP. In each case you should indicate whether, subject to receiving equivalent funding, the upper tier local authority/authorities would continue to undertake each activity.</p> <p>Where a different set of functions/services is being delivered for a neighbouring area, you should repeat the exercise for that area.</p> <p>You do not need to include LEP activity delivered in a private capacity.</p>			
Title	Short Description (1-2 sentences)	Will the activity continue once the LEP is integrated? (subject to future funding)	
		Yes	No
Economic Strategy	A new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy for 2024 onwards is currently being developed and will underpin the delivery of former LEP functions in East Sussex.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Local Growth Board	TES will continue to operate but will review its structure and activity prior to March 2024 to ensure alignment with post-LEP functions and the new economic strategy. ESCC will continue to provide TES' secretariat function.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital Grant funded programmes: Local Growth Fund (LGF) and Getting Building Fund (GBF)	Oversight of LGF and GBF grant programmes in East Sussex, including ongoing financial claims and post-completion evaluation and monitoring as appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Capital Loan funded programmes: Growing Places Fund (GPF)	Oversight of GPF loan programme in East Sussex, including ongoing monitoring and evaluation and establishing arrangements for future deployment of returned GPF loan funding.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accountable body role, as defined by DLUHC	Establish ESCC in to-be-defined AB role, ensuring all appropriate functions transferred from SELEP. Ongoing capital programme management, reporting and decision making as the new Accountable Body will be required for future years both internally and to DLUHC.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Existing data and reports	SELEP reports, data and analysis to be shared with ESCC, or an agreed 'archive' to be set up with legacy arrangements in place for ESCC and partners to access the data.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

State of the Region Report	ESCC already produces its own State of the County report which will replace this.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Skills Data	ESCC will make use of other publicly available skills datasets and LSIP generated skills data.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
SELEP Partnership and Network groups	Team East Sussex (TES) to be retained as an informal partnership acting as the strategic oversight / advisory economic growth board for the county of East Sussex, providing the voice of business. ESCC to consider whether East Sussex CC and/or other East Sussex representatives' involvement will be wanted/needed in any of the SELEP working groups.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Town Boards	Representation on Hastings and Newhaven Town Deal Boards to be achieved through nominated TES business members.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Greater South East Net Zero Hub	Current SELEP member on board will initially be replaced by a UTLA representative from across SELEP region. The future intention is to have one representative from each of the three economic areas, including ESCC. To be determined by GSENZ hub board and any change to their terms of reference.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub	The SELEP South East Business Hub (SEBH) Growth Hub to be drawn to a close.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
East Sussex Growth Hub	The Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub which is an in-house run service will continue operating fully independent of SELEP from April 2024, contracted with and reporting directly to the Government Department for Business and Trade (DBT).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Growth Hub websites	SELEP Growth Hub websites to be discontinued in March 2024, to be replaced in East Sussex by a BES Growth Hub page on the ESCC website.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Match and other funding commitments	Options for alternative or additional sources of funding for a possible enhanced Growth Hub offer to be explored.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Business Support	This will continue through the Business East Sussex (BES) Steering Group, BES Providers Group, and the activities of the BES Growth Hub and wider ESCC Economic Development Team.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

SECTION 5: DELIVERY AND APPROVALS

Governance of the integration process
5.1 (a) What mechanisms will be in place to manage the integration process at the local level?
<p>ESCC teams have been fully involved in the transition process since early summer 2023, including colleagues in our Legal, Finance, Governance Services, Economic Development, Audit, Communications, Research & Information, and Major Projects & Growth departments. All of these teams have contributed to the development of the SELEP Integration Plan and our own East Sussex Integration Plan.</p> <p>As we continue to move through the integration process, colleagues stand ready to respond to any updated Government guidance (expected January 2024) and will revise the above draft plans accordingly. We are also prepared to establish new governance and monitoring/reporting procedures to align with the anticipated new Government framework (to replace the National Local</p>

Growth Assurance Framework) and will update the Team East Sussex (TES) Terms of Reference as necessary.

Throughout the process, senior managers including the ESCC S151 Officer, the TES Chair and the Leader of the County Council have been fully briefed on progress and are involved in the approvals process (see 5.2 below).

5.1 (b) If the existing LEP is intending to formally cease operation and dissolve following its integration, who will be responsible for managing the transition and any legacy issues?

SELEP is intending to formally cease operation following its integration from April 2024.

Throughout the current transition period, SELEP has worked closely with its six UTLAs, including ESCC, on developing the SELEP Integration Plan, and all of these organisations are continuing to work closely together on the plan’s implementation. At a local level, ESCC has developed its own East Sussex Integration Plan, arranging the activities of the SELEP plan into county-specific actions, to ensure timely progress and a smooth transition of LEP functions locally.

The current accountable body for SELEP is Essex CC, who has formal responsibility for managing the transition and any legacy issues, in close cooperation with the other five UTLAs. From April 2024, ESCC will take on local accountable body status, and will manage any local legacy issues. Overall responsibility for managing this at ESCC sits with the Head of Service for Economic Development, Skills, Culture and Infrastructure.

Approvals

5.2 Has this integration plan been agreed by the relevant boards/persons in both the local LEP(s) and local authority/authorities?

Yes

No

Please copy all relevant parties (including the Chair of the local LEP(s)) when you submit this plan.

- SELEP Strategic Board approval of draft SELEP Integration Plan, 13 October 2023. Board members from East Sussex CC Leader and 3 x TES business members supported this decision.
- ESCC Corporate Management Team (CMT) note and endorse SELEP Integration Plan and draft East Sussex Integration Plan, 22 November 2023.
- Team East Sussex approval of SELEP Integration Plan and draft East Sussex Integration Plan, 4 December 2023. TES board members approve including ESCC Leader.
- SELEP Strategic Board approval of SELEP Integration Plan, 8 December 2023. Board members from East Sussex CC Leader and 3 x TES business members intend to support this decision.
- ESCC Cabinet Briefing to consider SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 10 January 2024.
- Team East Sussex approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 29 January 2024.
- ESCC Cabinet approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 5 March 2024.
- To be determined if required - ESCC Full Council approval of SELEP Integration Plan and East Sussex Integration Plan, 19 March 2024.

NB – Dates are indicative.

At East Sussex CC, this Government ‘LA/LEP integration plan template’ has been agreed by: the Leader; the Corporate Director for Communities, Economy and Transport; the Chief Finance Officer (S151 Officer); and the Chair of Team East Sussex.

