



PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 14 JULY 2023

10.30 am COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillor Matthew Beaver (Chair)
Councillors Chris Collier, Alan Hay, Julia Hilton (Vice Chair), Ian Hollidge,
Eleanor Kirby-Green, Philip Lunn, Steve Murphy, Paul Redstone,
Stephen Shing and David Tutt

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the previous meeting (*Pages 3 - 10*)
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. Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) 2024/2025 (*Pages 11 - 230*)
Report by the Chief Executive.
6. Rights of Way and Countryside Team - update report (*Pages 231 - 236*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.
7. Implementation of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23 - 2027/28
(*Pages 237 - 248*)
Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.
8. Work programme (*Pages 249 - 266*)
Report by the Assistant Chief Executive.
9. Any other items previously notified under agenda item 4

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6 July 2023

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PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 28 March 2023.

| | |
|--------------|---|
| PRESENT | Councillors Matthew Beaver (Chair), Chris Collier, Alan Hay, Julia Hilton (Vice Chair), Ian Hollidge, Stephen Holt, Philip Lunn, Paul Redstone and Stephen Shing |
| LEAD MEMBERS | Councillors Nick Bennett, Claire Dowling and Rupert Simmons |
| ALSO PRESENT | Rupert Clubb, Director of Communities, Economy and Transport Ros Parker, Chief Operating Officer Ian Gutsell, Chief Finance Officer Anne Epsom, Head of Policy & Improvement, Orbis Procurement Nigel Brown, Assistant Director Property Karl Taylor, Assistant Director Operations Justin Foster, Waste Team Manager |

24. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

24.1 The Committee RESOLVED to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022 as a correct record.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

25.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eleanor Kirby-Green.

26. DISCLOSURES OF INTERESTS

26.1 Councillor Chris Collier declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest under agenda item 8, Food Waste Environment Act 2021 requirements, as he is the Cabinet Member for Performance at Lewes District Council.

27. URGENT ITEMS

27.1 There were none.

28. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR)

28.1 The Chair introduced the report which asked the Committee to review its input into the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process for the financial year 2023/24 and to consider any RPPR related items that it may wish to add to the work programme.

28.2 The Committee discussed the report, and a summary of the discussion is given below.

28.3 The Committee commented that one of the potential areas of work that could be included in the work programme was the idea of developing a range of 'shovel ready' projects that had been costed and prioritised (with a weighting in terms of importance and benefit) for inclusion in the Council's budget should Government funding become available. This could be developed by asking officers to include information on areas for improvement, policy changes, or service issues that require funding as part of the reports that are presented to the Committee. For example, the upcoming reports on the Rights of Way service and the Libraries and Information Service.

28.4 The Committee noted that the timetable of the RPPR process would mean that the Committee would need to agree detailed work now in order to have a range of projects ready for inclusion in the following financial years budget.

28.5 The Director of Communities, Economy and Transport commented that one of the challenges is that often Government funding is made available for specific purposes and may be subject to a bidding process. It can be difficult to find the necessary revenue funding in order to develop a pipeline of costed projects, although the Government has more recently recognised this problem and made capacity building funding available (e.g. for the Bus Service Improvement Plan). Some new policies, such as the requirement to collect food waste, are new areas but are not considered as a new burden for which the Government will provide additional funding. This can put added pressure on any revenue funding the Council has. As the RPPR process is an iterative process, the Scrutiny Committee has an opportunity to comment on where it might be better to allocate any funding that does become available.

28.6 The Committee RESOLVED to:

1) Note the report; and

2) Request that future reports include areas for improvement, policy changes, or service issues that require funding, in order to develop a prioritised pipeline of 'shovel ready' projects that the Committee could investigate, support and recommend for funding.

29. SCRUTINY REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT: SOCIAL VALUE AND BUYING LOCAL

29.1 The Chair of the Review Board, Councillor Chris Collier introduced the report of the Review Board on the Scrutiny Review of Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local. He thanked the other Board members who were Councillors Julia Hilton and Paul Redstone, and the officers and other witnesses who took part in the review. Councillor Julia Hilton and Councillor Paul Redstone also commented on the report.

29.2 The Chief Operating Officer outlined that the report was very well received by the Procurement Team and the department is happy to take forward the findings and recommendations from the review. The Head of Policy & Improvement, Orbis Procurement also welcomed the review and outlined that the Team is happy with the recommendations of the review and will be taking them forward. Councillor Bennett, Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change thanked everyone for the report and the work that they had done.

29.3 There were no questions on the report from the Committee.

29.4 The Committee RESOLVED to endorse the report of the Review Board, and make recommendations to Cabinet for comment, and County Council for approval.

30. COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFERS AND ASSET USE

30.1 The Assistant Director Property introduced the report and summarised the key points regarding the Council's policy and processes for community asset transfers and asset disposal and use. He highlighted that there are some statutory considerations where the Council is required to secure best value for disposals which applies to the sale of property assets and includes the freehold transfer of land/buildings or the grant of a lease over 7 years.

30.2 The Committee discussed the report and a summary of the questions and key points raised is given below.

30.3 The Committee asked how many Council assets are currently declared surplus and being considered for disposal. The Assistant Director Property responded that there are currently ten building assets that are surplus and being considered for disposal, retention for income generation or transfer.

30.4 The Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy is dated 2016 and some Committee members commented that community groups in Hastings were not aware of the policy. The Committee asked what plans there were to update the CAT policy and ensure that it is communicated to Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners so that they are aware of the policy.

30.5 The Assistant Director Property outlined that the CAT Policy had been included within the Strategic Asset Plan 2020-2025, and officers would update the CAT policy within the next six months. The update work will include talking to VCSE groups about the policy and many groups are already aware of the CAT policy.

30.6 The Committee asked if the Council has a mechanism for working collaboratively with public and private sector partners to bring forward the development of land or property where the Council owns or has an interest in part of the potential development site (e.g. where working together would unlock a site for development for the benefit of the local community).

30.7 The Assistant Director Property explained that this is the role of the Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES) programme and there are examples of successful projects where the SPACES Group has pooled land to realise development opportunities. Officers are also part of a wider Developer Group in East Sussex, and the Council has sold land in conjunction with private developers.

30.8 The Committee noted that the original report request included a request for an update on the SPACES programme and its successes. The Committee asked if it would be possible to have a follow up report on the updated CAT policy and an update on the SPACES programme.

30.9 The Assistant Director Property outlined that a review of the SPACES programme was carried out in January 2023 which looked at the future focus of the programme and has a detailed implementation plan. All partners have agreed a slightly different approach, which will focus on Adult Social Care wellbeing, asset rationalisation and climate change. The Chief Operating Officer added that it will be possible to bring an update report on the CAT policy and SPACES programme to a future meeting.

30.10 Councillor Stephen Shing asked about the disposal of the former Hindsland playing fields in Polegate which is listed on the Council's Forward Plan of Decisions and whether part of the site could be used as open space for the community. The Assistant Director Property clarified that the site was being marketed and any proposals for community use would be considered together with any other proposals for the site, or part of the site.

30.11 The Committee RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) request an update report on the SPACES programme and updated CAT policy.

31. FOOD WASTE - ENVIRONMENT ACT 2021 REQUIREMENTS

31.1 The Waste Team Manager introduced the report and summarised the key points and implications for the Council of the requirement in the Environment Act 2021 for councils to provide a food waste collection service. The report outlines the implications for East Sussex County Council (ESCC) as the waste disposal authority. The District and Borough councils (D&Bs) in East Sussex, who are the waste collection authorities (WCAs), will be responsible for operating the food waste collection service and they will then deliver the food waste to ESCC for composting. The Waste Team Manager outlined that he thought ESCC was in a good position to deal with this new requirement with the waste disposal facilities that are already in place.

31.2 The Committee discussed the report and a summary of the key points and questions raised is given below.

Use of home composting 'hot bins'

31.3 The Committee commented that providing food waste collections in rural areas could be expensive and asked whether the Council could request that the WCAs offer 'hot bins' for food waste composting instead of food collections. The Waste Team Manager explained that it is a legal requirement to collect food waste so it might not be possible to offer home food composting facilities as an alternative. However, he would investigate and come back to the Committee with an answer.

Food waste composition of 'black bag' residual waste

31.4 The Committee questioned whether the estimate of around one third of 'black bag' (residual) waste being food waste was accurate, as Covid and the cost of living crisis has made people much more aware of reducing wasting food. The Committee also asked if the Waste Team knows the proportion of the different types of food waste to draw a distinction between the ones that could be minimised (e.g. the proportion of surplus food waste/cooked food, versus food preparation waste such as peelings that are less amenable to waste minimisation). The Waste Team Manager responded that percentage of food waste in black bins is quite high, and the Waste Team is planning to carry out a composition study to get an up to date analysis of the composition of 'black bag' waste. This will cover the different types of food waste.

Environmental impacts of food waste collection

31.5 The Committee commented that a food waste collection service would add extra vehicle movements and carbon emissions and increase resource use. It asked what the energy and environmental costs would be of the food collection service and whether ESCC would monitor the impact on carbon emissions. The Waste Team Manager explained that not all vehicle movements to deliver food waste for disposal would be to the Woodlands facility at Whitesmith. There will be other hubs to collect food waste in Brighton and Peabsham to bulk up food waste before transporting it for processing at the Woodlands site. He outlined that the carbon emissions for the service will be monitored.

Education and Communication to reduce food waste

31.6 The Committee agreed that it would be better to try and minimise food waste through education and asked if there was a role for ESCC in working with the WCAs on communications and education activities to minimise food waste. The Waste Team Manager responded that minimising food waste is very important, and the Team will do some work on this with the WCAs. ESCC can also work with the WCAs on communications and education activities and the Waste Team is happy to do this.

Food waste processing/composting capacity

31.7 The Committee noted that the capacity at the current composting facility at Woodlands may eventually be exceeded and there may be up to an additional 5,000 tonnes of food waste per year. It asked whether ESCC is investigating increasing food waste processing capacity in case the amount of food waste collected exceeds current capacity, and whether establishing smaller scale local processing/composting facilities is being considered to reduce transport requirements.

31.8 The Waste Team Manager outlined that the Team is talking to Veolia about the possibility of expanding capacity at the Woodlands facility. However, it is difficult to predict how much food waste will actually be collected and typically the amounts drop off following the introduction of a food waste collection service due to behaviour change. Therefore, it is hard to predict the need for extra capacity. The development of smaller scale local community composting groups is something that could be explored at a local level (e.g. with local community groups via the District & Borough councils).

Collection arrangements

31.9 Collections from flats and apartment blocks will be something that the WCAs will decide but is likely that blocks of flats will be provided with communal food waste collection facilities.

31.10 The Committee asked whether providing a food waste collection service is compulsory and can people opt out. The Waste Team Manager responded that it is compulsory to provide a separate weekly collection and it is likely all local authorities will have to do so by March 2025. Everyone will get a food waste caddy due to the obligation to provide a food waste collection service.

Funding

31.11 The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) have indicated verbally that County Councils will not receive any extra funding for food waste collections as it is expected that they will make a saving because composting/processing food waste is cheaper than processing 'black bag' waste. Additional new burden funding will be made available to WCAs to cover the capital costs of providing the food waste collection service and possibly to cover some of the revenue costs.

31.12 The Committee asked when more detailed information would be available on the collection requirements and funding. The Waste Team Manager outlined that it could be imminently in the next two to three weeks or after the local government elections.

31.13 The Committee RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the report; and
- 2) Request and update report in three to six months time.

32. WORK PROGRAMME

32.1 The Committee discussed the future work programme, and a summary of the key points raised is given below.

Work Programme - Economic Development

32.2 The Committee discussed scrutiny involvement in the Economic Development project development process and establishing a scrutiny board or reference group to work on this topic. The Director for Communities, Economy and Transport suggested that the best way of scrutiny having input into the process would be for the Committee to be involved with the development of the Economic Growth Strategy and would welcome the Committee's input into this piece of work.

32.3 Councillor Hilton commented that there might be an opportunity to look at the Economic Growth Strategy through the lens of climate change and examine how it could help promote green businesses. Committee members also noted that it would be helpful to include some lessons learnt as part of the work on the Economic Growth Strategy and the ongoing role of scrutiny in scrutinising this area of work. The Committee agreed to form a reference group to provide scrutiny input into the development of the Economic Growth Strategy.

Work Programme - Southern Water

32.4 The Committee noted that since the November 2022 meeting with representatives from Southern Water there had been further serious pollution incidents, notably at Bulverhythe. It was suggested that it would be helpful to put together a set of questions for Southern Water in advance of the next update from them at the 23 November 2023 Committee meeting. Committee members also noted that it would be important to get verbal updates from representatives from Ofwat and the Environment Agency on any changes in regulation and investment.

Highways Scoping Board

32.5 Councillor Lunn commented that the scoping meeting had been very interesting and productive and the recommended scope for the scrutiny review will help provide a response to residents on the issue of potholes and help with communications in this area.

32.6 Councillor Hilton asked if it would be possible to add the condition of pavements to the terms of reference of the review and indicated that she would like to be part of the Review Board. Councillor Stephen Shing asked if the Council had a plan to enlarge drainage capacity. Councillor Hollidge, Chair of the Scoping Board, commented that it would be better to focus on one specific aspect of highways i.e. potholes, before examining other areas.

32.7 The Committee discussed the issue of highways drainage and flooding from highways into properties. It was suggested that the Committee could explore this subject in more detail after the pothole review to see if it an issue across the County and what could be done about it. The Committee noted that this might be a wider piece of work looking at drainage and flooding and the links to the Nature Recovery Network and the follow-on work from Southern Water on reducing the use of combined sewer overflows. It might be possible to produce a menu of actions the Council could take on these issues in a joined up strategic way.

32.8 The Director of Communities, Economy and Transport outlined that the department does have a drainage plan to enlarge the capacity of highway drainage pipes where possible and improve capacity gradually. However, many pipes are only 150mm wide and cannot cope with heavy rainfall events such as those that sometimes occur, especially during the summer. There is funding to deal with drainage issues such as clearing pipes from root penetration, but it is not possible to replace all the drainage infrastructure due to the amount of funding available and the disruption this would cause in digging up the roads to replace drainage pipes. It is possible to reduce the risk of flooding, but it may not be possible to eliminate the risk completely. Reducing flood risk can be a challenge, and deciding where to spend the available funding for the most impact is key.

32.9 The Committee agreed to proceed with the Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management and the terms of reference for the review. The Committee agreed that the members of the Review Board will be Councillors Matthew Beaver, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Eleanor Kirby-Green and Philip Lunn, with Councillor Hollidge as Chair of the Review Board.

Forward Plan of Decisions

32.10 The Committee commented that as the Forward Plan only covers the decisions that are being made in the next four months it sometimes does not give the Committee sufficient time to examine issues, policies or service changes. The Committee asked if there is a way of getting an earlier indication of forthcoming decisions.

32.11 The Director of Communities Economy and Transport suggested that one way of getting an earlier indication would be through the State of the County report and the RPPR process. The Committee could use these reports to look at upcoming issues, some of which a cyclical such as the review of the Waste and Minerals Plan and the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Changes in legislation usually have a consultation period which may flag up any changes in advance of implementation, and having a section in reports to highlight upcoming issues may be helpful.

32.12 The department has been quite good at flagging up forthcoming issues and service changes such as through the work that was carried on the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy, the Highways contract and the LTP. It might aid the Committee to have reports on service areas they are aware of but would like to know more about such as the Registration Service and the existing scheduled reports on Rights of Way and Libraries. The Waste Disposal Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract is due to end in 2033 and this may be something to start looking at in around five years time.

32.13 The Committee noted the 12 June 2023 report to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health on the retender of the Integrated Health and Wellbeing Service and asked if this would incorporate Active Travel. The Director of Communities Economy and Transport outlined that this may be more a question for the People Scrutiny Committee, but the Public Health Team will look at the wider determinants of health as part of the procurement activity and in meeting public health needs.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) Reference Group - Verbal Update

32.14 Councillor Paul Redstone, Chair of the LTP Reference Group gave a verbal update on the work of the reference group. He outlined that it was a complex and far reaching piece of work which is being guided by officers and the consultants, Steer. The Group has had some discussion about the methodology and approach to the revised LTP and has been looking at a range of transport scenarios through a series of workshops. The next stages of the Group's work will be to examine a preferred transport scenario and vision for the LTP together with the interventions that will be needed to deliver it.

32.15 The Committee RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the work programme and Forward Plan;
- 2) Agree to form a reference group to provide scrutiny input into the development of the Economic Growth Strategy (paragraph 32.3);
- 3) Develop a list of questions for Southern Water in advance of the 23 November 2023 Committee meeting (paragraph 32.4);
- 4) Agree to proceed with a Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management, with the Review Board comprised of Councillors Beaver, Hilton, Hollidge (Chair), Kirby-Green and Lunn (paragraph 32.9);
- 5) Request that future reports include a section on areas for service improvement, policy changes, or upcoming service issues (paragraph 28.6); and
- 6) Amend the work programme by adding an update report on the SPACES programme and updated CAT policy (paragraph 30.11), and an update report on food waste collection (paragraph 31.13).

The meeting ended at 12.22 pm.

Councillor Matthew Beaver (Chair)

Report to: Place Scrutiny Committee

Date of meeting: 14 July 2023

By: Chief Executive

Title: Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

Purpose: To begin the committee's input to the Council's business and financial planning process (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources) for 2024/25.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The scrutiny committee is recommended to:

(1) Consider information within the 2022/23 end of year Council monitoring report and State of the County 2023 report relevant to the remit of the committee;

(2) Agree key areas of interest for scrutiny and to ensure these are reflected in the committee's future work programme, including any further information required for consideration by the committee at its autumn awayday; and

(3) Establish a RPPR scrutiny board to consider the developing Portfolio Plans and financial plans and to submit scrutiny's final comments on them to Cabinet in January 2024.

1. Background

1.1 On 27 June 2023 Cabinet considered two reports which form important annual milestones in the ongoing Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) cycle – the Council's integrated business and financial planning process.

1.2 The end of year performance monitoring report for 2022/23 set out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget and Capital Programme, together with Risks at the end of March 2023. The State of the County 2023 report set out the current operating context for the Council in preparation for more detailed planning for the 2024/25 financial year and beyond. The report provided an up to date understanding of how the Council will need to continue to respond to the wide range of policy, demographic and financial drivers which influence the outlook for the authority.

1.3 The State of the County report highlighted that uncertainty continues to define the context within which the Council is working. The challenging national economic environment, including the increased cost of living, continues to affect our residents, and to generate ongoing cost and resource pressures on the Council itself. The financial outlook for the Council remains unclear, with a further one year financial settlement anticipated for 2024/25 and any significant national reforms to local government funding unlikely before the next general election, which is expected in 2024. Many of our major, demand-led, services are subject to significant national reforms, with associated service and financial risks, and there is a continuing pressing need to work towards addressing the impacts of climate change.

1.4 Within this uncertain national environment, we continue to experience increased demand for services locally, arising from demographic changes, increased need and the longer term impacts of Covid. There are also challenges securing the skilled workforce we need to respond to the pressures we face and to develop our services for the future. Taken together, these national and local factors make future service and financial planning very challenging. When the 2023/24 balanced budget was approved by Full Council on 7 February 2023, the deficit on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2025/26 was £40.672m. Updating the MTFP for normal factors

(such as the latest inflation rates and an additional year), the position would have been a deficit budget position by 2026/27 of £55.499m. The MTFP position does not account for the impact of Adult Social Care reform, and if grant funding for social care, currently announced for two years, continues at the same level after 2024/25, the deficit would reduce by £28.2m.

1.5 In this context, we will need to continue to take action proactively to prepare for the time ahead, to maximise our resilience as an organisation and to best manage growing demand for our services. The report sets out that the Council's relatively stable financial position for 2023/24 presents an opportunity to intensify ongoing work to maximise organisational resilience, make best use of our resources, and to equip our services for future demands, given the significant challenges ahead.

2. Place scrutiny committee engagement in RPPR

2.1 This committee's contribution to the RPPR process is vitally important and is threaded through all scrutiny work. The insight and evidence gathered through previous and ongoing scrutiny work is drawn together and enhanced in specific RPPR sessions which will, ultimately, enable each scrutiny committee to provide commentary and recommendations to be taken into account by Cabinet and Council before a final decision is taken on the updated Council Plan, budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) early in 2024. The diagram attached at **appendix 1** summarises scrutiny involvement throughout the annual RPPR cycle.

2.2 The **July scrutiny committees** have a particular focus on reviewing current service and financial performance information contained in the end of year monitoring report, as well as considering new developments which will impact on services as set out in the forward-looking demographic, policy and financial analysis in the State of the County report. This is to ensure the scrutiny committees have a full understanding of the current context and future pressures for the service areas within the remit of each committee.

2.3 The following attachments are provided to support the committee in these tasks:

- **Appendix 2** comprises extracts from the 2022/23 **end of year monitoring report** considered by Cabinet in June – departmental appendices not relevant to this committee's remit have been removed. The Strategic Risk Register (appendix 7 of the end of year monitoring report) is included for information, however the Audit Committee has a lead role in relation to oversight of risk management and the Strategic Risk Register.
- **Appendix 3** contains the full **State of the County report** as considered by Cabinet in June. The committee is invited to focus on the elements relevant to services within its remit, particularly in appendix 2 to the report – the national and local policy outlook.

2.4 Based on the information in the attached reports, and Members' wider accumulated knowledge and evidence, the committee is invited to identify any key areas of interest or lines of enquiry which it will pursue through subsequent RPPR discussions and/or its wider work programme. This includes any additional information required for the September meeting or autumn awayday to inform the committee's input to the RPPR process.

2.5 Areas of interest to be prioritised for scrutiny may arise from, for example, areas experiencing performance challenges, significant policy changes or new service developments. Careful selection of topics to focus on will enable the committee to be well positioned to comment on the impact of service changes, future service delivery and budget proposals as part of the ongoing RPPR process.

2.6 The **September 2023 and November 2023 scrutiny committee meetings** can consider any additional information which has been requested and any updated information reported to Cabinet during the autumn. Further refinements to the committees' ongoing work programmes can also be considered at each meeting. In addition, the committees' **autumn work planning awaydays** provide an opportunity to receive more detailed information on any specific areas of interest identified by Members, and to review the overall work programme to ensure it is aligned to strategic priorities for the Council and scrutiny.

2.7 The committee is also asked to agree the membership of its **RPPR board**, which will meet in **December 2023** to agree detailed comments and any recommendations on the emerging Portfolio Plans and financial plans to be put to Cabinet on behalf of the scrutiny committee.

2.8 The **March 2024 scrutiny committees** review the process and their input into the RPPR process and receive feedback on how scrutiny input has been reflected in final plans. Any issues arising can be reflected in the future work programme.

2.9 Running alongside the scrutiny process, whole-Council Member forums will ensure that Members can keep an overview of the emerging picture across all service areas including the impacts of national announcements on our plans. Chief Officers will also provide any briefings required by group spokespersons to assist them in contributing to the RPPR process.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

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Local Members:

All

Background Documents:

None

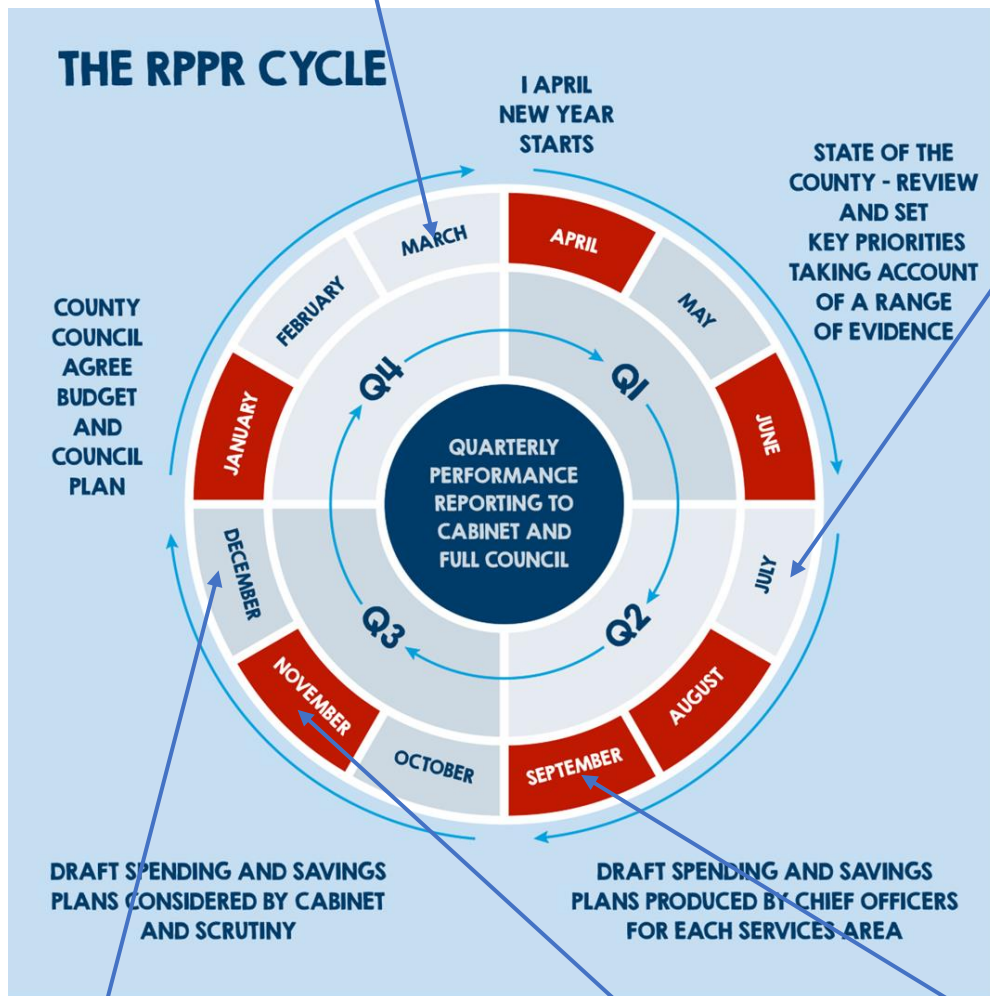
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5. March scrutiny committee meetings

Scrutiny committees review their input into the budget setting and business planning process, receive feedback on any specific recommendations and consider any potential improvement to the way they are involved in the process for the coming year, including the information they receive and the way they scrutinise the planning process.

1. July scrutiny committee meetings

Scrutiny committees review the Q4 Council Monitoring report (backward look) and the State of the County report (forward look) with a focus on services within their remit. The Q4 report enables committees to scrutinise performance in relation to the Council's targets, financial performance and risk issues over the previous year. The State of the County report enables scrutiny to consider the key issues in the policy, financial and operating environment for the relevant service areas in the coming planning period. The committees identify any aspects of performance, policy, budget or service issues that they would like to explore in more detail through their autumn business planning (RPPR) agenda items or via their broader work programme.



Scrutiny input is embedded throughout the annual budget setting and business planning (RPPR) cycle

4. December RPPR Boards

The committees' RPPR Boards scrutinise the latest information on the overall financial position, including the provisional settlement if available, relevant draft updated Portfolio Plans and savings plans. Scrutiny comments and recommendations on financial and service plans for the coming year are agreed and submitted for consideration by Cabinet in January.

3. November scrutiny meetings

The committees continue to consider the latest available information on the policy and financial context, review any additional information requested in September and agree any further information required for committees' RPPR Boards.

2. September scrutiny meetings

The committees consider the latest available information on the policy and financial context for the coming year and review any additional budget or service information requested in July. Further information or scrutiny work is agreed as required.

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Title: Council Monitoring Report – end of year 2022/23
Report to: Cabinet
Date: 27 June 2023
Report by: Chief Executive
Purpose: To report Council monitoring for the full year 2022/23

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council;
- 2) note the changes to the Strategic Risk Register; and
- 3) agree to £5m additional provision being made to the Capital Programme in relation to Highways Maintenance for 2023/24.

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 March 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 7.

1.3 The Council has faced a number of external challenges over the past year. The increase in rates of inflation have affected our residents, local businesses and our supply chain. We have also continued to see increased demand for support as part of the longer-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Departmental Appendices (2-6) provide examples of how we have responded to these challenges.

2. Overview of Council Plan outturns 2022/23

2.1 35 (65%) of the 54 Council Plan targets were achieved and 15 (28%) were not achieved. 4 (7%) are carried over for reporting in quarter 1 2023/24. The carry overs are measures, where action has been completed, but the year-end outturn data is not yet available to report against the target.

2.2 Of the 54 targets, the outturns for 10 (18%) are not comparable with the outturns from 2021/22. Of the remaining 44 measures which can be compared, 25 (46%) improved or were at the maximum (i.e., the most that can be achieved); 3 (6%) remained the same; 13 (24%) had a lower outturn; and 3 (6%) are carried over for reporting in quarter 1 2023/24. Although 13 measures are showing a lower outturn compared with 2021/22, 7 of these met their target for 2022/23.

2.3 The Strategic Risk Register, Appendix 7, was reviewed and updated to reflect the Council's risk profile. The 'Placements for Children and Young People in our Care' risk has been escalated to the Strategic Risk Register. The risk was previously included in the Children's Services Departmental Risk Register. Risk 4 (Health), Risk 5 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources), Risk 6 (Local Economic Growth), Risk 9 (Workforce), and Risk 15 (Climate) have updated risk controls. Risk 17 (Safeguarding of Children and Young People) covered the risks of failing to recruit and retain an effective children's social care workforce. It has been removed as a standalone strategic risk and incorporated into the existing Workforce strategic risk.

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 overspend of £10.7m (£10.8m at quarter 3). The main headlines are:

- The outturn in Children's Services (CSD) is an overspend of £11.5m, a decrease of £0.1m since quarter 3.

The outturn comprises an overspend against the budget relating to Early Help and Social Care of £10.328m and a further overspend of £2.422m in Communication, Planning and Performance, mainly within Home to School Transport. This is offset by an underspend of £1.217m in Central Resources, where the department records any efficiencies and staff vacancies from across a number of areas in the department.

The department is continuing to look for further mitigations, with senior managers leading in taking every opportunity to save costs where possible. However, containing costs in Children's Services continues to be a significant challenge across the country, against the background of increased demand and complexity of needs emerging from the pandemic and acute supply side shortages in both care and education provision.

The department has continued looking at any longer-term impact from the 2022/23 outturn on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP includes significant investments totalling some £8.9m for Home to School Transport, Looked After Children, Locality social work, new school attendance duties and support for care leavers from 2023/24.

- The Adult Social Care (ASC) outturn is an overspend of £0.1m (£0.2m at quarter 3). This comprises an overspend of £1.7m in the Independent Sector, offset by an underspend of £1.6m in Directly Provided Services, the latter due mainly to staffing vacancies.
- The outturn in Communities, Economy & Transport (CET) is an underspend of £0.7m (no change from quarter 3). The main underspend arising primarily within Waste Services, due to increased income from recycling, electricity sales, and reduced disposal costs. As agreed, £2.4m of this windfall Waste income has been transferred to the Waste Reserve to cover future budget pressures, and a further £1.4m will be used to cover the cost of the Record Service move from Ropemaker Park. There is a net overspend of £0.6m on the Highways budget due to streetlighting electricity, the cost of correcting safety defects, additional gritting and drainage works, and additional tree work due to Ash Die Back.
- The Business Services (BSD) outturn is an underspend of £0.2m (£0.3m at quarter 3). This resulted from minor underspends across services due mainly to vacancies.

3.2 Within Treasury Management (TM), Corporate Funding and other centrally held budgets (CHB) there is an underspend of £8.9m including the general contingency (£11.0m at quarter 3):

- Corporate Funding budgets have overspent by £0.7m, because of a £0.6m error by Rother District Council in their precept returns to the Council at budget setting, and a £0.7m reduction in the income from Business Rate Pooling arrangements compared with the district and borough forecasting used for budget setting. This is offset by a £0.6m grant from government for the Council's share of an accumulated surplus in the national business rates levy account that was announced as part of the final local government settlement.
- Within CHB an accounting adjustment of £1.0m is required to reflect the potential risk that increasing outstanding debt levels will not be settled. This is a book entry required by accounting standards, based on a prudent judgement of future risk. This has resulted in a reduction in the underspend. The General Contingency of £4.3m will be required in full to offset part of the Service and Corporate Funding overspend.
- There is a £6.2m underspend on TM as a result of improved returns on market investment. The slippage on the capital programme, and an increase in our cash balances, has also removed the need to borrow externally in 2022/23. This underspend has reduced by £0.5m since quarter 3 because interest accrued on S106 contributions was higher than forecast due to increased interest rates. The entire £6.2m will be required to offset part of the Service and Corporate Funding overspend.

- The remaining £1.763m of the Service and Corporate Funding comprises an operational overspend of £0.748m, compared with £0.743m at quarter 3, and the £1.015m accounting adjustment for increased levels of debt.

3.3 The Council is still experiencing residual COVID-19 related costs and income losses which are being fully mitigated from general and specific funding. The following table shows the use of this funding in 2022/23:

| COVID-19 Grants 2022/23 (£m) | Carried forward | Use in-year (including payback*) | Specific set-aside for LAC in future yrs | Estimated balance remaining |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|------------------------------------|
| COVID-19 General Funding | 14.1 | (5.0) | (3.1) | 6.0 |
| COVID-19 Specific Funding | 9.0 | (4.7) | - | 4.3 |
| Total funding | 23.1 | (9.7) | (3.1) | 10.3 |

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

3.4 Capital Programme expenditure for the year totalled £75.4m against an approved budget of £84.1m, a net variation of £8.7m. Of the net variation position, £1.4m relates to Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) funded projects being delivered by, or in partnership with, others, where the timing of expenditure and delivery is largely outside of the Council's control.

Main variations include:

- Bexhill and Hastings Link Road – Project costs remain for post excavation archaeology, landscaping, and remaining compensation claims. There is a projected overall overspend on the scheme in the region of £2.3m, of which £1.0m has materialised during 2022/23.
- Westfield Lane – Underspend of £0.6m due to budget provisionally held for potential land charge not being required.
- Emergency Active Travel Fund – Underspend of £0.6m where the grant was larger than expected and a number of schemes bid for turned out to not be feasible.
- Managing Back Office System (MBOS) Programme – slippage of £1.8m which reflects delays in build and testing.
- IT&D Digital Strategy – Slippage of £0.7m largely due to staff resource limitations. None of the delayed projects or programmes affects the Council's existing systems or security but may delay new capabilities being introduced.
- Bus Service Improvement Programme – Slippage of £0.7m as awaiting outcome of consultant's reports before commencement of bus priority infrastructure work.
- Visibly Better Road – Slippage of £0.5m due to the need to redirect footway gangs to repair potholes.
- Other Integrated Transport Schemes – slippage of £0.7m due to delays on a number of Integrated Transport schemes including the Casualty Reduction Programme, Battle Hill, Dropped Kerbs and Uckfield Bus Station.
- Climate Emergency Works – £1.2m profiled to 2023/24 to cover retention payments not yet due and underspends now being allocated to other 2023/24 projects.
- Hastings Bexhill Movement and Access Programme (LEP funded project) – slippage of £1.2m mainly due to elements of the project being delayed until commencement of new highways contract.

There are several other schemes that have smaller variances.

4 Progress against Council Priorities

Driving sustainable economic growth

4.1 The Council has spent £299m with 898 local suppliers over the past 12 months, 66% of our total spend, exceeding our target of 60%. We continued throughout the year to work with suppliers to maximise the social value delivered by our contracts. Our target for the year was to secure commitments for economic, social and environmental benefits that were of equivalent value of at least 10% of our spend with suppliers. At the end of 2022/23 we had managed to secure commitments that were equal to 57% of our spend with suppliers (Appendix 3).

4.2 As part of our work on supporting our local economy we helped create or safeguard the equivalent of nearly 200 full-time jobs last year. In addition our Trading Standards team provided advice or training to 379 businesses and individuals. We also continued to work with partners to develop ways to attract visitors to the county as well as supporting our local cultural sector to attract funding (Appendix 5).

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 2022. Both the percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance and the percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance were slightly above target but in line with the outturn from 2021/22 (5% and 6% compared to targets of 4%). The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 13%, below the target of 14%, and the same outturn as 2021/22. These targets were set as part of a ten-year programme of investment to improve the condition of roads in East Sussex. The winter saw challenging weather for the condition of the roads, with two periods of very wet and cold weather in November/December 2022 and March 2023. By the end of January 2023, we had more than doubled the number of pothole repair gangs from 10 to 23 and extended working hours. Overall, 93.7% of the repairs to potholes were completed within the required timescales in 2022/23. 30,000 potholes were repaired, with 21,600 of these potholes in the road. This is a significant increase on the 24,000 potholes completed in 2021/22. (Appendix 5). Cabinet will receive, at the same meeting as this report being considered, a report updating Cabinet on the condition of the highways and recommending Cabinet consider additional investment on highways maintenance in 2023/24 be increased by £15.7m. It is proposed that £5m of this increase be funded through additional provision being made to the Capital Programme. Such additional provision will be funded by borrowing which will have a revenue implication of £375k per annum.

4.4 A number of highway improvements were completed in 2022/23 using the one-off investment funding agreed by Cabinet in November 2021. Using the extra investment, we have completed an extra 1,117 patch repairs over 735 sites. We have also completed 367 small patch repairs to footways. We installed 1,193 new signs, costing £0.5m, to replace worn out signs. We also completed £0.2m worth of refreshed road marking works (Appendix 5).

4.5 A new highways contract was awarded to Balfour Beatty Living Places in October 2022. The new contract is worth £297m and started in May 2023. Balfour Beatty Living Places will be responsible for maintaining the county's highways network and infrastructure, including roads, pavements, drainage, streetlights, traffic lights and bridges. As part of the procurement process Balfour Beatty Living Places demonstrated how they would help reduce the Council's carbon footprint, provide value for money, and improve social wellbeing in East Sussex (Appendix 5).

4.6 The Government confirmed in quarter 2 that the Council would receive £41m towards our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). This allocation was the third highest for shire/rural authorities, and the highest per capita amongst these authorities. The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes were agreed in quarter 3, and the first tranche of funding has now been received from the Department for Transport. The new Bus Team are analysing the tenders from bus operators for the enhanced bus services, with the additional services expected to start running in quarter 1 2023/24 (Appendix 5).

4.7 The proportion of young people participating in education, training or employment with training improved in quarter 4, achieving the targets set for the year. The percentage of Looked After Children participating in education, training or employment with training at academic age 17 remained slightly below target, Virtual School, Through Care Team and Youth Employability Service are continuing to provide support to those not participating in education to re-engage (Appendix 4).

4.8 We exceeded our targets for adult education this year. We had 1,166 enrolments across our Family Learning programmes, over twice as many as our target of 500. The refurbishment of our library buildings continued in 2022/23, with works completed at Rye and Newhaven libraries.

Keeping vulnerable people safe

4.9 The increase in demand for Children's Social Care continued throughout 2022/23. There was an 37% increase in the number of referrals to the Single Point of Advice compared with 2020/21. We continue to ensure that there is pace and purpose in our work with Children in Need and that plans are ended where it is safe to do so. The number of open Children in Need (CIN) cases fell from a high of 980 at the end of quarter 2, to 897 by the end of quarter 4. The rate of children with a Child Protection Plan was 64.8 per 10,000 children (691 children) at the end of quarter 4, above the target of 50.3 (536 children). There continues to be robust management oversight of plans, with additional scrutiny of plans being provided by mid-way reviews by the Children Protection Advisor (Appendix 4).

4.10 The rate of LAC at quarter 4 was 62.3 per 10,000 children (664 children). Of the 664 children, 73 are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC), and this cohort represented 25% of our new entrants to care in 2022/23. A change in the National Transfer Scheme for UASC means that the authority is now required to look after up to 106 UASC. We are also experiencing an increase in asylum seeking young people, placed in adult hotels in the area requiring age assessment and placements. There are also still delays in the court system which is continuing to impact on how quickly we are able to secure Special Guardianship Orders and adoptions (Appendix 4).

4.11 The percentage of Health and Social Care Connect referrals that were triaged and progressed to required services within 24 hours was 87.3% at year end, below the target of 95.0%. Performance was affected by a combination of an increase in referrals and workforce challenges. A number of vacant posts have now been recruited to and sickness absence has reduced. The percentage of Health and Social Care Connect contacts that were appropriate and effective remained above target (Appendix 2).

4.12 Trading Standards made 530 positive interventions to protect vulnerable people in 2022/23, 418 of which were support sessions and training and 112 were direct interventions. Trading Standards also obtained Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) confiscation orders against convicted individuals totalling nearly £100,000. The POCA ensures that criminals do not profit from their crimes. Trading Standards also received civil compensation of over £160,000 in quarter 4, which is being distributed to nine victims of fraud (Appendix 5).

Helping people help themselves

4.13 The winter period and final quarter of 2022/23 was one of extreme pressure across the country for NHS and care services. Locally our staff worked hard to rapidly use our share of the extra national £500m Social Care Discharge Fund to best effect, helping patients be discharged from hospital and into onward care as fast as possible. This, and other winter rapid improvement work meant that the Council was part of a successful Sussex Integrated Care System bid to be one of six national 'Discharge Frontrunners'. This will trial innovative long-term solutions in 2023/24, to free up hospital beds and make sure patients get the right care at the right time, which could be rolled out more widely across the NHS and care system if successful (Appendix 2).

4.14 The take up of NHS Health Checks by eligible residents living in the top 20% most deprived areas in the county continues to be below target. The Hastings and St Leonards Primary Care Network started delivering health checks in February and are specifically targeting those living in the most deprived areas (Appendix 2).

4.15 We continued to provide support to Ukrainian guests living in East Sussex as part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme and their hosts. Over 400 school places have been allocated to Ukrainian children. We have also provided support with accommodation to over 100 families (Appendix 2).

4.16 We completed four infrastructure schemes to improve road safety in quarter 4. Two of these schemes were in Eastbourne, one in Bodiam and one in Hastings. In total during 2022/23, the highways contractor completed 17 road safety schemes. Several other schemes have been designed, however it was not possible to schedule these within the final works programme before the end of the existing highways contract. These schemes will be carried over for the new highways contractor to implement. As part of our wider work on road safety we delivered 555 'Bikeability' courses to 4,354 individuals at participating schools and the Cycle Centre at Eastbourne Sports Park in 2022/23. We also delivered 252 'Wheels for All' sessions to 3,649 attendees at the Sports Park (Appendix 5).

Making best use of resources now and for the future

4.17 We developed a range of initiatives to help address our significant recruitment and retention challenges as a result of the current labour market conditions and cost of living pressures during 2022/23, most notably the development and launch of our new employer recruitment brand and campaign: 'We Choose East Sussex'. This has resulted in increases in people visiting our online jobs pages and in the proportion of Council vacancies filled. As well as attracting external candidates to the Council, in line with our commitment to supporting and developing our existing managers, two new leadership development initiatives were launched: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and Heads of Service masterclass programme (Appendix 3).

4.18 We set a more challenging target for sickness absence for 2022/23 compared to previous years. This target of 9.10 days lost per full-time equivalent employee has not been met, mainly due to an increase in COVID-19 related absences at the beginning of the year. We have seen an increase in mental health absences, a trend also seen in other local authorities. We have developed a range of initiatives to support staff in response (Appendix 3).

4.19 We experienced a number of challenges in our delivery of energy efficiency projects during 2022/23, including delays within supply chains. We completed 21 projects against a target of 22. The data on carbon emissions from Council buildings for 2022/23 will be available in quarter 1 of 2023/24 as carbon data is reported a quarter in arrears. However, data from quarter 3 forecasts a 33% reduction in carbon emissions for year end against the baseline year of 2019/20. This is very close to the target of a 34% reduction from the baseline year and represents an improvement on the previous quarter (Appendix 3).

4.20 The Council has continued to work with a range of partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work in 2022/23. We have assisted 149 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to measure their carbon footprint and awarded energy grants, totalling £250,000, to 49 SMEs to implement carbon reduction measures. We also delivered carbon literacy training to 259 staff and Members and have shared an e-learning climate change module with district and borough councils (Appendix 5).

4.21 Throughout 2022/23 corporate lobbying work has focussed on using our partnerships and networks at the local, regional, and national level to influence policy development in a range of areas, including adult social care charging reforms, the future of children's social care and local authority funding. In quarter 4, we also supported councils across the south east region to escalate questions and concerns regarding migration and contributed to the development of the new Office for Local Government (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 Adult Social Care and Health – (ASCH)
- Appendix 3 Business Services (Department) – (BSD)
- Appendix 4 Children’s Services (Department) – (CSD)
- Appendix 5 Communities, Economy and Transport – (CET)
- Appendix 6 Governance Services – (GS)
- Appendix 7 Strategic Risk Register

Cover report, Appendix 1

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

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 2). More detailed performance and finance data is also available in the departmental appendices.

Departmental Appendices 2 - 6

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. |

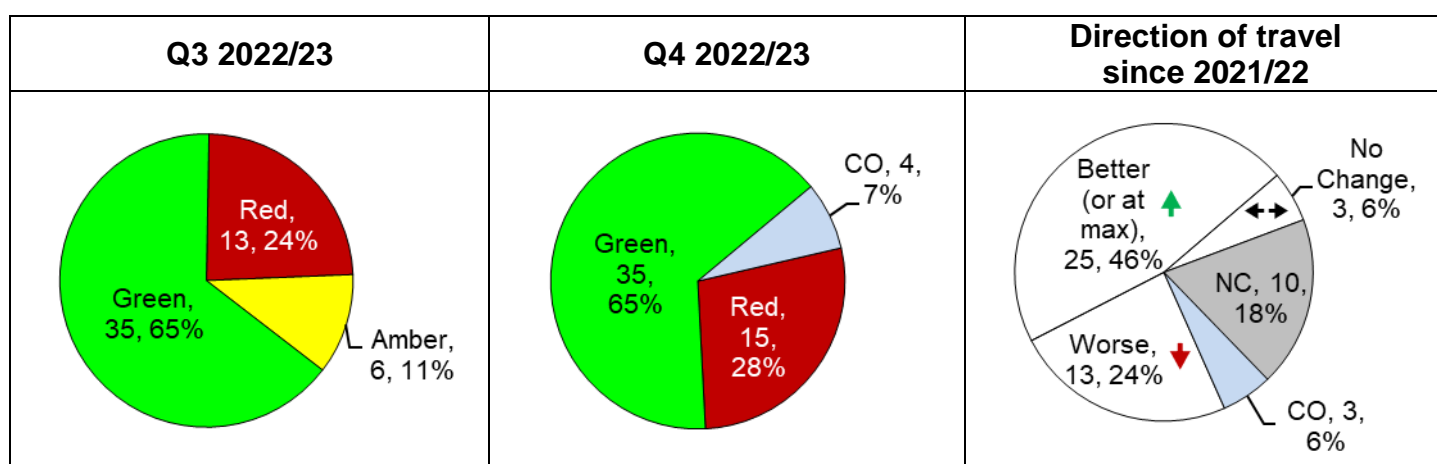
Strategic Risk Register Appendix 7

Appendix 7 contains commentary explaining mitigating actions for all Strategic Risks.

Council Monitoring Corporate Summary – end of year 2022/23

Council Plan performance targets

| Priority | Total | Red | Green | Carry Over |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Driving sustainable economic growth | 24 | 6 | 18 | 0 |
| Keeping vulnerable people safe | 9 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Helping people help themselves | 16 | 4 | 11 | 1 |
| Making best use of resources now and for the future | 5 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total | 54 | 15 | 35 | 4 |



Direction of Travel key:

No Change: ↔, Not Comparable: **NC**, Carry Over: **CO**, Worse: ▼, Improved (or at maximum): ▲

Council Plan year end 2022/23 outturn summary all measures

54 Council Plan target outturns for the full year are reported below. Targets achieved are highlighted in green; targets not achieved are highlighted in red; and carry overs (CO) for reporting at Q1 2023/24 are highlighted in blue.

Detailed information for new exceptions at Q4 is contained in the departmental appendices and these exceptions are highlighted **in bold in the table below**. Details of previous exceptions can be found in the referenced appendices for Q1-Q3 monitoring.

Where available, performance improvement relative to 2021/22 is given under Direction of Travel. Measures marked NC (not comparable) do not have 2022/23 outturns, which are comparable with 2021/22 outturns.

Driving sustainable economic growth – outturn summary

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|--|---|---|---------------------|
| BS | The percentage of Council procurement spend with local suppliers | 67.9% | 60% | 66% | ↓ |
| BS | Economic, social and environmental value committed through contracts, as a percentage of our spend with suppliers | 11% | ≥10% | 57% | ↑ |
| BS | The Council's Apprenticeship Levy strategy supports the Council's workforce development and training plan | 265 ESCC staff currently undertaking an apprenticeship. 129 staff enrolled on new apprenticeship in 2021/22 Apprenticeships range from entry level to Master's degree across 33 types of apprenticeship. £150K drawn down from Apprenticeship Incentive Scheme and Kickstart Scheme and passed onto hiring teams. | Where appropriate Standards exist, to ensure apprenticeship training is available and taken up (subject to the needs of the business), which addresses skills shortages in the Council. | 270 staff within the Council and schools currently undertaking an apprenticeship. 115 staff enrolled on new apprenticeship in 2022/23. Apprenticeships range from entry level to Master's degree across 47 different types of apprenticeship. Apprenticeships continue to address skills shortages and offer existing staff a variety of progression routes. | ↑ |
| CET | Percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance | 5% | 4% | 5% | ↔ |
| CET | Percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance | 6% | 4% | 6% | ↔ |
| CET | Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance | 13% | 14% | 13% | ↔ |
| CET | The number of businesses and professionals receiving advice and support through training and bespoke advice provided by Trading Standards | 126 individual delegates trained. 204 businesses received bespoke advice. | 350 | 379 (107 individual delegates trained; 272 businesses received bespoke advice) | ↑ |

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|--|--|--|--|------------------------|
| CET | Deliver a range of Family Learning programmes across East Sussex to provide high quality learning opportunities for parents/carers and their children to develop English, maths and language skills and to support a culture of learning in the family (subject to external funding) | 828 enrolments | 500 enrolments across Family English, maths and Language (FEML) and Wider Family Learning (WFL) programmes. | 1,166 enrolments | ↑ |
| CET | In partnership with funding organisations provide online learning (including skills for life and ICT courses) in libraries (subject to contract) | 70 achievements | 70 achievements | 83 achievements | ↑ |
| CET | East Sussex Careers Hub | Secondary schools and colleges supported to achieve an average of 5.2 benchmarks. Online employability resources piloted and embedded by East Sussex Careers Hub. | East Sussex Careers Hub to support schools to achieve an average of 5 national benchmarks. Recruit a further 15 employers as Industry Champions to support all 40 schools and colleges in the county to make progress in giving young people encounters with employers and experiences of the workplace | Schools supported to achieve an average of 5.36 national benchmarks. 46 Industry Champions recruited to support schools and colleges. | ↑ |
| CET | Deliver East Sussex Skills priorities for 2021-2026 | 'Carbon zero' task group established. SES Task groups met and identified action plans to support the new SES priorities. Careers East Sussex website revised and relaunched. | Develop 6 action plans to address the 6 Skills East Sussex priorities. | 6 action plans developed to address the 6 Skills East Sussex priorities. | ↑ |
| CET | Create a pan-Sussex visitor economy group to re-start the leisure, hospitality, culture, retail and tourism economy and enhance existing marketing vehicles | Research commissioned. Recommendations approved by Lead Member. 3 year growth budget secured. | Establish Sussex Tourism Leadership Group. | Sussex Tourism Leadership Group established. | ↑ |

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|--|---|--|------------------------|
| CET | Create a prioritised list of cultural projects ready for and seeking funding over the value of £100k | Governance framework created and ready to be implemented. Board membership refresh will take place in 2022/23. Documentation for list of cultural projects ready for and seeking funding over the value of £100k rolled out in 2022/23 | Launch the list of cultural projects ready for and seeking funding over the value of £100k. | List launched of cultural projects, ready for and seeking funding over the value of £100k. | ↑ |
| CET | Job creation from East Sussex Programmes | 193.5 jobs created or safeguarded. | 140 jobs created or safeguarded. | 195.45 full time equivalent jobs created. | ↑ |
| CS | The percentage of eligible 2 year olds who take up a place with an eligible early years provider | 84% National Average: 62% | Equal to or above the national average | ESCC: 82% National Average: 72% (March 23) | ↓ |
| CS | The percentage of pupils achieving a "good level of development*" at the Early Years Foundation Stage *A pupil achieving at least the expected level in each Early Learning Goal (ELG) within the three prime areas of learning, and at least the expected level in each ELG within the literacy and numeracy specific areas of learning | Ac Year 20/21: Measure not monitored as assessment results not published | Ac Year 21/22: Equal to or above the national average | Ac Year 2021/22 ESCC: 69.0% National Average: 65.2% | NC |
| CS | Average Progress 8 score for state funded schools The average Progress 8 score shows how much progress pupils at this school made between the end of key stage 2 and the end of key stage 4, compared to pupils across England who got similar results at the end of key stage 2 | Ac Year 20/21: Measure not monitored as assessment results not published | Ac Year 21/22: ≥ -0.06 (ESCC outturn for academic year 18/19) | Ac Year 2021/22 ESCC: -0.11 National Average: -0.03 | NC |
| CS | The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving at least the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2 | Ac Year 20/21: Measure not monitored as assessment results not published | Ac Year 21/22: $\geq 45.8\%$ (ESCC outturn for academic year 18/19) | Ac Year 2021/22 ESCC: 37.6% National Average: 42.7% | NC |
| CS | The average Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils | Ac Year 20/21: Measure not monitored as assessment results not published | Ac Year 21/22: ≥ 33.6 (ESCC outturn for academic year 18/19) | Ac Year 2021/22 ESCC: 33.3 National Average: 37.7 | NC |

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|---|--|---|---------------------|
| CS | The percentage of young people meeting the duty of RPA (Raising the Participation Age) by either participating in education, training or employment with training or undertaking re-engagement provision at academic age 16 (Year 12) | 93% | 93% | 94.1% | ↑ |
| CS | The percentage of young people meeting the duty of RPA by either participating in education, training or employment with training or undertaking re-engagement provision at academic age 17 (Year 13) | 85% | 86% | 86.1% | ↑ |
| CS | Average Progress 8 score for Looked After Children (LAC) | Ac Year 20/21: Measure not monitored as assessment results not published | Ac Year 21/22: No more than 0.5 points below the national average for looked after children | Ac Year 21/22: -1.17 National average: -1.3 | NC |
| CS | The percentage of LAC participating in education, training or employment with training at academic age 16 (Year 12) | 78% | 80% | 81% RPA (86% EET) | ↑ |
| CS | The percentage of LAC participating in education, training or employment with training at academic age 17 (Year 13) | 82% | 70% | 67% RPA (80% EET) | ↓ |

Keeping vulnerable people safe – outturn summary

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|--|---------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| ASC | Percentage of Health and Social Care Connect referrals triaged and progressed to required services within 24 hours | N/A | 95% | 87.34% (67,404/77,177) | NC |
| ASC | Percentage of Health and Social Care Connect contacts that are appropriate and effective (i.e. lead to the provision of necessary additional services) | 98% (April 21 to January 22) | 95% | 99.27% (78,641/79,219) | ↑ |
| ASC | The % of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have improved safety/support measures in place upon leaving the service | 90% (420/467) | 80% | CO | CO |
| ASC | When they leave the service the % of those affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse who have improved coping strategies | 92% (473/514) | 88% | CO | CO |
| CET | The number of positive interventions for vulnerable people who have been or may be the target of rogue trading or financial abuse | 227 positive interventions. | 200 | 530 positive interventions. | ↑ |
| CS | Rate of children with a Child Protection Plan (per 10,000 children) | 50.3 (536 children) | 50.3 (536 children) | 64.8 (691 children) | ↓ |

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|--|------------------------|--|---------------------|
| CS | Rate (of 0-17 population) of referrals to children's social care services (per 10,000 children) | Rate 392 (4,169) | ≤ 489 | Rate 377 (4,018) | ↑ |
| CS | Rate (of 0-17 population) of assessments completed by children's social care services (per 10,000 children) | Rate 330 (3,510 assessments initiated) | ≤ 517 | Rate 353 (3,764 assessments initiated) | ↓ |
| CS | Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000 children) <i>*Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</i> | 58.9 (628 children) 54.5 (581 children excl. UASC*) | 59.8 (637 children) | 62.3 (664 children) 55.5 (591 children excl. UASC*) | ↓ |

Helping people help themselves – outturn summary

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|-------------------------|--|--|---------------------|
| ASC | National outcome measure: Proportion of working age adults and older people receiving self-directed support | 100% (4,583 clients) | 100% | 100% (4,792 clients) | ↑ |
| ASC | National outcome measure: Proportion of working age adults and older people receiving direct payments | 32.7% (1,488 people) | ≥31.5% | 31.9% (1,520 people) | ↓ |
| ASC | Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention | 474 | 390 | 494 | ↑ |
| ASC | Number of people receiving support through housing related floating support | 8,919 | 5,000 | 7,946 | ↓ |
| ASC | National outcome measure: Achieve independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care | N/A | >90% | CO | NC |
| ASC | Number of providers registered with Support With Confidence | 327 | 360 (10% increase on 2021/22 outturn) | 346 | ↑ |
| ASC | The proportion of people who received short-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing support | 93.7% | >90.5% | 94.7% (1,292 / 1,364) | ↑ |
| ASC | Percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that the professionals who are involved in organising and providing their care communicate well with each other and share information to make sure their support is the best it can be (Listening To You) | N/A | >56% | 58.5% Clients: 64% (60 / 94) Carers: 53% (47 / 89) | NC |
| ASC | Number of new service user interventions started through One You East Sussex as part of the Integrated Lifestyle Service | 5,204 | 5,000 | 5,078 (Q1-Q3) (Reported a quarter in arrears) | ↑ |

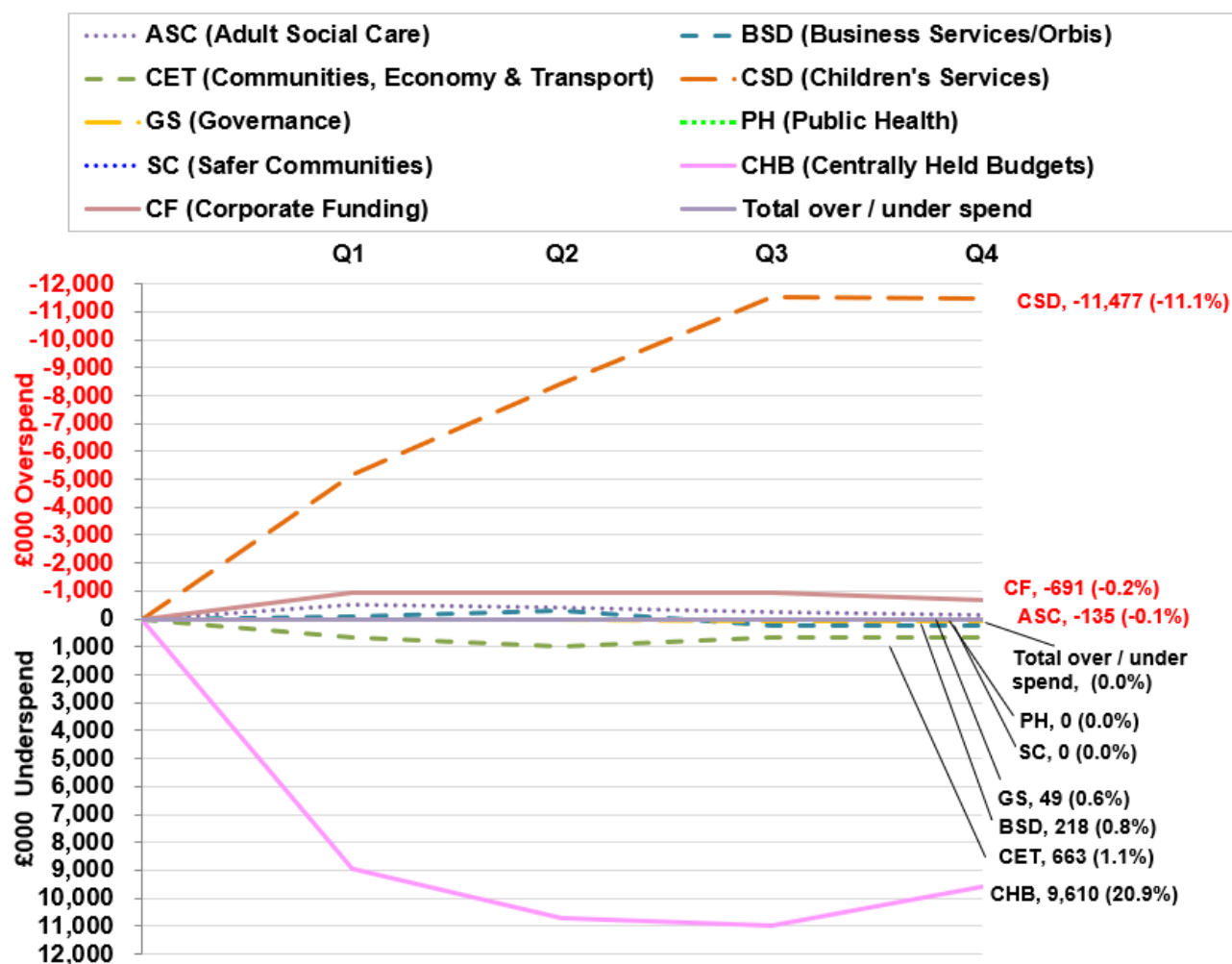
| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|--|--|--|---|---------------------|
| ASC | Improving targeting of NHS Health Checks | 70% of GP practices (35/50) delivering NHS Health Checks | 35% uptake rate by eligible patients from IMD1 (pandemic baseline 18%) | 31.1% (5 year period 2018/19 to 2022/23 Q3) (Reported a quarter in arrears) | NC |
| ASC | Through the Drug and Alcohol Funding streams commission services that sustain the development of the recovery community in East Sussex | Services commissioned | Commission services | 12 services commissioned | ↑ |
| CET | Road Safety: Deliver targeted cycle training activities to vulnerable road users | 445 Bikeability courses delivered to 4,010 individuals. 160 Wheels for All sessions with 3,166 attendees. | Deliver Bikeability training to 4,000 individuals and complete 80 Wheels for All sessions. | 555 Bikeability Courses delivered to 4,354 individuals. 252 Wheels for All Courses delivered to 3,649 individuals. | ↑ |
| CET | Road Safety: Implement infrastructure schemes on identified high risk sites/routes to improve road safety | 24 Safety Schemes implemented. | Implement 22 Safety Schemes. | 17 Safety Schemes implemented. | ↓ |
| CS | Percentage of EHCP (Education, Health and Care Plans) annual review meetings where the child gave their view and/or participated | 94.5% (2,168/2,295) | 85% | 93.1% (2,271/2,439) | ↓ |
| CS | The proportion of respondents to the feedback surveys who agree that things have changed for the better as a result of getting targeted support from the 0 – 19 Early Help Service | Adult: 91% Young People: 95% Average: 93% | 80% | Adult: 91% Young Person: 100% Average: 95.5% | ↑ |
| CS | Number of households eligible under the government's Supporting Families programme receiving a family support intervention | 856 | 1,350 | 595 | ↓ |

Making best use of resources now and for the future

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|--|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| BSD | Number of working days lost per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employee due to sickness absence in non-school services | 9.24 | 9.10 | 10.07 | ↓ |

| Dept | Performance Measure | Outturn 2021/22 | Target 2022/23 | Outturn 2022/23 | Direction of Travel |
|------|---|---|---|--|------------------------|
| BSD | Review use of corporate buildings | 'Together Again' strategy implemented move to hybrid working model. Online engagement sessions held with staff in Q4 on new working arrangements. New working model started 19/04/2022. | Implement workstyles adaptations in 3 office hubs and review the impact | Workstyles adaptations completed in 3 office hubs. Impact reviewed. | ↑ |
| BSD | Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations | 7.4% reduction (comparing emissions to the end of Q4 2021/22 against emissions for the same period in 2020/21). | 34% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 8,206 CO2e). | CO | CO |
| BSD | Progress on implementation of Carbon reduction scheme | N/A | 10 low energy lighting schemes, 10 solar PV schemes and 2 decarbonisation of heat schemes implemented | 11 low energy lighting schemes completed; 8 solar PV schemes completed; 2 decarbonisation of heat schemes implemented. | NC |
| BSD | Deliver the Property Asset Investment Strategy | 9 outline business cases completed. | Outline Business cases brought forward against at least 2 priority projects | 6 business cases completed. | ↓ |

Revenue budget outturn (net £000)



Revenue budget summary (£000) 2022/23

Services:

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Adult Social Care | 310,228 | (106,492) | 203,736 | 320,695 | (116,824) | 203,871 | (10,467) | 10,332 | (135) |
| Safer Communities | 2,021 | (909) | 1,112 | 1,918 | (806) | 1,112 | 103 | (103) | - |
| Public Health | 31,097 | (31,097) | - | 31,376 | (31,376) | - | (279) | 279 | - |
| Business Services / Orbis | 59,407 | (32,466) | 26,941 | 62,689 | (35,966) | 26,723 | (3,282) | 3,500 | 218 |
| Children's Services | 386,022 | (282,479) | 103,543 | 398,681 | (283,661) | 115,020 | (12,659) | 1,182 | (11,477) |
| Communities, Economy & Transport | 136,101 | (73,535) | 62,566 | 146,810 | (84,907) | 61,903 | (10,709) | 11,372 | 663 |
| Governance Services | 8,286 | (640) | 7,646 | 8,534 | (937) | 7,597 | (248) | 297 | 49 |
| Total Services | 933,162 | (527,618) | 405,544 | 970,703 | (554,477) | 416,226 | (37,541) | 26,859 | (10,682) |

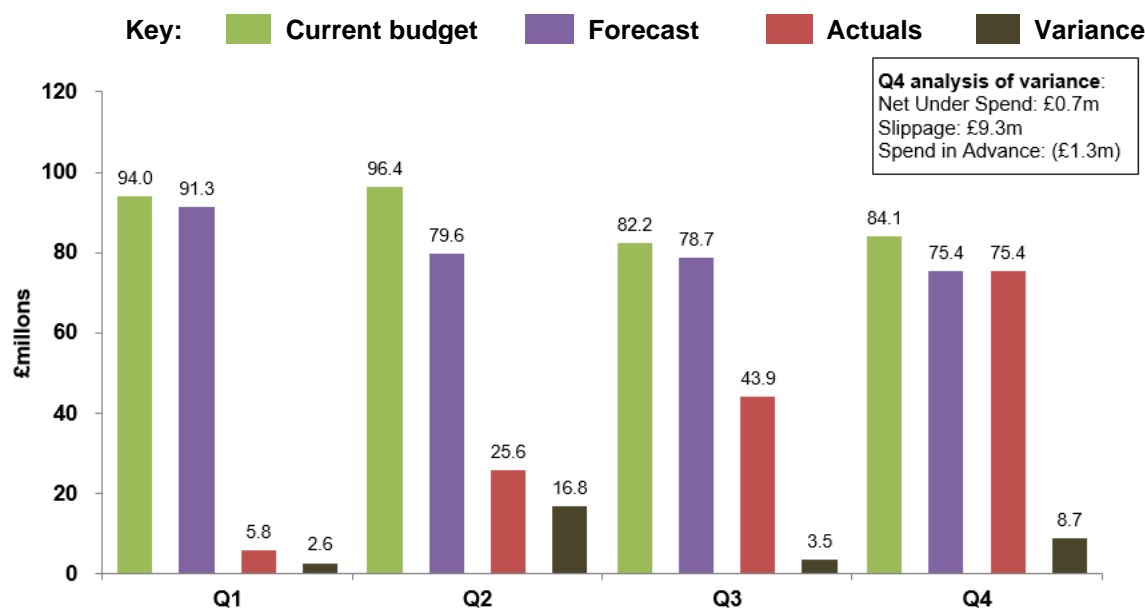
Centrally Held Budgets (CHB):

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Treasury Management | 19,102 | (1,700) | 17,402 | 17,068 | (5,888) | 11,180 | 2,034 | 4,188 | 6,222 |
| Capital Programme | 3,356 | - | 3,356 | 3,361 | - | 3,361 | (5) | - | (5) |
| Unfunded Pensions | 8,023 | - | 8,023 | 8,015 | - | 8,015 | 8 | - | 8 |
| General Contingency | 4,330 | - | 4,330 | - | - | - | 4,330 | - | 4,330 |
| Contrib. to Reserves | 9,320 | - | 9,320 | 9,321 | - | 9,321 | (1) | - | (1) |
| Apprenticeship Levy | 600 | - | 600 | 716 | - | 716 | (116) | - | (116) |
| Levies, Grants and Other | 3,250 | (192) | 3,058 | 3,179 | (308) | 2,871 | 71 | 116 | 187 |
| Debt Impairment | - | - | - | 1,015 | - | 1,015 | (1,015) | - | (1,015) |
| Total Centrally Held Budgets | 47,981 | (1,892) | 46,089 | 42,675 | (6,196) | 36,479 | 5,306 | 4,304 | 9,610 |

Corporate Funding:

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net |
|--------------------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|---------------|------------------|------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Business Rates | - | (86,199) | (86,199) | - | (86,154) | (86,154) | - | (45) | (45) |
| Revenue Support Grant | - | (3,687) | (3,687) | - | (3,687) | (3,687) | - | - | - |
| Service Grant | - | (5,175) | (5,175) | - | (5,175) | (5,175) | - | - | - |
| Council Tax | - | (332,082) | (332,082) | - | (331,436) | (331,436) | - | (646) | (646) |
| Social Care Grant | - | (23,674) | (23,674) | - | (23,674) | (23,674) | - | - | - |
| New Homes Bonus | - | (816) | (816) | - | (816) | (816) | - | - | - |
| Total Corporate Funding | - | (451,633) | (451,633) | - | (450,942) | (450,942) | - | (691) | (691) |

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net |
|--|----------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| TOTAL | 981,143 | (981,143) | 0 | 1,013,378 | (1,011,615) | 1,763 | (32,235) | 30,472 | (1,763) |
| Use of FM reserve to cover operational overspend | - | - | - | - | (748) | (748) | - | 748 | 748 |
| Use of FM reserve to cover debt impairment | - | - | - | - | (1,015) | (1,015) | - | 1,015 | 1,015 |
| FINAL TOTAL | 981,143 | (981,143) | 0 | 1,013,378 | (1,013,378) | 0 | (32,235) | 32,235 | 0 |

Capital Programme (gross £ millions) – approved projects**Capital Programme Summary 2022/23 (£'000)**

| | Budget 2022/23 | Actual 2022/23 | Variation (Over) / under 2022/23 budget | Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend | Variation analysis: Slippage to future year | Variation analysis: Spend in advance |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---|--|---|---|
| Adult Social Care | 394 | 376 | 18 | 50 | 140 | (172) |
| Business Services | 26,018 | 22,177 | 3,841 | 978 | 3,301 | (438) |
| Children's Services | 2,355 | 2,327 | 28 | 13 | 15 | - |
| Communities, Economy & Transport | 55,331 | 50,528 | 4,803 | (339) | 5,846 | (704) |
| Gross Expenditure (Planned Programme) | 84,098 | 75,408 | 8,690 | 702 | 9,302 | (1,314) |
| Section 106 and CIL | 1,965 | 558 | - | - | - | - |
| Other Specific Funding | 10,082 | 7,699 | - | - | - | - |
| Capital Receipts | 9,591 | 9,591 | - | - | - | - |
| Formula Grants | 34,234 | 34,672 | - | - | - | - |
| Reserves and Revenue Set Aside | 20,572 | 17,076 | - | - | - | - |
| Borrowing | 7,654 | 5,812 | - | - | - | - |
| Total Funding (Planned Programme) | 84,098 | 75,408 | - | - | - | - |

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 quarter 4 was £260m. The total amount received in short term interest for the quarter was £2.1m at an average rate of 3.30%, an increase from quarter 3, £1.7m at an average rate of 2.37%. The Bank of England Base Rate was increased twice; on the 2 February and 23 March to a rate of 4.25% by the end of quarter 4. The investment return outlook has improved due to anticipated increases in future interest rates, and we have been able to place a number of fixed term deposits with banks for periods up to 1 year at much improved rates. These investments have been 'laddered' and will mature at different intervals in the next 12 months. This will take advantage of a rising bank rate in future quarters.

In seeking investment opportunities, as defined by the TMS, an opportunity has been undertaken to reinvest a maturing Bank Deposit that aligns to the United Nations' Sustainable Development

Goals (SDGs). In quarter 4, £18m of maturities was reinvested for a duration of three to six months, maintaining the £30m placed for investment in this deposit type. Deals were placed in March with other Local Authorities as the rates improved versus traditional bank deposits in the run up to year end. Bank deposits will be utilised into quarter 1 and beyond as Local Authority deposits are expected to be weaker.

No short or long term borrowing was required in quarter 4. The majority of the Council's external debt, totalling £217m at quarter 4, is held as long-term loans, and no cost-effective opportunities have arisen during quarter 4 to restructure the existing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB).

The Treasury Management budget underspent by £6.2m. This is based on the position on the capital programme removing the need to borrow externally in 2022/23, together with the financial information presented above.

Reserves and Balances 2022/23 (£000)

| Reserve / Balance | Balance at 1 Apr 2022 | Forecast net use at Q3 | Outturn net use at Q4 | Movt | Balance at 31 Mar 2023 |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|
|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------|------------------------|

Statutorily ringfenced or held on behalf of others:

| | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------|------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| Balances held by schools | 21,328 | - | (1,246) | (1,246) | 20,082 |
| Public Health | 6,857 | 550 | 955 | 405 | 7,812 |
| Other | 6,941 | 74 | 42 | (32) | 6,983 |
| Subtotal | 35,126 | 624 | (249) | (873) | 34,877 |

Service Reserves:

| | | | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------|------------|----------------|---------------|
| Capital Programme | 17,013 | 1,788 | 2,870 | 1,082 | 19,883 |
| Corporate Waste | 18,942 | (1,077) | (5,517) | (4,440) | 13,425 |
| Insurance | 7,253 | (78) | 110 | 188 | 7,363 |
| Adult Social Care | - | 2,500 | 3,099 | 599 | 3,099 |
| Subtotal | 43,208 | 3,133 | 562 | (2,571) | 43,770 |

Strategic Reserves:

| | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|--------------|----------------|
| Priority / Transformation | 17,285 | (4,623) | 113 | 4,736 | 17,398 |
| Financial Management | 47,303 | (6,048) | (5,423) | 625 | 41,880 |
| Subtotal | 64,588 | (10,671) | (5,310) | 5,361 | 59,278 |
| Total Reserves | 142,922 | (6,914) | (4,997) | 1,917 | 137,925 |
| General Fund | 10,000 | - | - | - | 10,000 |
| Total Reserves and Balances | 152,922 | (6,914) | (4,997) | 1,917 | 147,925 |

Changes to Fees & Charges

Graduate Leader Fund: Training Courses

The number of courses is based on data around how many people in the sector need training or refresher training. The sector includes Nurseries, Pre-schools, Holiday Play Schemes, Out of School Clubs, Creches, Independent School Nurseries, Childminders and Nannies. The charges have been increased by £5 per course per person due to the increased costs of venues. Costs are kept low to account for the sector we deliver to and consideration is taken of the financial barriers that exist within the workforce. Prices have been checked with other providers and Local Authorities that have provided this training in previous years.

| Description | Previous (£) | New (£) | Movt (£) | Movt (%) |
|--|--------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Practitioner (we keep the practitioner training cost lower than the DSL to ensure wider level participation) | 20.00 | 25.00 | 5.00 | 25.0% |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead – Initial training | 60.00 | 65.00 | 5.00 | 8.3% |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead – refresher training | 50.00 | 55.00 | 5.00 | 10.0% |

Information Governance

Training and network events to support the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Information Governance traded service for schools. Costs were benchmarked (in discussion with the Children's Services Department Training team) against similar length courses within the ESCC training offer, and external providers with similar offers.

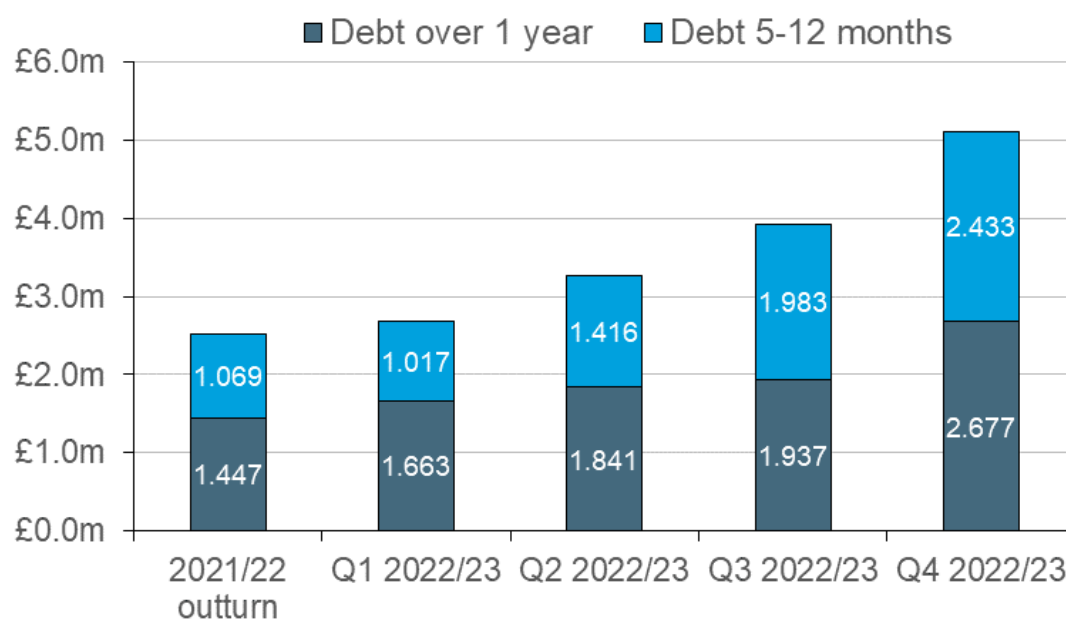
| Description | Previous (£) | New (£) | Movt (£) | Movt (%) |
|--|--------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Training and network events - £50 per delegate (unless signed up to the IG4 or IG5 DPO contract, then FREE for those schools attending). | 45.00 | 50.00 | 5.00 | 11.1% |

Trading Standards

East Sussex Trading Standards Business advice rates have been increased to reflect charges from other Local Authorities in the region offering the same service.

| Description | Previous (£) | New (£) | Movt (£) | Movt (%) |
|---|--------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Business Advice (outside a Primary Authority Arrangement) – including VAT | 98.40 | 108.00 | 9.60 | 9.8% |
| Primary Authority Business Advice (VAT Exempt) | 82.00 | 90.00 | 8.00 | 9.8% |

Outstanding debt analysis (£ millions)



The value of debt aged over 5 months at quarter 4 has increased by £2.594m to £5.110m compared to the 2021/22 outturn position of £2.516m. The majority £4.215m (82.48%) of all debt over 5 months old relates to Adult Social Care (ASC).

The value of aged debt over 5 months as a proportion of debt raised has increased from 1.85% in 2021/22 to 3.22% in 2022/23.

Of the £2.594m increase in outstanding debt £1.892m relates to ASC client contributions and £0.594m relates to income due from other public sector organisations including Local Authorities and NHS.

The majority of the £1.892m increase in ASC debt is in two categories of debt as follows:

- Estate case waiting for executor information has increased by £0.831m, with several high value cases impacting on the level of debt.

- Non-payment and financial hardship referrals has seen an increase of £0.763m with client numbers more than double compared to the previous year at 329 which has been linked to the cost of living crisis.

Recovery of debt continues to be a high priority with continual review of systems and processes. Debt recovery related to ASC client contributions can often take a long time due to the circumstances of the client e.g. lack of capacity, delays with executors of estates. Regular ASC debt case review meetings ensure that the most appropriate steps are taken to recover debt with sensitivity and consideration of the clients or families concerned and in accordance with the Care Act.

Revenue Savings Summary 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target for 2022/23 | 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 | - | - | - | - | - |
| CS | - | - | - | - | - |
| CET | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 |
| GS | - | - | - | - | - |
| Total Savings | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 |
| ASC | | | - | - | - |
| BSD / Orbis | | | - | - | - |
| CS | | | - | - | - |
| CET | | | - | - | - |
| GS | | | - | - | - |
| Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹ | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Savings & Permanent Changes | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 |

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

Adult Social Care – Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| There are no targeted savings in 2022/23 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| 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 |
|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| 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).

Business Services – Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| There are no targeted savings in 2022/23 | | | | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| 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 |
|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| 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).

Children's Services – Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| There are no targeted savings in 2022/23 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| 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 |
|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| 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).

Communities, Economy & Transport – Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Increase on-street parking charges where possible. Surpluses to be used for transport related funding. | 1,000 | 1,000 | 255 | 745 | - |
| We will further reduce the operating costs of our Library and Information Service by improving the cost efficiency of provision and/or relocating back office functions/libraries. In addition, we'll achieve further efficiencies in ICT through the implementation of a new contract for self-service facilities in libraries. | 183 | 183 | 183 | - | - |
| Income generation through traded services. | 60 | 60 | - | - | 60 |
| The Keep Sustainability Plan has been agreed and is a three-part savings and income plan to ensure the financial sustainability of The Keep. It would ensure that the partners still deliver our statutory and legal duties, and maintain a good degree of public access. | 14 | 14 | 14 | - | - |
| Total Savings | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 |
| | | | - | - | - |
| | | | - | - | - |
| Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹ | | | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Total Savings and Permanent Changes | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 |

| Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000) | Temporary Funding ² | Part of reported variance ³ | Total |
|---|--------------------------------|--|------------|
| Parking - use of COVID-19 funding | 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).

Governance Services – Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|
| There are no targeted savings in 2022/23 | - | - | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - | - | - |
| 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 |
|---|--------------------------------|--|----------|
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| | - | - | - |
| 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).

Business Services – end of year 2022/23

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

Key cross cutting programmes

Carbon

The emissions outturn for Q4 will be available in Q1 of 2023/24 **(i)** as carbon data is reported a quarter in arrears. Data from Q3 forecasts a 33% reduction in carbon emissions for year end against the baseline year of 2019/20. This is very close to the target of a 34% reduction from the baseline year and represents an improvement on the previous quarter. Gas consumption for buildings (schools and corporate) was down 25% and electricity consumption was down 8% compared to 2021/22. Due to the weather dependent space heating requirements, emissions in the final quarter can have a significant impact on full year performance. This year Q4 was colder than the same quarter in the baseline year.

Part of the reduction in consumption is due to the more typical weather experienced in Q1 when compared to the unexpected low average minimum temperatures experienced in 2021/22, but improved management of buildings to reduce energy usage was also a factor. The need to provide ventilation in our buildings as part of COVID-19 safety measures is still adversely affecting our overall percentage reduction.

A programme of carbon reduction measures continues to be delivered in schools and across the corporate estate, in line with our current Climate Action Plan.

Good progress was made in Q4 on delivery of energy efficiency projects; we achieved 95% of our target with 21 projects delivered against a target of 22, despite supply chain delays, staff shortages and site portfolio changes.

- Eleven projects have been completed as part of the 2022/23 LED lighting programme and an additional project is almost complete (final building checks pending).
- Eight solar photovoltaics (PV) projects have been completed. Two of the ten targeted projects did not fully complete before the end of Q4 due to supply chain lead times for batteries, inverters and roof mounting system components. Both projects will complete in Q1 2023/24.
- The Ninfield Decarbonisation project was completed in November 2022 (Q3). The second project at Herstmonceux achieved practical completion in January 2023 (Q4).
- Tendering commenced for six primary schools heat decarbonisation projects, part-funded by a successful award of grant funding over £1m for the Phase 3b Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. There is one corporate project (Greenwood) fully funded by the Council. Contracts have been awarded for three sites with programmes of works planned for summer 2023. Tendering for the other four sites will be completed in Q1 2023/24.
- The annual Greenhouse Gas Report for 2021/22 was published in Q4. This included estimated procurement related carbon emissions from the Carbon Modelling Tool.
- Market testing of the potential “invest to save” Schools’ Solar scheme commenced in Q4. In-house desktop modelling by the Energy team produced indicative system sizes, energy, carbon and cost savings for a sample of ten schools. The data has been used to illustrate how a scheme, part funded by the Council and part funded by an interest free loan, might work. Schools have been asked to review proposals and provide quantitative and qualitative feedback to inform the scheme during meetings scheduled for Q1 2023/24.
- A further four Energy Saving workshops for both School and Corporate Site Managers were delivered in January and February to support energy cost and carbon reduction through good site management practice. This brings the total number of staff trained to 82.
- At the annual Services to Schools conference on 8 February 2023, 46 school business managers attended two presentations on how they might make best use of the Department for

Education (DfE) capital funding for energy efficiency. Tips on energy saving site practices as well as billing and account management from Energy and Schools finance teams were also included.

- A short survey was sent to schools in Q4 to seek further input on how the Council could support schools to invest their DfE energy efficiency funding. This indicated a need for further advice, which will be met through workshops in Q1 2023/24 where a consultant building services engineer will provide impartial advice on energy saving technologies. Tips from Property Energy and advice from Schools Finance on how to claim the grant will also be included. Over 40 schools have already signed up to attend.

Modernising Systems

The Managing Back Office Systems (MBOS) Programme was established to deliver the replacement of the Council's core finance and Human Resources (HR) systems. Replacement of these systems will support further developments to increase agile and digital working. The User Acceptance Test phase has continued in Q4 and gathered greater pace with 84% of all test scenarios passed. Confidence in the quality of the system is significantly higher and focus is now shifting to preparations for Payroll Parallel Run testing and business readiness. The final go-live date remains under review, targeting the end of 2023, to ensure that we have confidence in the quality of the system and data before confirming.

Workstyles

Facilities and support for hybrid working have been delivered across the Council. This included training resources, a Workstyles Policy, Space User Guides, guides and technology support via the Tech Advocates and a suite of office adaptations across three office hubs, to facilitate hybrid working whilst in the office. Subject to the needs of the service, hybrid working allows work to be structured in a way that enables our staff to be as productive as possible, regardless of where they are working. It also supports staff wellbeing and a reduction in our carbon footprint.

A Workstyles staff survey took place in October 2022, and the results have now been analysed and published. The findings of the survey provided insights into hybrid working that covered support for how we work, and property and technology enhancements. Staff engagement group sessions have continued to take place during Q4. Engagement and the analysis of the results of the Workstyles survey have been used to make recommendations for office adaptations such as the use of floors to accommodate larger meetings/areas and moveable furniture additions, such as 'phone booths', to support the use of Microsoft Teams calls whilst in the office. The workstyles office adaptations are designed to ease the demand on meeting rooms and provide additional space for calls and collaboration and support hybrid working.

Work to deliver the new office bases in Hastings continued throughout Q4 as the Council's lease at Ocean House ended in March 2023. The new offices provide a 39% reduction in office space whilst providing new layouts for particular service client needs. The new Hastings offices incorporate a relocation of Workstyles property elements from Ocean House thus efficiently reusing items which were designed to be flexible and moveable when installed. In Q4, acoustic elements were installed in six Eastbourne office hub meeting rooms to improve confidentiality.

Work on the Workstyles property elements for County Hall have been paused to allow resources to be focused on the office moves in Hastings. In Q1 2023/24 some moveable and flexible adjustments will be considered for County Hall, following further engagement.

Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD)

In response to the significant recruitment and retention challenges as a result of the current labour market conditions and cost of living pressures, a range of initiatives were developed during 2022/23, most notably the development and launch of our new employer recruitment brand and campaign: 'We Choose East Sussex', aimed at promoting the council as a high-quality employer of choice. Initial evaluation shows:

- the proportion of Council vacancies filled has risen from 33% to more than 50%;
- applications from candidates of a minority ethnic background have doubled; and
- there has been an 11% rise in traffic to our online jobs pages and a 17% rise in download of application forms and related documents.

As well as attracting external candidates to the Council, in line with our commitment to supporting and developing our existing managers, two new leadership development initiatives were launched: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and Heads of Service masterclass programme. Both initiatives were well received, and evaluations are now taking place; these will help us to further enhance and develop these programmes for the future.

Our extensive wellbeing offer was also further enhanced during 2022/23 with a range of new initiatives. In particular, a musculoskeletal (MSK) workshop, aimed at frontline operational staff in Adult Social Care and Health, was delivered in partnership with Brighton University. The purpose of the workshop was to help staff make meaningful and sustainable changes to support better MSK health and thereby reduce related sickness absence.

Attendance Management and Wellbeing

The 2022/23 year end sickness absence figure for the whole authority (excluding schools) is 10.07 days lost per full time employee (FTE), an increase of 8.9% since last year. The 2022/23 target of 9.10 days/FTE has not therefore been met. The predominant reason for the increase in absence rates is a rise in COVID-19 related absences at the beginning of 2022/23.

Mental health absences have also increased by 1,483 days compared to the same period last year. However, the benchmarking data from 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 increased support to staff by:

- Engaging with the workforce to understand how we can improve our stress risk assessment tool. The improved form will be launched in the coming months.
- Running a dedicated 'mental fitness' campaign for stress awareness month in April, including fully booked 'food for your mood' workshops and evidence-based signposting.
- Raising awareness of the mental health support available from our Employee Assistance Provider and partners 'able futures' through a series of interactive staff webinars and individual staff sessions.
- Promoting financial wellbeing through our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) and external partners.
- Launching a short 4-minute film for World Mental Health Day to promote the resources available, raise awareness and encourage early intervention.
- Growing our Mental Health First Aid network which continues to pro-actively support staff and promote wellbeing resources within teams.
- Exploring a bespoke 'nurse led' service through our absence management provider, prompting all employees reporting a mental health absence to speak with a nurse at the earliest opportunity.

More broadly, we will shortly be running a pilot facilitating a series of 'Long Covid Cafes'. These coaching style sessions will explore coping strategies and effective signposting. Based on the research on long COVID-19 they should be effective in reducing the length of time employees are absent.

Procurement

Savings achieved through procurement, contract and supplier management activities

The Council has spent £299m with 898 local suppliers over the past 12 months, which equates to 66% of our total spend, compared to a target of 60%. This figure includes our Tier 2 supplier data (i.e., the direct spend with the Council's suppliers that is then sub-contracted by them to a local supplier). 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

The refreshed East Sussex Social Value Marketplace was launched during 2022/23. The Marketplace enables us to work collectively with suppliers and Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners to improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our residents and local communities. Several contracts with significant social value commitment were secured this year, including:

- The Highways and Infrastructure Services Contract: the successful supplier has committed to a social value offer of around £180m (around 62% of contract value). This includes a commitment to deliver 60% of the contract value through local supply chains, in addition to delivering apprenticeships, a wide range of employability support, and creating local jobs.
- Extra Care Housing schemes: the successful supplier has committed to a social value offer of around £2.2m. The majority of their social value commitment is around training local people to NVQ level 2/3 and providing job opportunities to the long term unemployed, those currently working less than 16 hours per week and 18-24 year olds not in employment, education or training.

In Q4, a total of 17 contracts were awarded, of which seven 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 in-scope contracts for Q4 had a total contract value of £17.87m and secured £6.48m in Social Value commitment, which equates to an outturn of 36%. This brings our final outturn figure for the year to 57%.

The Social Value secured through our Property Frameworks used for our Planned Maintenance programme in 2022/23 has been reported in Q4. Contracts with a combined value of £13.9m were awarded and secured £5.98m in Social Value, which equates to 43%. The Social Value consists of a number of different measures, including targeted spend with local sub-contracted suppliers and contractors, which is an important contributor to economic growth. Other benefits included various employment and skills initiatives, such as school talks to educate pupils on careers in the construction industry; multiple work experience placements for older pupils and college students; and curriculum support for colleges.

The Social Value figures detailed above are financial proxies used in the Social Value Measurement Charter, to reflect the value of how much of a social impact the commitments will have to local residents and communities, based on the measurements that in the [National Themes, Outcomes and Measures \(TOMs\)](#).

The Place Scrutiny Committee carried out a Scrutiny Review of Procurement in 2022/23 which focussed on Social Value and Buying Local policies and procedures. The review considered a wide range of evidence and was also able to comment on and endorse the East Sussex Social Value Policy. The Review found that a great deal of work has been undertaken to make sure the Council's Social Value requirements are well understood and considered at an early stage of the procurement process, and that the Buying Local policy area and processes are well developed and meeting the Council's targets. The report is due to be approved at Full Council in May 2023.

Procurement's Policy Team continues to build on the success of achieving publication of the Environmentally Sustainable Procurement Policy (ESPP) in Q3. Extensive guidance for the

Procurement Team on how to utilise the policy has been published on our new Procurement Intranet site.

Internal Audit

The Chartered Institute of Internal Auditors carried out an independent external assessment of our Internal Audit function in Autumn 2022, incorporating a full validation of the service's own self-assessment, interviews with key stakeholders from across all the Orbis partner councils and discussions with Internal Audit team members. Orbis Internal Audit were assessed as achieving the highest level of conformance available against professional standards with no areas of non-compliance identified, and therefore no formal recommendations for improvement.

Property

Property provided increased advice and options for several organisational transformation programmes throughout the year including Q4. In addition, Property concentrated on a number of workstreams in the Council's Asset Management Plan 2020-2025, focusing on more efficient use of offices, supporting service transformation and providing advice to schools on energy efficiency.

Key outcomes secured across Property over the year include:

- Increasing the Council's commercial income portfolio by 5% during 2022/23 as compared to 2021/22.
- Completing disposal of two key assets to secure capital receipts of £1.15m and securing approval from the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change to commence marketing on three sites in Q4, which is now underway.
- New accommodation was found for the Modern Records service in Q3 by re-purposing a Council owned asset. The new site will allow the Modern Records service to move from Ropemaker in due course. The accommodation is smaller than the current premises and will contribute to less property operational costs and reduced carbon emissions.

Property Strategy (SPACES)

Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES) is a partnership of public bodies and third sector organisations, which aims to improve the use of public sector assets, creating efficiencies (such as reducing property costs and releasing capital receipts) and more effective environments to deliver services.

During Q4, the initial phase of the 'Land Release for Housing Development' workstream was completed (funded by One Public Estate Opportunity Development Fund (ODF)). Engagement with all local authorities (LAs) in East Sussex took place to develop a pipeline of LA owned brownfield sites to be put forward as bid applications for the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF). The BLRF helps to unlock sites for housing, which may not otherwise be available due to viability issues. The next application round is anticipated in Q4 2023/24. This follows the success of the £485,000 BLRF capital grant funding awarded to SPACES partners earlier in 2023/23 to deliver a total of 30 new homes on brownfield land in the county.

Furthermore, the 'Health and Wellbeing Hubs' ODF workstream has also progressed, with the appointment of Sussex Innovation to carry out national and local research and stakeholder engagement. The consultant will produce a report on how to deliver health and wellbeing hubs effectively. The outputs will support existing health hub projects as well as help to identify future opportunities across the county.

IT & Digital

The Council achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation during 2022/23 (Q3). 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. Business continuity preparedness exercises have been undertaken, and an enhanced network detection and response solution has been purchased. This system will use artificial intelligence,

machine learning and data analytics, in near real-time, to detect threats before they become destructive or damaging.

Migration of services to the new South East Grid network on behalf of the Link Consortium has continued in Q4. Hosted by the Council, the network puts in place a mechanism that the Council and other public sector organisations in the South East can use to access higher speed digital infrastructure connections and contribute to the provision of ultra-fast data network connectivity throughout East Sussex. Discussions are underway with other public sector organisations about their use of the Council's framework contract for the provision of high speed digital infrastructure.

During Q4, approval to source a Microsoft Teams, flexible new cloud-based telephony platform was given by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change. This will replace the current on-premise solution when the contract expires in 2024. Following extensive investigation of potential options, Microsoft Teams is expected to provide value for money and support the Council's hybrid working pattern. Procurement activity has now commenced to replace the core telephony solution paired with a dedicated contact centre solution. The change from landline-based telephony builds on existing technology investment, supports hybrid working and provides a sustainable solution, reducing our carbon footprint (removing handsets and on-premises equipment) and removing building dependency, thereby supporting a reduction in the Council's office space.

External Funding

During Q4 the External Funding Team helped 11 organisations secure £254,600. This included a number of small to medium sized applications from organisations such as the Pelham Community Hub & Coffee Lounge in Sidley, Warming Up the Homeless in Bexhill and Home Start East Sussex, which works to support, encourage and develop the increased safety, confidence and independence of local families who have experienced adversity.

Throughout 2022/23 the team supported 220 organisations, 66 Council colleagues, and signposted 43 individuals to relevant services:

Resources

- Funding News, a monthly electronic publication about forthcoming funding opportunities (over 10,200 subscribers).
- East Sussex 4 Community, a free to use database of funders.

One to one support

- 307 funding searches tailored to organisations' needs.
- Bid readiness – talking through practicalities and steps to take before applying. The team met with 101 organisations and 27 council colleagues to discuss their specific requirements.
- Reviewing grant applications, acting as a critical friend, vetting proposals for strengths and weaknesses. We carried out 11 quality checks and delivered eight bid writing training sessions attended by 460 people.

Partnership working

- Supporting Council departments in countywide initiatives such as "Stewardship approach to tackling loneliness".
- Supporting the development and running of grant programmes such as the Winter Support Fund.
- Working with key stakeholders at county and regional levels discussing trends and sharing best practice.

By facilitating connections between groups and colleagues the team helped secure almost £1.4m, through 45 grants which ranged from £500 to £485,000. These projects mostly covered communities (23 projects) and health and wellbeing (15 projects).

Revenue Budget Summary

The 2022/23 Business Services net revenue budget is £26.941m and has a net underspend of £0.218m. There were no planned savings in BSD this financial year.

Finance and Business Administration net underspend of £0.126m (**ref ii**): the forecast overspend in Business Administration has continued to reduce from Q2, closing at £0.058m. This was mainly due to additional income and vacancy savings and is further offset by a net underspend in Finance of £0.178m, arising from vacancy and recruitment gaps.

The remaining service areas had minor variances, including the ESCC contribution to the Orbis partnership.

Capital Programme Summary

The 2022/23 capital budget is £26.018m and has underspend of £0.978m, slippage of £3.301m, and spend in advance of £0.438m at Q4.

Special Provision in Secondary School has slippage of £0.422m (**ref iii**) as the scope of the project is being re-assessed.

14 Westfield Lane has underspend of £0.616m and slippage of £0.053m (**ref iv**). This was mainly due to the budget provisionally held for potential land charge, which is no longer required.

The Core Programme - Schools Basic Need has a combination of underspend and slippage totalling £0.339m (**ref v**): £0.216m underspend from Hailsham Secondary school project and slippage on other projects totalling £0.123m.

Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools has spend in advance of £0.438m (**ref vi**), largely due to the large number of roof projects in progress.

Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation has slippage £0.689m (**ref vii**), largely due to staff resource limitations. None of the delayed projects or programmes affects the Council's existing systems or security but may delay new capabilities being introduced.

Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation MBOS has slippage £1.820m (**ref viii**), which reflects delays in build and testing.

Performance exceptions (Q4 – See How to read this report for definition)**Priority – Making best use of resources now and for the future**

| Performance measure | Outturn 21/22 | Target 22/23 | RAG Q1 22/23 | RAG Q2 22/23 | RAG Q3 22/23 | RAG Q4 22/23 | 2022/23 outturn | Note ref |
|---|--|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|----------|
| Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations | 7.4% reduction (comparing emissions to the end of Q4 2021/22 against emissions for the same period in 2020/21) | 34% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 8,206 CO2e) | G | A | A | CO | Q3: 33% reduction (Reported a quarter in arrears) | i |

Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | 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 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Planned savings - Orbis | - | - | - | - | - | |
| 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 2022/23 (£'000)

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net | Note ref |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Finance & Business Administration | 10,586 | (5,900) | 4,686 | 12,074 | (7,514) | 4,560 | (1,488) | 1,614 | 126 | ii |
| HR & OD | 3,019 | (1,089) | 1,930 | 3,345 | (1,427) | 1,918 | (326) | 338 | 12 | |
| IT & Digital | 12,844 | (4,777) | 8,067 | 16,676 | (8,651) | 8,025 | (3,832) | 3,874 | 42 | |
| Procurement | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Property | 29,071 | (20,700) | 8,371 | 26,723 | (18,374) | 8,349 | 2,348 | (2,326) | 22 | |
| Contribution to Orbis Partnership | 3,887 | - | 3,887 | 3,871 | - | 3,871 | 16 | - | 16 | |
| Total BSD | 59,407 | (32,466) | 26,941 | 62,689 | (35,966) | 26,723 | (3,282) | 3,500 | 218 | |

Capital programme 2022/23 (£'000)

| Approved project | Budget: total project all years | Projected: total project all years | Budget 2022/23 | Actual 2022/23 | Variation (Over) / under 2022/23 budget | Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend | Variation analysis: Slippage to future year | Variation analysis: Spend in advance | Note ref |
|--|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|---|--|---|---|-------------|
| SALIX Contract | 3,500 | 3,500 | 350 | 269 | 81 | 81 | - | - | |
| Property Agile Works | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| Lansdowne Unit (CSD) | 75 | 75 | 75 | 10 | 65 | - | 65 | - | |
| Special Educational Needs | 3,198 | 3,198 | 175 | 150 | 25 | - | 25 | - | |
| Special Provision in Secondary School | 120 | 120 | 750 | 328 | 422 | - | 422 | - | iii |
| Special Educational Needs - Grove Park | 19,179 | 19,179 | 120 | 55 | 65 | 65 | - | - | |
| Disabled Children's Homes | 786 | 786 | 57 | 46 | 11 | - | 11 | - | |
| 14 Westfield Lane | 721 | 721 | 721 | 52 | 669 | 616 | 53 | - | iv |
| Core Programme - Schools Basic Need | 98,444 | 98,444 | 2,749 | 2,410 | 339 | 216 | 123 | - | v |
| Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Corporate | 44,119 | 44,119 | 3,439 | 3,370 | 69 | - | 69 | - | |
| Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools | 42,817 | 42,817 | 5,179 | 5,617 | (438) | - | - | (438) | vi |
| Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation | 78,847 | 78,847 | 4,186 | 3,497 | 689 | - | 689 | - | vii |
| Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation MBOS | - | - | 8,193 | 6,373 | 1,820 | - | 1,820 | - | viii |
| IT & Digital - Utilising Automation | 24 | 24 | 24 | - | 24 | - | 24 | - | |
| Total BSD Gross | 291,830 | 291,830 | 26,018 | 22,177 | 3,841 | 978 | 3,301 | (438) | |

Communities, Economy & Transport – end of year 2022/23

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

Economy and environment

Employability and Skills

The Careers Hub has supported school to achieve an average of 5.4 national benchmarks in March 2023. We recruited 16 further Industry Champions in Q4, bringing the total number of Champions supporting schools and colleges at the end of 2022/23 to 206. 54 Open Door visits took place in Q4, offering 691 pupils experience of the workplace, with employers including Albion in the Community, Glyndebourne Opera House and the RSPCA. The Careers Hub also hosted an iCan careers event for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and/or Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing difficulties in Q4. 259 students, 95 teachers and school staff, 30 providers and 63 professionals attended the event.

In March 2022 the Government announced that as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund the new 'Multiply' programme would seek to improve adults' numeracy skills over the next three years. In support of the Levelling Up agenda, the programme aims to help people improve their ability to understand and use maths in their daily lives and achieve a mix of formal and non-formal qualifications. The delivery of the project started in Q4, with the new Multiply Team providing numeracy training to over 700 people.

Apprenticeships

By the end of Q4, 115 members of staff had enrolled onto a new apprenticeship; there are currently 270 staff across the council and in schools undertaking an apprenticeship. Apprenticeships are continuing to be used to address skills shortages and offer existing staff a variety of routes to progress their careers, for example, the apprenticeship degree training in areas such as social work, occupational therapy, and teaching.

During Q4, all new full-time administration roles have been advertised with the option for the successful candidate to undertake an apprenticeship. The aim of this initiative is to widen the pool of candidates while highlighting the professional development opportunities within the Council.

A new Pre-Employment Co-ordinator post, funded from the one-off additional investment money agreed by Cabinet, was appointed during Q4. This post will establish clear pathways for job seekers to access opportunities within the Council, particularly from amongst disadvantaged groups or those facing particular barriers to employment.

Apprenticeship Roadshows returned to Hastings and Eastbourne in Q1, with 63 exhibits, advertising over 200 vacancies. A total of 645 young people, their parents and carers and jobseekers attended the events. A panel discussion took place, providing an opportunity for visitors to question and ignite discussion amongst employers, providers, and apprentices from a range of organisations. The commitment and hard work of apprentices was then celebrated at an East Sussex graduation ceremony in Eastbourne on the 19 October 2022.

Cultural investment and recovery

Tourism business leaders came together in Q1 to form a Sussex Tourism Leadership Group. The group identified three priority work packages, Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE); the Sussex story; and market segmentation. In Q2, a MICE subgroup and a Sussex Story subgroup met to agree actions plans for 2023/24. Work on the Sussex Story continued in Q3 and Q4, and the Sussex Visitor Economy Industry Group also contributed to the draft Sussex Wine Tourism Strategy funded by the UK Community Renewal Fund and led by Sussex Modern.

The Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative (SVEI) led by Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC), West Sussex County Council (WSCC) and East Sussex County Council (ESCC) has submitted an

Expression of Interest to Visit England/Visit Britain to become a Local Visitor Economy Partnership for Sussex. The Local Visitor Economy Partnerships will work in collaboration locally, regionally and nationally on shared priorities and targets to support and grow the visitor economy.

The Turner Prize will be hosted by the Towner Eastbourne from September 2023. As part of the hosting, the Council funded a successful bid for a £500,000 grant from Arts Council England to enable several Eastbourne based arts organisations, Sussex Modern and Public Health, to deliver a programme of local events for young people which will take place while the shortlisted works are exhibited. It is expected that 300,000 additional people will visit Eastbourne during the six months of the exhibition. It is estimated that the international exposure has already generated £280m worth of publicity for the town, with visitor numbers already doubling at peak times and hospitality businesses reporting an increase in custom.

Broadband

The Broadband Project is completing the connections to the final remaining properties identified as part of the scheme, including to some very complex sites. The project will move to formal contract closure once all targets have been delivered, which is expected in Q1 2023/24. The Broadband Team is continuing to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its centrally run Project Gigabit programme. BDUK has put the Gigabit Voucher scheme, including the East Sussex top up, on hold during the procurement process and we are awaiting confirmation of when BDUK will allow communities to apply for vouchers again. 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.

Business support and job creation

The Economic Development Team has developed an East Sussex business support programme, funded by district and borough partners using their UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocations. The programme will provide support to both new and established businesses. It will give local Small and Medium Enterprises access to high quality, professional advice and support to help them adapt and thrive through the current economic challenges and will help retain or create good quality local jobs in the county.

Business support programmes helped businesses to create or safeguard 28 jobs in Q4. During 2022/23 195 jobs were created or safeguarded. Locate East Sussex helped 20 businesses to remain within, or relocate to, East Sussex in Q4, making the 2022/23 total 51.

Locate East Sussex has been extended for a further year, and will continue to provide support to businesses in 2023/24. The service will have a reduced budget due to the withdrawal of contributions from the district and boroughs councils and the ending of EU match funding for the scheme.

Environment and climate change

Teams in CET and BSD have worked together with partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. In 2022/23 this has included:

- Assisting 149 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to measure their carbon footprint and awarding energy grants, totalling £250,000, to 49 SMEs to implement carbon reduction measures.
- Recruiting a new dedicated post focusing on reducing emissions from the Council's procurement activity, which makes up about 95% of our total corporate carbon emissions.
- Delivering carbon literacy training to 259 staff and Members, and sharing the e-learning climate change module with district and borough councils.
- Continuing to deliver the Active Travel programme, including a successful bid for £180,000 from the Department for Transport, and submitting a capital bid for capability funding.

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined within the statutory determination period in 2022/23. 100% of County Council development applications were also determined within eight weeks or within an agreed extension of time during 2022/23.

Highways, transport and waste

Highways improvements and road condition

A number of highway improvements were completed in 2022/23 using the one-off investment funding agreed by Cabinet in November 2021. Using the extra investment, we have completed an extra 1,117 patch repairs over 735 sites. We have also completed 367 small patch repairs to footways. We installed 1,193 new signs, costing £0.5m, to replace worn out signs. The remaining £0.5m of works will be undertaken in 2023/24 and 2024/25 with the entire programme forecast to be completed by 31 March 2025. We also completed £0.2m worth of refreshed road marking works and will complete a further £0.3m worth of works in 2023/24.

We completed 35 resurfacing projects to improve the condition of the county's roads in Q4. In total we completed 147 resurfacing projects during 2022/23, improving the condition of over 60 miles of roads. We repaired 12,207 potholes during Q4, 10,392 of which were potholes in the road; the remainder were potholes on the pavement. There was a significant increase in reported potholes during Q4, following a mix of cold and wet weather. The number of pothole repair gangs was increased and working hours extended in response. However, due to the challenging conditions some potholes were not repaired within the target timescales. Most of these were potholes that were assessed to be a lower risk to road users which we aim to repair within 5 days of being reported. Overall, 93.7% of the repairs to potholes were completed within the required timescales in 2022/23. There was a delay of six days, on average, for the pothole repairs not completed on time in 2022/23. During the year 30,000 potholes were repaired, with 21,600 of these potholes in the road. This is a significant increase on the 24,000 potholes completed in 2021/22.

A new highways contract was awarded to Balfour Beatty Living Places in October 2022. The new contract is worth £297m and started in May 2023. Balfour Beatty Living Places will be responsible for maintaining the county's highways network and infrastructure, including roads, pavements, drainage, streetlights, traffic lights and bridges. As part of the procurement process Balfour Beatty Living Places demonstrated how they would help reduce the Council's carbon footprint, provide value for money, and improve social wellbeing in East Sussex.

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 2022. The percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance was 5%, above the target of 4%, but matching the outturn from 2021/22 (**ref i**). The percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance was 6%, above the target of 4%, but matching the outturn from 2021/22 (**ref ii**). The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 13%, below the target of 14%, and the same outturn as 2021/22. These targets were set as part of a ten-year programme of investment to improve the condition of roads in East Sussex. The winter saw challenging weather for the condition of the roads, with two periods of very wet and cold weather in November/December 2022 and March 2023. By the end of January 2023, we had more than doubled the number of pothole repair gangs from 10 to 23 and extended working hours because of the number of potholes.

Road safety

We completed four infrastructure schemes to improve road safety in Q4. Two of these schemes were in Eastbourne, one in Bodiam and one in Hastings. In total during 2022/23, the highways contractor completed 17 road safety schemes. Whilst we have identified, designed and costed several other schemes, it has not been possible to schedule these within the final works

programme before the end of the existing highways contract. These schemes will be carried over for the new highways contractor to implement **(ref iv)**. The very wet and, at times, cold weather this winter has put extreme pressure on our highways contractor who have been dealing with an unprecedented number of potholes and drainage issues over the last few months, and this has impacted on all other highway activities including diverting resources away from our planned and programmed work.

We delivered 211 'Bikeability' courses to 1,124 individuals at participating schools and the Cycle Centre at Eastbourne Sports Park during Q4. During 2022/23, we delivered 555 courses to 4,354 individuals. 99 'Wheels for All' sessions were also delivered at the Sports Park during Q4 to 633 attendees. During 2022/23 we delivered a total of 252 'Wheels for All' sessions, to 3,649 individuals.

Transport and parking

The Government confirmed in Q2 that the Council would receive £41m towards our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). This allocation was the third highest for shire/rural authorities, and the highest per capita amongst these authorities. In Q2 the Lead Member agreed to use existing underspend from the Transport Hub budget to fund the early implementation of bus fare reductions, to encourage bus use and assist operators in maintaining a high-quality bus network in the county. The Enhanced Partnership Plan and Schemes were agreed in Q3, and the first tranche of funding has now been received from the Department for Transport. The new Bus Team are analysing the tenders from bus operators for the enhanced bus services, with the additional services expected to start running in Q1 2023/24.

The Transport Hub team worked quickly in Q2 to provide temporary bus stops at the bottom of School Hill in Lewes, following the decision by the owners of Lewes Bus Station to stop buses using the bus station. We completed works to widen the footways and install bus shelters in Q4.

In summer 2022 Stagecoach, the main operator of bus services in the county, informed the Council that they would be significantly reducing their services. The Transport Hub Team secured nine additional services through a tender process. This investment of £500,000 ensured that nearly all communities continued to be served by a bus route, meaning people could continue to access essential services, employment and education.

Following the launch of the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, we have been successful in securing a total of £105,000 towards capability funding. This money will help to support the development of the Council's infrastructure plan. Up to £4.4m of LEVI capital funding was also allocated to the Council to support infrastructure delivery and will be available in 2023/24 or 2024/25.

The Home to School Transport Team put in place school transport provision for over 6,000 children in 2022/23. The team have managed an increase in the number of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities requiring specialist transport, and the reduced the number of high-cost solo routes being used which has helped to, in part, mitigate the significant overspend in the service seen the first half of 2022/23. A proactive engagement programme with schools has improved transport reviews, which has also played an important part in containing cost increases.

A review of the parking restrictions in Rother District, implemented in September 2020, is being undertaken by the Parking Team. As part of the review the team received over 1,000 requests from people in Rother for new parking controls, such as double yellow lines, new disabled bays or resident parking permits. A formal consultation on the proposed new parking controls was conducted in February and March 2023. The results of this consultation are being reviewed and recommendations for new controls are due to be considered by the planning committee in Q1 2023/24.

Waste

54.6% of household waste was re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially in Q3 (reported a quarter in arrears). The Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) was running more efficiently during Q3, which has resulted in less tonnage coming out of the facility. This has resulted in less bottom ash and metals, which are included in the recycling rates. There has also continued to be a reduction in dry mixed recycling and composted materials.

The Waste Team introduced a number of measures to reduce waste and improve recycling services in 2022/23, including:

- Introduced rigid plastic recycling at Newhaven and Heathfield Household Waste and Recycling Sites (HWRS).
- Expansion of the Hailsham HWRS.
- The reuse shop at Eastbourne HWRS was improved and had a new roof fitted.
- A mechanical sweepings bay was installed at Maresfield Waste Transfer Station. Wealden District Council's street sweepings are now separated for recycling, reuse and composting.
- Delivered a communications campaign to increase awareness of the hazardous nature of batteries, increase battery recycling, and reduce the amount being thrown into rubbish and recycling bins.
- Received high income from sales of recycling and electricity which significantly reduced overall expenditure on waste.

Communities

Trading Standards

During 2022/23 Trading Standards obtained Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) confiscation orders against convicted individuals totalling nearly £100,000. The POCA ensures that criminals do not profit from their crimes. A proportion of any payment received against those orders is retained by the authority to invest in future enforcement activity. Trading Standards also received civil compensation of over £160,000 in Q4, which is being distributed to nine victims of fraud. The defendant was originally convicted by Trading Standards in 2016 for consumer protection offences, and a Proceeds of Crime Confiscation Order was made in 2017. However, at this time the defendant was an undischarged bankrupt and had no available assets to pay his victims. A new investigation by Trading Standards revealed significant financial assets of the defendant resulting in the new civil compensation agreement.

57 businesses and individuals received training and advice from Trading Standards in Q4. Improvements have been made to the recording of support on the Trading Standards system and the resulting updated figures for quarters 1 to 3 show a higher number of businesses and individuals receiving support than was previously reported. In total during 2022/23, 379 businesses and individuals received training and advice from Trading Standards, meeting the target for the year **(ref iii)**.

Trading Standards made 104 positive interventions to protect vulnerable people in Q4. 93 of these were as part of support sessions and training delivered to vulnerable groups, while 11 were direct interventions to protect vulnerable people. During 2022/23, there were 530 positive interventions, 418 of which were support sessions and training and 112 were direct interventions. The number of interventions was boosted in 2022/23 by working with new groups such as the Financial Inclusion team.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

The England Coastal Path is a new walking route that will follow the entire coast of England and is due to be fully open in 2023/24. The Council chairs the South East England Coast Path Trail Partnership, which is responsible for a 250 mile section of the England Coastal Path running along the coast from Bexley to Brighton. During 2022/23 new sections of the path in East Sussex have been opened from Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne and Camber to Folkestone.

We completed 91% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in 2022/23, against a target of 80%. A long period of dry weather in summer 2022 allowed improved access for maintenance work, as well as reducing the level of vegetation growth. Both these factors allowed a greater focus on planned rather than reactive work.

Libraries

470 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q3. 116 of these were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes, while 354 were in Wider Family Learning programmes. During the whole of 2022/23 there were 1,166 enrolments, 959 of which were in Wider Family Learning programmes, and 207 were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes. 19 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q4, bringing the total number of achievements for 2022/23 to 83.

The Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, visited Eastbourne library in March as part of his decade long tour of UK libraries. The E to G Libraries Tour, ran from March 17 to March 23 and was the latest leg of Simon's ten-year adventure celebrating UK libraries. At the event in Eastbourne Simon read solo from a range of his work and answered questions from the audience.

The refurbishment of our library buildings continued in 2022/23, with works completed at Rye and Newhaven libraries. Improvements have been made to the layout to enhance the customer experience. Children's areas have been upgraded and new seating provided at both libraries, while study spaces have also been upgraded at Newhaven library. The improvements will support the library service to deliver its aims, including improving child and adult numeracy and literacy.

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget was £62.566m and was underspent by £0.663m. There was £0.908m of COVID-19 costs and lost income which has been offset with COVID-19 tranche funding. The underspend would have been higher, but only £0.255m of the £1m Parking savings target was achieved this year **(ref v)**. The Parking savings have been significantly impacted by changes to driving and parking habits following COVID-19. High street activity has not returned to pre-covid levels and consequently we have yet to see the level of revenue that the increased parking charges were expected to yield. The £0.06m Environmental Service saving is unachievable and the department will look to find alternative savings next year **(ref vi)**. The largest area of underspend is in Transport and Operational Services. This is mostly made up of Waste Service underspends due to increased income from recycling, electricity sales, and reduced disposal costs. As agreed, £2.4m of this windfall Waste income has been transferred to the Waste Reserve to cover future budget pressures and a further £1.37m will be used to cover the cost of the Record Service move from Ropemaker Park **(ref vii)**. There is a net overspend on the Highways budget due to streetlighting electricity, the cost of correcting safety defects, additional gritting and drainage works, and additional tree work due to Ash Die Back **(ref viii)**. The Economy overspend is mainly due to Hastings Borough Council's decision not to remove the byelaw prohibiting cycling in Alexandra Park. The Alexandra Park Cycle scheme was therefore aborted resulting in the capital costs already incurred being assigned back to the revenue budget **(ref ix)**. The department decided to not draw down £0.285m of earmarked reserves, as there was the opportunity to manage with current resources and avoid unnecessary calls on corporate reserves. There are a number of variances across other services consisting mainly of staff vacancies, project slippage and additional income.

Capital Programme Summary

The final CET capital programme had a gross budget of £55.329m and there was slippage of £5.846m, overspend of £1.189m, underspend of £0.847m and spend in advance of £0.703m. Schemes with the largest slippage include the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package, where elements of the scheme will now be undertaken by the new Highways contractor in May 2023 **(ref xiii)**. The Climate Emergency programme slipped to cover retention payments not yet due and underspends allocated to 2023/24 projects **(ref xi)**. Bus Service Improvement Plan works are delayed pending a consultant's report **(ref xii)**. There were delays on a number of Integrated Transport schemes including the Casualty Reduction Programme, Battle Hill, Dropped Kerbs and Uckfield Bus Station **(ref xiv)**. The need to redirect footway gangs to repair potholes has led to slippage in the Visually Better Roads scheme **(ref xvii)**.

The main underspend is on the Emergency Active Travel scheme, where the grant was larger than expected and a number of schemes bid for turned out to not be feasible **(ref xv)**. The opportunity to bring forward additional patching works has resulted in the spend in advance on the Highways Structural Maintenance programme **(ref xvi)**. The overspend is mostly due to Bexhill to Hastings Link Road compensation claims and other ongoing costs such as archaeology, ecological monitoring and landscaping **(ref x)**. There are several schemes that are forecasting smaller variances.

Performance exceptions (Q4 – See How to read this report for definition)**Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth**

| Performance measure | Outturn 21/22 | Target 22/23 | RAG Q1 22/23 | RAG Q2 22/23 | RAG Q3 22/23 | RAG Q4 22/23 | 2022/23 outturn | Note ref |
|---|---|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---|----------|
| Percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance | 5% | 4% | G | G | G | R | 5% | i |
| Percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance | 6% | 4% | G | G | G | R | 6% | ii |
| The number of businesses and professionals receiving advice and support through training and bespoke advice provided by Trading Standards | 126 individual delegates trained; 204 businesses received bespoke advice | 350 | G | G | R | G | 379 (107 individual delegates trained; 272 businesses received bespoke advice) | iii |

Priority – Helping people help themselves

| Performance measure | Outturn 21/22 | Target 22/23 | RAG Q1 22/23 | RAG Q2 22/23 | RAG Q3 22/23 | RAG Q4 22/23 | 2022/23 outturn | Note ref |
|---|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------------------|----------|
| Road Safety: Implement infrastructure schemes on identified high risk sites/routes to improve road safety | 24 Safety Schemes implemented | Implement 22 Safety Schemes | G | A | A | R | 17 Safety Schemes implemented | iv |

Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | 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 | 1,000 | 1,000 | 255 | 745 | - | v |
| Libraries | 183 | 183 | 183 | - | - | |
| Environmental Services | 60 | 60 | - | - | 60 | vi |
| Archives | 14 | 14 | 14 | - | - | |
| Total Savings | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 745 | 60 | |
| | | | - | - | - | |
| | | | - | - | - | |
| Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹ | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | |
| Total Savings and Permanent Changes | 1,257 | 1,257 | 452 | 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 2022/23 (£'000)

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net | Note ref |
|----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------|---------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------|
| Management and Support | 5,888 | (4,456) | 1,432 | 8,734 | (7,421) | 1,313 | (2,846) | 2,965 | 119 | |
| Customer and Library Services | 8,217 | (3,883) | 4,334 | 8,881 | (4,402) | 4,479 | (664) | 519 | (145) | |
| Communities | 4,730 | (1,865) | 2,865 | 5,167 | (2,562) | 2,605 | (437) | 697 | 260 | |
| Transport & Operational Services | 92,291 | (53,970) | 38,321 | 94,109 | (56,996) | 37,113 | (1,818) | 3,026 | 1,208 | vii |
| Highways | 15,630 | (2,653) | 12,977 | 18,715 | (5,108) | 13,607 | (3,085) | 2,455 | (630) | viii |
| Economy | 5,390 | (3,754) | 1,636 | 6,519 | (4,694) | 1,825 | (1,129) | 940 | (189) | ix |
| Planning and Environment | 3,955 | (2,954) | 1,001 | 4,685 | (3,724) | 961 | (730) | 770 | 40 | |
| Total CET | 136,101 | (73,535) | 62,566 | 146,810 | (84,907) | 61,903 | (10,709) | 11,372 | 663 | |

Capital programme 2022/23 (£'000)

| Approved project | Budget: total project all years | Projected: total project all years | Budget 2022/23 | Actual 2022/23 | Variation (Over) / under 2022/23 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 | 26 | - | 26 | - | 26 | - | |
| Covid-19 Recovery - Libraries Targeted Support | 250 | 132 | 211 | 93 | 118 | 118 | - | - | |
| Peacehaven Library | 70 | 70 | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | - | |
| Libraries | 5,139 | 5,139 | 497 | 428 | 69 | - | 69 | - | |
| Broadband | 33,800 | 33,800 | 911 | 908 | 3 | - | 3 | - | |
| Bexhill and Hastings Link Road | 126,247 | 127,266 | 318 | 1,337 | (1,019) | (1,019) | - | - | x |
| BHLR Complementary Measures | 1,800 | 1,800 | 167 | 38 | 129 | - | 129 | - | |
| Economic Intervention Fund | 8,884 | 8,884 | 242 | 213 | 29 | - | 29 | - | |
| Economic Intervention Fund - Loans | 3,000 | 3,000 | 347 | 220 | 127 | - | 127 | - | |
| Stalled Sites Fund | 916 | 916 | 35 | 9 | 26 | - | 26 | - | |
| EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties | 500 | 500 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| UTC Maritime & Sustainable Technology Hub GBF | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | 1,300 | - | - | - | - | |
| Food Street GBF | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | - | - | - | - | |
| Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Infrastructure Uplift GBF | 284 | 284 | 284 | 284 | - | - | - | - | |
| Skills for Rural Businesses - Post Brexit | 4,413 | 4,413 | 915 | 915 | - | - | - | - | |
| Observer Building GBF | 315 | 315 | 315 | 315 | - | - | - | - | |
| Community Focused Road Safety Interventions | 750 | 750 | - | 28 | (28) | - | - | (28) | |
| Climate Emergency Works | 9,945 | 9,859 | 2,448 | 1,246 | 1,202 | 86 | 1,116 | - | xi |
| Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme | 445 | 445 | 641 | 709 | (68) | - | - | (68) | |
| SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School | 145 | 145 | - | - | - | - | - | - | |
| SALIX Decarbonisation | 369 | 455 | 77 | 163 | (86) | (86) | - | - | |
| Newhaven Port Access Road | 23,271 | 23,271 | 257 | 191 | 66 | - | 66 | - | |
| Real Time Passenger Information | 2,963 | 2,963 | 74 | 48 | 26 | - | 26 | - | |

APPENDIX 5

| Approved project | Budget: total project all years | Projected: total project all years | Budget 2022/23 | Actual 2022/23 | Variation (Over) / under 2022/23 budget | Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend | Variation analysis: Slippage to future year | Variation analysis: Spend in advance | Note ref |
|---|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|---|--|---|---|-------------|
| Bus Service Improvement Plan | 22,315 | 22,315 | 1,125 | 390 | 735 | - | 735 | - | xii |
| Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station | 100 | 100 | 100 | 96 | 4 | - | 4 | - | |
| PAX Software System | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | - | - | - | - | |
| Hastings & Bexhill Movement & Access Package | 9,534 | 9,534 | 2,265 | 1,096 | 1,169 | - | 1,169 | - | xiii |
| Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package | 6,936 | 6,936 | 540 | 287 | 253 | - | 253 | - | |
| Hailsham / Polegate / Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor | 2,251 | 2,251 | 684 | 565 | 119 | - | 119 | - | |
| Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package A | 4,286 | 4,286 | 532 | 664 | (132) | - | - | (132) | |
| Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package B | 5,454 | 5,454 | 304 | 304 | - | - | - | - | |
| Other Integrated Transport Schemes | 65,690 | 65,609 | 3,260 | 2,567 | 693 | 81 | 612 | - | xiv |
| A22 Corridor Package | 962 | 1,043 | 533 | 614 | (81) | (81) | - | - | |
| Community Match Fund | 771 | 771 | 90 | 36 | 54 | - | 54 | - | |
| Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 | 1,456 | 892 | 756 | 193 | 563 | 563 | - | - | xv |
| Exceat Bridge | 10,591 | 10,591 | 1,955 | 1,566 | 389 | - | 389 | - | |
| Exceat Bridge (Blight notice) | 1,000 | 1,003 | 1,000 | 1,003 | (3) | (3) | - | - | |
| Queensway Depot Development | 1,956 | 1,956 | 175 | 137 | 38 | - | 38 | - | |
| Hailsham HWRS | 171 | 171 | 171 | 169 | 2 | 2 | - | - | |
| Core Highways Structural Maintenance | 456,327 | 456,327 | 21,686 | 22,140 | (454) | - | - | (454) | xvi |
| Visually Better Roads | 5,800 | 5,800 | 4,809 | 4,316 | 493 | - | 493 | - | xvii |
| Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening | 36,663 | 36,663 | 1,981 | 1,990 | (9) | - | - | (9) | |
| Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired | 33,001 | 33,001 | 2,973 | 2,829 | 144 | - | 144 | - | |
| Core Programme - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme | 2,961 | 2,961 | 650 | 431 | 219 | - | 219 | - | |
| Core Programme - Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement | 9,844 | 9,844 | 565 | 578 | (13) | - | - | (13) | |
| Total CET Gross (Planned Programme) | 904,082 | 904,422 | 55,331 | 50,528 | 4,803 | (339) | 5,846 | (704) | |

Governance Services – end of year 2022/23

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

Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

Planning for 2023/24 and beyond culminated in February with the agreement of the budget and Council Plan by County Council, informed by engagement events with strategic partners, young people, business representatives and Trade Unions as well as input from scrutiny committees. The Council Plan and Portfolio Plans 2023/24, which set out our priority and delivery outcomes for the coming year and our plans for delivering them, have been published online. Delays to the implementation of reforms, additional short-term grant funding for social care, and increased flexibility on levels of Council Tax and the adult social care precept, together with our prudent planning, means that, for now, our financial position remains secure despite the challenges we face. However, further ahead, demand and costs will continue to grow, and there will be additional expectations arising from national reforms. This means we are likely to face a much more challenging position in future years. We will continue to work with our local, regional and national partners to highlight the specific needs of East Sussex, and to press for fair and sustainable allocation of funding that enables us to continue to meet the needs of our residents.

RPPR has once again proved to be effective in matching our resources with our delivery plans for our priority outcomes during 2022/23. Our integrated planning process has allowed us to continue to focus and protect our spending where it will deliver our priority objectives most effectively, and ensure we have the demographic trends and performance information to monitor progress, as well as evidence to support lobbying at a local, regional and national level. Our robust planning has meant that, despite significant challenges faced during the year, the Council has been able to provide stability in our service offer to residents. We have continued to use this short-term stability to prepare for challenges ahead, particularly in children's social care where additional investment in more sustainable models, focused on keeping more children with their families, has been included in the medium-term financial plan.

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

The TfSE Strategic Investment Plan (SIP) is the blueprint for future investment in strategic transport infrastructure in the south east for the next thirty years, and builds on the Transport Strategy published in 2020. The draft SIP was subject to a full public consultation from June to September 2022, attracting over 600 responses from members of the public and stakeholders. The final version of the SIP was approved by the Partnership Board and submitted to government in March 2023. TfSE have subsequently received a letter from the ministerial team at the Department for Transport confirming that the document will be given consideration in future policy and investment decisions.

The TfSE Board approved the Business Plan for 2023/24 and the draft budget at their meeting in March 2023. This sets out the work plan for the next 12 months, including development of an analytical framework, a regional active travel strategy and a refresh of the evidence base for the Transport Strategy. Work will also commence on a Regional Centre of Excellence, which will support local transport authorities in the delivery and implementation of their local transport plans.

Our regional Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy was approved and signed off by the Partnership Board, in March 2023. Following the publication of this strategy, a second stage of work has been proposed that aims to produce forecasts for future electric vehicle infrastructure demand from vehicle fleets across the TfSE area.

The delivery of the 11 support packages for Bus Back Better has continued throughout Q4 and is due to finish in Q1 2023/24. TfSE, Transport East and England's Economic Heartland are working to understand if further support is required to continue progress on delivery of local authorities Bus Service Improvement Plans.

Corporate Lobbying

Throughout 2022/23 corporate lobbying work has focussed on using our partnerships and networks at the local, regional, and national level to influence policy development in a range of areas, including adult social care charging reforms, the future of children's social care and local authority funding. During Q4, we assessed the implications of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for the Council and fed into the Society of County Treasurers' response to the settlement consultation to ensure key issues and concerns for the Council were captured. We also assessed the implications of the Government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and contributed to an initial collective response to the Minister from the South East 7 partnership. The Leader continues to represent the Council on the County Councils' Network Executive as spokesperson for Children's and Young People's issues.

The Leader and Chief Executive have continued to raise issues and priorities for the county with our local MPs, including in Q4 through specific updates on our Council Plan and budget position for 2023/24. Chief Officers continue to influence service specific national policy developments through national professional associations and networks. The Chief Executive has contributed to national policy development throughout 2022/23 as representative for the South East region on a national grouping of local authority Chief Executives. In Q4, this included supporting councils across the region to escalate questions and concerns regarding migration and pressures in adult social care and children's services and contributing to the development of the new Office for Local Government.

Supporting democracy

During 2022/23 we supported 171 meetings (46 in Q4) including: six County Council meetings (two in Q4); seven Cabinet meetings (two in Q4); 45 Lead Member meetings (12 in Q4); 60 Scrutiny Committees and Review Boards (13 in Q4); and 53 other committees and panels (12 in Q4). We also supported three Whole Council Forums (one in Q4). The webcasts of Council meetings were viewed 6,902 times in 2022/23 (1,994 times in Q4). The most viewed meeting was the Full Council meeting in February 2023, which was watched 451 times, either by live view or as a recording.

The Member Training and Development Programme delivered a wide range training courses to Members throughout the course of the year (a total 26 training sessions were delivered). Courses included sessions on 'Climate Awareness', 'Digital Footprints', 'Armed Forces Covenant', 'East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Map Viewers' and 'Confidentiality and the Code of Conduct'. To help ensure courses continue to meet the needs of Members a survey of training needs was undertaken in Q4. Feedback from the survey will inform the development of a fresh training offer for Members for 2023/24. To help make participation as easy as possible most training sessions will continue to be delivered remotely with resources, such as slides from training sessions, being saved to the Councillors' area of the intranet for future reference. The Member Reference Group also met on three occasions and discussed a range of issues including, for example, IT developments relating to members.

The Council's scrutiny committees delivered varied work programmes during 2022/23, including a range of scrutiny reviews, reference groups and committee meetings, all of which have provided additional scrutiny and constructive challenge to the work of the Council and partners. In Q4 the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee completed two reviews of NHS reconfigurations covering cardiology and ophthalmology services. Place Scrutiny Committee completed its scrutiny work on both the new highways maintenance contract and the update of the corporate Climate Emergency Action Plan and held a meeting in November 2022 with Southern Water to question them on sewage discharges. Two scrutiny reviews were completed during Q4 on the Use of Digital and Technology in Adult Social Care, and Procurement: Social Value and Buying Local. Scrutiny comments were reported to Cabinet and Council as part of budget and Council Plan setting for 2023/24, following the Place and People Scrutiny RPPR Boards held in December. Questioning

skills training was provided in Q4 to further support Members in undertaking the roles on scrutiny and Audit committees.

The Health and Wellbeing Board met on 7 March 2023. The Board considered a report on the East Sussex Health and Social Care Integration Programme and the development of the Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) for the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Strategy. The draft SDP will be presented to the Board for endorsement at an additional meeting to be held on 27 June 2023. The Board also received reports on the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Building for our Future programme and hospital re-developments; Pharmacy provision in East Sussex following the announced closure of a number of pharmacies; and the Eastbourne Listening Tour carried out by Healthwatch East Sussex. During 2022/23 the Board has also considered and endorsed the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Strategy and received update reports on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment.

The East Sussex School Appeal Service continued to further enhance its in-house secure online digital appeal management system. The latest developments, which went live during Q4, have delivered improvements in customer service and further strengthened our information governance practices.

46 school admission appeals were submitted by families during Q4. This resulted in six virtual appeal hearing sessions taking place (at each hearing session a number of appeals are usually considered, with parents able to attend in-person if that is their preference).

Legal Services

During Q4, Legal Services assisted Trading Standards to secure a custodial sentence following a successful conviction against a fraudulent trader for seven counts of possessing for sale counterfeit tobacco. The Service also assisted Trading Standards to obtain a successful conviction for possession for sale of counterfeit footwear. The Service further assisted Trading Standards with an application to amend a confiscation order in respect of a fraudulent trader, who was sentenced in 2016. This resulted in £162,825 being secured to repay his victims.

During 2022/23 the Service advised in relation to 273 Court of Protection cases and 79 matters involving safeguarding vulnerable adults (compared to 307 and 100 in 2021/22) and in relation to 191 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications in the Court of Protection (up from 175 in 2021/22).

The Service continues 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 Q4 the Service advised in relation to 48 families in pre-proceedings compared to 54 in Q4 2021/22. In 2022/23 the Service applied for care proceedings in respect of 71 families compared to 64 in 2021/22. At the end of Q4, there were a total of 68 ongoing care proceedings compared to 61 proceedings in Q4 2021/22. In 2022/23 we concluded 63 sets of care proceedings compared to 81 in Q4 2021/22. Of the concluded proceedings 42% were placed in the care of family under special guardianship or child arrangements orders. Concluded proceedings in East Sussex in 2022/23 took on average 53 weeks per child. Court capacity has continued to be a contributory factor to the length of proceedings. In January 2023, the judiciary launched a plan to reduce the length of proceedings and the Service is working with the judiciary to implement this plan. The Service has also continued to provide training and legal advice to Children's Services, including on court work for newly qualified social workers and on policy and operational instructions.

During 2022/23, the Service completed agreements to secure financial contributions to the Council of over £1.9m, together with the delivery of additions and improvements to the highway network across the county. The Service also advised on 129 new property matters compared to 122 in 2021/22. In addition, the Service advised on 230 new contract and procurement matters compared to 147 in 2021/22.

Coroner Services

On average 209 deaths per month were reported to the Coroner in Q4. This is lower than the Q3 figure of 220. On average 206 deaths per month were reported to the Coroner in 2022/23 compared to 173 per month in 2021/22. In 2022/23 1,034 post mortems were carried out (42% of deaths reported) compared to 877 (43% of deaths reported) in 2021/22. A total of 375 deaths reported to the Coroner went to inquest in 2022/23 compared to 348 in 2020/21 and 315 inquests were closed in 2022/23 compared to 320 in 2021/22.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

During Q4, an application for directed surveillance was made under RIPA. This allowed Trading Standards officers to covertly observe the activities of a group of individuals suspected of supplying illegal tobacco from a retail shop. The activity, which lasted just over two months, concluded with the execution of a search warrant at a private dwelling. Counterfeit tobacco with a retail value of more than £26,000 was seized and the investigation is ongoing. This is one of two applications, which were made during 2022/23 concerning illegal tobacco, the first continuing from Q4 of 2021/22 into Q1 2022/23.

Over the course of the year, three separate applications were made under the Investigatory Powers Act 2016 for telecommunications data. These related to a suspected rogue trader, a seller of counterfeit clothing and a long term investigation into illegal tobacco supply.

During Q3, the Council participated in an Investigatory Powers (RIPA/IPA) update training session, representatives of all departments within the Council were invited to attend, together with colleagues from West Sussex County Council.

Local Government Ombudsman complaints

The Ombudsman issued 11 decisions in Q4. Eight 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, an appropriate remedy had already been applied and because the complaint had not been through our internal complaint processes. Of the three fully investigated, one case related to Adult Social Care (ASC), one to Children's Services (CS) and one to Governance Services (GS). All of the cases investigated were closed, with the complaint partly or fully upheld as follows:

ASC – The client complained about delays with the Council in completing a Disability Related Expenditure assessment (DRE) and in reviewing the subsequent appeal. The client also complained that the Council failed to fully acknowledge the expenses she was incurring because of her disability. The Ombudsman found fault with the Council for the delays and fault was also found for failing to fully assess all the client's requested DREs.

The Council has agreed to fully backdate the client's approved DREs, complete a review of an outstanding DRE and pay her £300 for the avoidable distress, inconvenience and frustration caused.

CS – The client complained about the level of transport offered by the Council for a child with an Education, Health and Care Plan to attend post-16 education. The Council initially offered one journey per day by taxi, with the expectation that the child's stepfather would provide transport for the other journey. The Council subsequently agreed to pay £45 per day (the cost of one taxi journey), backdated to the start of the academic year, so that the family could use their preferred taxi operator. The Ombudsman found fault with the Panel for making its decision without detailed, up-to-date information about the stepfather's work commitments. Further fault was found because the Panel issued a draft decision in response to the appeal, which is not set out in the Council's published appeals process.

GS – The client complained that the Council failed to provide a recording of the Coroner's inquest into her son's death and failed to provide details of the documents considered as part of the inquest. Whilst the Ombudsman found no evidence to support the view that the Coroner failed to

provide details of the documents considered, fault was found because, due to a corrupted file, the Coroner was unable to provide a working copy of the recording of the hearing, which is in breach of the service standards.

The Council has agreed to provide a written apology and make a symbolic payment of £250 to recognise the distress caused. The Council has also agreed to review the inquest recording system to ensure it is fit for purpose and that suitable storage and back up systems are in place.

Web activity

There were 1.7m visits to the Council's website in Q4, and 6.2m visits across the whole year. These figures include over 16,500 visits to our cost of living web pages, which have advice and support for residents who may be looking for some extra help.

Technical changes to the way web visits can be monitored mean that current figures are not directly comparable to previous years.

Media and information work

There were 488 media stories about the Council in Q4. The press office issued 31 press releases, generating 116 stories. 184 media enquiries were handled.

There were 1,689 media stories about the Council throughout 2022/23, The press office issued 123 Council press releases this year, generating 337 stories, and handled 475 media enquiries.

Effective publicity and campaigns

During the period of our "Get into Libraries" campaign library membership increased by 15% year on year, new users by 40% and footfall by 65%. The campaign was designed to encourage more visits to library buildings, concentrating on five key activities: free computer and wi-fi use, adult learning, study space and rhyme time. More than half of residents (53%) said they had seen the campaign, which involved bus stop ads, social media, school book bags, online newsletters, media work and hard copy advertising.

An internal campaign to get more managers and staff to find out more about apprenticeships and consider employing apprentices saw visits to the relevant pages increase by more than 900% on last year.

Our most recent survey of residents showed well over half (57%) agreed the Council kept them either very well-informed or quite well-informed with a growing gap between those who held those views and those who disagreed.

South East 7 (SE7)

Throughout 2022/23, the SE7 partnership has continued to provide a valuable forum for sharing intelligence on the rapidly evolving national policy context, and developing joint lobbying messages on particular issues. The SE7 partnership has also helped provide understanding on how neighbouring councils are responding to shared challenges, which this year has particularly focused on the rising cost of living, proposed adult social care charging reforms and migration.

SE7 Leaders and Chief Executives met jointly in Q4, to discuss latest issues and priorities for all councils, including issues emerging from budget setting for 2023/24, the Independent Review of Integrated Care Systems, and county deals and devolution. They also discussed common challenges related to asylum dispersal with the Head of Partnership at the South East Strategic Partnership on Migration and agreed that they would jointly write to the Home Secretary, highlighting the pressures on the region from accommodating a large number of asylum seekers. In March, Leaders met and discussed issues including the Chancellor's Spring Budget, the proposed transfer of Local Enterprise Partnership functions to local authorities and developments in relation to devolution.

Leaders have written to the Ministers for Children, Families and Wellbeing in Q4, sharing their collective view on the children's social care implementation strategy and consultation: 'Stable

Homes, Built on Love', and expressing concern that there is insufficient funding allocated to support the proposed reforms.

Other partnership working

The Council has been taking part in the Partnerships for People and Place programme run by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities throughout 2022/23. The aim of the programme is to develop ways for central and local government to work better together. During Q2 we worked in partnership with Citizen's Advice 1066 to undertake an engagement exercise with landlords and tenants to better understand barriers to landlords investing in properties, and the impact of housing standards on residents' health and wellbeing. During Q3 and Q4 we continued to work with partners to design and deliver our workstreams. One focuses on behaviour change seeking to increase the number of tenants and landlords in the private rented sector taking up the existing support available. The other workstream aims to collect data on the current gaps in funding available for improvement works for low-income households, provide support to deliver minor improvements to properties and to provide support to local residents through grant funding to CA1066.

Revenue Budget Summary

The Governance Service net budget for 2022/23 is £7.646m and was underspent by £49k. This was due to small variances across the department's services.

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

| Performance measure | Outturn 21/22 | Target 22/23 | RAG Q1 22/23 | RAG Q2 22/23 | RAG Q3 22/23 | RAG Q4 22/23 | 2022/23 outturn | Note ref |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|----------|
| There are no Council Plan targets | | | | | | | | |

Savings exceptions 2022/23 (£'000)

| Service description | Original Target For 2022/23 | Target including items c/f from previous year(s) | Achieved in-year | Will be achieved, but in future years | Cannot be achieved | Note ref |
|--|-----------------------------|--|------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| There are no targeted savings in 2022/23 | - | - | - | - | - | |
| | - | - | - | - | - | |
| 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 2022/23 (£'000)

| Divisions | Planned Gross | Planned Income | Planned Net | 2022/23 Gross | 2022/23 Income | 2022/23 Net | (Over)/ under spend Gross | (Over)/ under spend Income | (Over)/ under spend Net | Note ref |
|-------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Corporate Governance | 4,700 | (252) | 4,448 | 4,596 | (272) | 4,324 | 104 | 20 | 124 | |
| Corporate Support | 3,586 | (388) | 3,198 | 3,938 | (665) | 3,273 | (352) | 277 | (75) | |
| Total Governance | 8,286 | (640) | 7,646 | 8,534 | (937) | 7,597 | (248) | 297 | 49 | |

Capital programme 2022/23 (£'000)

| Approved project | Budget: total project all years | Projected: total project all years | Budget 2022/23 | Actual 2022/23 | Variation (Over) / under 2022/23 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 | |

Strategic Risk Register – Q4 2022/23

| 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. 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.</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 |
| 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 to Adult Social Care. Rising inflation and cost of living are likely to lead to higher demand for Council services and increase 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>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 conflict in Ukraine, national service reforms and the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic. 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.</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 |
|---------|---|--|-----|
| Page 92 | <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. Current work includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Further work on the development of an employer brand and updated recruitment materials, such as recruitment videos and social media advertising, to identify the Council as an employer of choice. - Streamlined recruitment processes for identified roles e.g. removal of application form and replacement with CV and interview as soon as an application is received - Use of market supplements for specific posts. - On-going attendance at events such as careers fairs and shows to maximise our presence with job seekers. - Use of apprenticeships, traineeships, intern arrangements and more flexible work arrangements etc as a way of bringing in new talent to the Council. - Ensuring our workforce policies and approaches support individuals to remain in work, e.g. Wellbeing offer, occupational health, and absence management services. - Ensuring senior management oversight of caseloads, including mitigating actions to address high caseloads, along with the provision of high quality and regular managerial support and supervision of practitioners. - Completion of the workforce specific actions within the Corporate Equality action plan. - Implementation of mental health first aiders in the workplace. We now have a network of over 100 trained individuals. - Launch of a refreshed 'financial wellbeing' resource to support our staff, particularly given the rising cost of living pressures. - Clarity on professional development pathway for profession specific roles. - Pilot of equality and diversity pilot informing recruitment and retention policies tailored to increasing diversity of the workforce. <p>New approaches being developed include:</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. A new post of 'Pre-Employment Coordinator' has been established to lead on this work and will be recruited to early in the New Year. - Provision of a leadership development programme aimed at LMG3/4 managers, along with the continued delivery of our two leadership development programmes to support our talent management strategies: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and 'Head of Service Masterclasses'. - Development of career pathways for 'hard to recruit' posts including greater use of apprenticeships. - Forecasting of workforce 'gaps' and future need to enable bespoke approaches to be designed e.g. production of workforce development plan by CSD to support the Family Safeguarding initiative. | Red |

| Ref | Strategic Risks | Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score | RAG |
|----------------------------------|--|---|-----|
| <div>15</div> <div>Page 73</div> | <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. 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 flood risk management plans and deliver a Heat Alert service during the summer months.</p> <p>In Quarter 4:</p> <p>1) Carbon Reduction Target: the carbon reduction target for 2022-23 is a 34% reduction compared with the baseline year of 2019-20. Energy usage data for 2022-23 will be collated and analysed by July 2023-24. The initial analysis of Q1-3 data for 2022-23 indicated that we may be close to reaching the 34% cumulative reduction target, subject to the weather during Q4 being mild.</p> <p>2) 10 LED lighting projects: 11 schemes have been completed.</p> <p>3) 10 solar PV projects: 7 sites have been completed. An 8th site is due to complete in March, a 9th site is due to complete in Q1 2023/24 and a 10th site in the pipeline for 2022-23 will now also be picked up for delivery in 2023-24.</p> <p>4) 2 Decarbonisation of Heat Projects: Ninfield & Herstmonceux school projects have completed.</p> <p>5) Climate Awareness Training: 140 staff have had carbon literacy training; 82 school and corporate site managers have had energy efficiency training; and 46 School Business Managers have had presentations on how they could best use the Department for Education efficiency funding given to schools in 2022-23.</p> <p>6) Electric vehicle (EV) charge points: £106K of revenue Capability Funding has been awarded by the Department for Transport (DfT) to support the development of an on-street charge point network. Capital funding from DfT is expected, which will support the procurement of the 1st phase of the network, planned in 2023-24.</p> <p>7) New corporate Climate Emergency Plan: the new plan, covering the period up to March 2025, was agreed by full Council in February.</p> | Red |

| Ref | Strategic Risks | Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score | RAG |
|--------------|--|--|-----|
| New | PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE Inability to secure sufficient high quality placements for children in our care, and, suitable accommodation for care experienced young people and respite provision, leading to significant financial pressure | Effective management of demand through early intervention and support to families, (delivery of supported families, early help services). Ensuring appropriate thresholds applied through Single Point of Advice (SPOA) and multi-agency safeguarding hub. Robust quality assurances and performance management across locality teams. Monitoring and evaluation of investment in Connected families and Family Safeguarding approach (to be launched January 2024), enabling more children to live safely with their families and supporting reunification. Ensuring Family Group Conferences in place and kinship care are considered for all children entering care. Placement sufficiency assessment and strategy refreshed to inform forecasting regarding number and type of placements required over the next three-five years. Fostering recruitment and retention strategy refreshed. Review of foster carers rates. | Red |
| Page 6 74 | SCHOOLS AND ISEND For Children with Special Educational Needs. Inability to secure statutory provision. | Effective use of forecasting data to pre-empt issues. Work with statutory partners to develop contingency plans. Work with the market to increase provision where needed. Expanding internal interim offer for children. | Red |
| 1 | ROADS Extreme weather events over recent years 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. Post pandemic and recent events in Ukraine, and the economic impact of these, have had some effects on service delivery during this year, particularly with increased costs, shortages of suitable contractors and materials. | While additional funding over the last few years has helped maintain road condition, the latest condition and funding modelling showed the potential for renewed deterioration over the next 10 years if further investment was not introduced into road maintenance. This reflects the changing climate with more extreme events such as warmer wetter winters, drier summers (drying and shrinking the substructure of roads) punctuated by unseasonal heavy downpours, all now influencing the rate of road deterioration. However, further investment was approved by Cabinet in November 2021 and through the Reconciling Policy, Performance & Resources (RPPR) process in February 2022 to maintain condition at current levels; and to help mitigate these factors over the next 10 years by increasing the capital budget for road maintenance by an additional £3.1m per year. In addition, a one-off investment of £5.8million to be spent on highway maintenance (roads, footways, lines and signs) in 2022/23 was also agreed. The wettest November on record, followed by one of the coldest starts to December and then further heavy rain, have led to a significant increase in the number of potholes appearing on our roads. This will also likely be reflected in a wider deterioration in road surfaces, which may manifest in our Road Condition Indicator (RCI) scores for this year, when survey works are undertaken later in the summer. We closely monitor the national economic situation; evaluate all options for service delivery; manage delays to materials with long lead in times; and allow for increased costs within the new Highways contract. | Red |

| Ref | Strategic Risks | Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score | RAG |
|--------------|---|---|-------|
| 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.</p> <p>Technical security measures operated by Information Technology and Digital (IT&D), including access control.</p> | Amber |
| Page 75 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.</p> <p>The volatile national economic situation has increased uncertainties within the construction industry around supply chain issues and high-cost inflation, which are likely to impact project deliverability and affordability. This has been exacerbated by the invasion of Ukraine by Russia and the resultant global sanctions imposed on Russia.</p> <p>Additionally, there is a risk that, 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 could be significantly reduced.</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>The CSAB have oversight of all sources of capital funding, including grants, capital receipts and developer contributions, to ensure that resources 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.</p> | Amber |

| Ref | Strategic Risks | Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score | RAG |
|---------------------------------|---|---|-------|
| <div>4</div> <div>Page 76</div> | <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>The additional £500 million Government Social Care Discharge Fund was used to increase capacity across Discharge to Assess (D2A) beds, specialist beds, packages of care, D2A homecare, and equipment provision to help patients be discharged safely from hospital and into onward care as fast as possible. A range of other measures, including recruitment and retention incentives for the independent care sector, were also enhanced to support safe and effective discharge. Working as part of the wider Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) Winter Rapid Improvement Enhanced Workstream enabled our System to: maintain performance on Medically Ready for Discharge (MRD) at Q1 (2022/23) baseline levels over the winter period; improve the trend in weekend discharges being observed across a number of Sussex acute hospitals; and improve system visibility of data with the development of a system discharge dashboard covering a wide range of key performance indicators.</p> <p>The Sussex ICS has been selected as one of six areas in the country to be a 'Discharge Frontrunner' to find innovative ways to improve how people can be supported to leave hospital quicker and ease the current pressures on the National Health Service (NHS). East Sussex County Council is participating in the programme with NHS and Local Authority partners in the Sussex ICS, which will take the above work into a new phase to build on progress and enable the Sussex ICS to further reduce the length of time people wait to be discharged, positively impact on bed occupancy, and maximise reablement and independence after discharge. Delivery will include trialling a new business information tool which aims to give health and care teams full visibility of discharge systems, patient-level information required for effective discharge, and the ability for teams to share intelligence with each other, and creating an effective, empowered, and integrated workforce across health and care to support the discharge system effectively.</p> <p>The year 1 (2023/24) delivery priorities were finalised for the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) and were submitted to NHS England (NHSE) by the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB). This sets out shared delivery priorities drawn from the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Strategy focussed on health outcomes improvement, children and young people, mental health and community health, care and wellbeing. Planning for years 2 – 5 of the SDP is currently taking place and will be shared with the East Sussex HWB in June for endorsement, prior to final approval and submission to NHSE.</p> | Amber |
| <div>6</div> | <p>LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p>Failure to deliver local economic growth, and failure to maximise opportunities afforded by Government proposal to allocate Local Growth Funding to South East Local Enterprise Partnership, creating adverse reputational and financial impacts.</p> | <p>East Sussex County Council (ESCC), working with partners, has been successful in securing significant amounts of growth funding totalling £129m, via both the South East and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships, to deliver a wide range of infrastructure projects in East Sussex. We have worked with partners on complementary economic development programmes supporting businesses to grow, providing skills, creating employment, and improving our places with funds secured from various Government departments including the Levelling Up Fund (LUF), UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF), UK Community Renewal Fund, Getting Building Fund, Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Skills Improvement Plan, Active Travel, Stronger Towns Fund and Future High Street Fund etc.</p> <p>The impacts and effects of Covid 19 led ESCC to officially launch in September 2020 the East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan, called 'East Sussex Reset'. The plan identifies deliverable actions in the</p> | Green |

| Ref | Strategic Risks | Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score | RAG |
|---------|-----------------|--|-----|
| Page 77 | | <p>short term, alongside more aspirational asks, and has already aligned and secured new monies totalling £220m investment into East Sussex. The County Council is committed to now producing a longer term East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy and significant work will commence on this throughout 2023-24, with the plan to have the strategy approved in 2024.</p> <p>Specifically on the major LUF programme, ESCC submitted a transport package for Exceat Bridge of £8m, while four of the local Borough and District Councils (except Hastings) submitted in June 2021 major capital funding bids under this first round for town centre/regeneration and cultural investment. Outcomes were announced on 27 October 2021, with the following awarded monies: Exceat Bridge (£8m), Eastbourne (£19.8m) and Lewes (£12.6m) all to be delivered by March 2024. The other Borough and Districts were unsuccessful but applied under Round 2 in July 2022, with Rother's £19.2m bid awarded in January 2023.</p> <p>The main prospectus for the UKSPF (the successor to the outgoing EU funding) was released in April 2022 with the award of allocations known to each Borough and District Authority, who are now the responsible accountable bodies for the delivery of the programme. Investment plans were submitted to Government by 1 August 2022. ESCC has made the case with regards to pan East Sussex projects, which can continue to deliver against the main themes of the programmes and the Council's priorities. All 5 bids for circa £1m each over the period April 2022 to March 2025 were approved and allocated their monies in December 2022. In addition, as part of the UKSPF, the Multiply programme was announced in late March 2022 to help adults to improve their numeracy skills up to Level 2. The responsibility for managing this programme from 2022-2025 has been awarded directly to ESCC, with up to £2.5m available. We prepared an investment plan working with partners and submitted this by 30 June 2022 to the Department for Education and our plan has been approved for the full allocation. Contracts have now been awarded to providers and delivery is underway.</p> <p>The Government's recent Spring Budget announcements in March 2023 are in part intended to provide a stimulus to growing our businesses, increasing employment opportunities for our residents and improving our economy. The budget indicated the role of Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) is proposed to end by April 2024; and that subject to consultation will lead to current LEP powers, responsibilities and functions coming down to local authority level to elected members. At this stage no decision has been made on whether this will come down to County or District/Borough level or a combination of both, and what functions would be undertaken. We will respond to the consultation and work with SELEP and partners on this matter. The Government also announced the rollout of new Levelling Up Partnerships to improve place based regeneration and address the biggest barriers to levelling up in the 20 areas most in need over the period 2023-2025. This included Hastings and Rother, enabling these areas to bid for a share of the new £400m funds.</p> | |

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| Report to: | Cabinet |
| Date: | 27 June 2023 |
| By: | Chief Executive |
| Title of report: | Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) – State of the County |
| Purpose of report: | To update Members on the issues which need to be taken into account in the priority and budget setting process for 2024/25 and beyond |

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i note the evidence base on demographics (Appendix 1) and the national and local policy outlook (Appendix 2);**
- ii review the priority outcomes and delivery outcomes (Appendix 3) and agree these as the basis of the Council's business and financial planning, subject to the proposed amendments set out in paragraph 4;**
- iii agree officers update the Medium Term Financial Plan as the basis for financial planning when more information is available, as set out in paragraph 5;**
- iv agree officers update the Capital Strategy and programme (Appendix 4) as set out in paragraph 6; and**
- v receive reports on more detailed plans for 2024/25 and beyond in the autumn when there is greater certainty about future resources.**

1. Background

1.1 The State of the County report is a key part of the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, our integrated business and financial planning cycle. The report sets out an overview of the current context in preparation for more detailed planning for 2024/25 and beyond. In conjunction with our 2022/23 year end monitoring report, it reflects on our achievements over the last year, the challenges in the year ahead arising from both local and national factors and, in light of this, begins to refine our plans to guide our business planning and budget setting processes.

1.2 This report contains the normal elements included in the State of the County report: the demographic evidence base; the national and local policy outlook; and updates on the Medium Term Financial Plan and Capital Programme. It provides our latest understanding of how we will need to continue to respond to the wide range of policy, demographic and financial drivers which influence the outlook for the Council in the short and longer term.

1.3 Uncertainty continues to define the context within which we are working. The challenging national economic environment, including the increased cost of living, continues to affect our residents, and to generate ongoing cost and resource pressures on the Council itself. The financial outlook for the Council remains unclear, with a further one year financial settlement anticipated for 2024/25 and any significant national reforms to local government funding unlikely before the next general election, which is expected in 2024. Many of our

major, demand-led, services are subject to significant national reforms, with associated service and financial risks, and there is a continuing pressing need to work towards addressing the impacts of climate change.

1.4 Within this uncertain national environment, we continue to experience increased demand for services locally, arising from demographic changes, increased need and the longer term impacts of Covid. There are also challenges securing the skilled workforce we need to respond to the pressures we face and to develop our services for the future. Taken together, these national and local factors make future service and financial planning very challenging. In this context, we will need to continue to take action proactively to prepare for the time ahead, to maximise our resilience as an organisation and to best manage growing demand for our services.

1.5 It therefore remains essential that we focus our resources, in partnership with others, in the most effective way to support our priorities and core service provision. The Council spends over £1bn gross each year (in the region of £500m net) on services for the county's residents and businesses. RPPR is the process through which we ensure our financial and other resources are aligned to delivery of our priority outcomes and that we are informed by a clear understanding of our effectiveness. This approach, additional short-term Government support, and many years of careful financial management have enabled us to maintain a secure financial position in recent years, providing service stability during a difficult time for the county. However, the financial outlook in the medium term remains very challenging, with a number of key risks which cannot yet be fully defined, creating an imperative to use the current window of opportunity to equip the council as best we can to meet the challenges ahead.

1.6 As well as our continued work locally on strategies to manage demand and maximise efficiency, the report sets out the ongoing need for proactive lobbying and communications to help ensure that the Government is aware of the needs of our county and the ongoing and urgent need for a sustainable funding regime that appropriately reflects local need. In particular we will highlight the need for service reforms, particularly those in children's services and adult social care, to be fully and sustainably funded if we are to maintain core services in the future in light of growing demand and stretched resources.

2. Current Position

2.1 The key role the County Council plays for the residents, communities and businesses of East Sussex continued to be evident over the past year as the county was impacted by a range of national and international factors. The need for our support has been intensified by the pressures on the cost of living, which disproportionately impact on the most vulnerable, and we have continued to work with partners and communities across the county to support those seeking refuge from the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, and on the wider response to migration. Through our services, employment, purchasing and how we work in partnership with others the Council makes a significant contribution to quality of life for people across our county. Our assessments of the ongoing levels of need arising from recent developments continue to be refined and will influence our plans as we better understand the longer-term implications.

2.2 In developing our medium and longer term plans we will need to have regard to the broader context in which we will be working. The national policy environment continues to develop rapidly, with significant reforms brought forward by Government across a wide range of services. The national and local context includes:

- The challenging and uncertain national economic situation, current high levels of inflation and the increased cost of living, particularly high energy, fuel and food

prices. This environment is likely to continue to impact on the demand for our services as well as directly on the costs of providing services.

- The Government's economic and policy agenda, in particular the priorities outlined by the Prime Minister on the NHS, migration, economic growth and stabilising the economy, as well as the ongoing Levelling Up agenda and changes to arrangements for driving economic growth locally.
- Specific uncertainty over the future of local government funding. A planned funding review, covering the formula on which funding allocations to individual local authorities are based, now appears to be deferred beyond the next general election, and a further one year financial settlement is expected for 2024/25. In addition, major national reforms to Adult Social Care (ASC) and Children's Services (see below) carry considerable financial risks for local authorities.
- Challenges in the labour market, including the impact of significant workforce shortages in key sectors on our ability to recruit and retain staff, ongoing pay negotiations and the potential for industrial action, coupled with the need for our workforce to adapt to service reforms. Alongside this, rapidly developing advances in technology present potential new opportunities to support capacity and efficiency.
- The impact of Government reviews and reforms of public services – whilst major reforms to ASC charging (reported at State of the County 2022) have been postponed until 2025, other national reforms are being progressed, particularly in Children's Services. We are also continuing to respond to a range of significant national and local developments and pressures in health and social care and taking forward a range of work to manage demand and improve outcomes.
- The growing impact of climate change, the national and local commitments to achieve carbon neutrality, the need to adapt to the impacts of climate change, and the introduction of a range of new measures through the Environment Act including new duties in relation to food waste.
- Significant national policy developments related to planning, infrastructure, and transport and, locally, the mobilisation of our new highways contract and additional investment in highways, and taking forward our Bus Services Improvement Plan and refresh of our Local Transport Plan.
- The increasing need to respond to migration in light of global conflicts, increased numbers of people seeking asylum, including unaccompanied children, and new Government policy on immigration.
- Further development of positive work with our public and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) partners on financial inclusion and building community wellbeing and resilience, in response to the increased need in our communities and as part of our ongoing work to help people help themselves.
- The evolving nature and importance of our partnerships in harnessing the collective resources and assets available within the county for the benefit of our communities.

2.3 The local and national policy outlook at Appendix 2 sets out the latest thinking on these and other current issues, although plans will continue to develop over the summer as more information emerges.

2.4 Our relatively stable financial position for 2023/24 presents an opportunity to intensify our ongoing work to maximise organisational resilience, make best use of our resources, and to equip our services for future demands, given the significant challenges ahead. As part of this we will seek out further opportunities to benefit from advances in new technology, building on work already undertaken to introduce new digital and artificial intelligence approaches and systems which benefit both service delivery and capacity. For example, our 'digital by default' approach in Adult Social Care and the development of our universal digital offer in Children's Services. We will continue to assess our future workforce requirements and orient our recruitment, retention and organisational development strategies towards ensuring we have the diverse and skilled staff we will need. Work to rationalise and adapt our office estate in line with post-Covid needs will run alongside this. Our long-standing focus on demand management and preventative approaches will continue, supporting people and communities to be independent wherever possible, including through the introduction of Family Safeguarding, the further integration of community health and care services, and the development of community networks to bolster and link up existing local support. Proposed additional investment in the resilience of the roads which support the local economy and our communities is set out elsewhere on this agenda.

2.5 As part of our RPPR planning we will systematically consider any further actions which may reduce the need for support in the future or improve our ability to respond to new challenges. As always, our approach will be evidence-based, draw on best practice and use data and benchmarking to identify where we can improve and to ensure value for money.

2.6 This ongoing discipline will ensure the council is as resilient as possible for the future. However, fundamentally there remains a significant gap between the income we currently expect to receive in the coming years and the costs of providing core services, with significant additional risk arising from service reforms. Without further Government support or sustainable reform of local government finances we will not have the funding we need for the future. Further detail on the financial outlook is provided at paragraph 5.

2.7 In all our activities, and in planning for the future, the County Council continues to work to our guiding principles that:

- We are effective stewards of public money and deliver good value for money through strong integrated business planning;
- Our activities are transparent and we can be held to account;
- We operate as One Council and focus on agreed priority outcomes;
- We prioritise the investment available for front line service delivery and maximise the resources available, including work to secure sustainable national funding and partnerships with other organisations;
- We carry out all we do professionally and competently;
- We remain ambitious, optimistic and realistic about what can be achieved; and
- We strive to be a good employer and partner.

3. Demographic and Demand Changes and Financial Background

3.1 Appendix 1 sets out the key factors affecting the County in relation to demography, housing, deprivation, health, the environment and economy, and the impact these are having on demand for our services. Some challenges are shared by many of our residents, whilst some areas and communities are more impacted than others by particular issues. The main issues driving demand are:

- **Older People** - East Sussex remains ahead of the national ageing population trend. Proportionately we have high numbers of over 65s and over 85s which has an impact on the demand for services and the Council's finances. Rother has the second highest percentage of the population aged 65 years and over in the country.

- **Children and Young People** – we continue to see higher levels of demand for children’s social care and more complex cases which together have resulted in a higher number of child protection cases. The number of children and young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) continues to increase.
- **Asylum seekers and refugees** – there has been a recent increase in the rate of people receiving asylum support within the county, particularly in our coastal communities. Unaccompanied asylum seeking children made up a quarter of those children who began to be looked after last year. The county also has a high number of Ukrainians who continue to be supported through our Homes for Ukraine programme, many of whom are living in Wealden.
- **Economy** - employment rates have increased over the last year as the economy recovers from the pandemic. However, the challenges that existed pre-pandemic relating to productivity and average wages for those employed within the county remain. The increases in utilities costs over the last year and the continued increased cost of living is expected to continue to impact on the growth of our economy.
- **Climate change** – CO2 emissions were falling in all sectors in East Sussex except transport before the pandemic. Although we had the lowest emissions of carbon dioxide per person of all the county council areas in England, further reductions will be needed.

4. Council Priority Outcomes

4.1 The Council's business and financial planning is underpinned by our four priority outcomes, which provide a clear focus for decisions about spending and savings and direct activity across the Council.

4.2 The current four priority outcomes are:

- Driving sustainable economic growth;
- Keeping vulnerable people safe;
- Helping people help themselves; and
- Making best use of resources now and for the future.

The priority outcome that the Council makes the “best use of resources now and for the future” is a test that is applied to all activities to ensure sustainability of our resources, both in terms of money and environmental assets. It ensures that the future impact of the choices we make about using resources is actively considered across all that we do, as well as the here and now.

4.3 The priority outcomes, and their subsidiary delivery outcomes, were reviewed and updated during 2022/23 with some amendments made to delivery outcomes to ensure they reflected the post-Covid environment. Recognising our continually evolving operating context, some specific further amendments to delivery outcomes are now proposed to ensure the priorities we are working to deliver, and the way we measure the performance of our activities and services, remain appropriate.

4.4 The current priority and delivery outcomes are attached at Appendix 3 (section a) and the following changes are proposed to delivery outcomes:

Helping people help themselves

Two changes are proposed to reflect the increasing importance of mutual support in people's networks and communities and work the Council is undertaking with partners to facilitate this:

- The most vulnerable get the support they need to maintain their independence, **supported by their social networks**, and this is provided at or as close to home as possible
- Through working well with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, individuals, families and communities are supported ~~to be independent and~~ to thrive.

Making best use of resources now and for the future

One change is proposed to reflect the increasing importance of planning for future workforce needs:

Delete:

- We are an employer of choice and support our staff to achieve and develop

To be replaced with:

- **We are an employer of choice and our staff are supported to achieve and develop, ensuring we have the workforce we need to deliver services both now and in the future.**

The proposed updated delivery outcomes, including the above amendments, are also shown at Appendix 3 (section b).

4.5 Cabinet is asked to review the current priority and delivery outcomes and agree them as the basis for future business and financial planning, subject to the amendments outlined in paragraph 4.4 above.

5. Medium Term Financial Plan

5.1 When the 2023/24 balanced budget was approved by Full Council on 7 February 2023, the deficit on the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) to 2025/26 was £40.672m. Updating the MTFP for normal factors (such as the latest inflation rates and an additional year), the position would have been a deficit budget position by 2026/27 of £55.499m. The MTFP position does not account for the impact of Adult Social Care reform, and if grant funding for social care, currently announced for two years, continues at the same level after 2024/25, the deficit would reduce by £28.2m:

| Medium Term Financial Plan | 2024/25 £m | 2025/26 £m | 2026/27 £m |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Annual Budget Deficit / (Surplus) | 4.024 | 41.811 | 9.664 |
| | | | |
| Total Budget Deficit / (Surplus) | 4.024 | 45.835 | 55.499 |

5.2 The current economic climate has meant the rate of inflation remains at levels not seen for several decades, which has led to an unprecedented level of financial uncertainty. At a national level, the Government funding that ESCC will receive between 2024/25 – 2026/27 is yet to be confirmed. While the provisional local government settlement in December 2022 included some indicative figures for two years of funding – notably for social care – the Local Government Financial Settlement was only a one-year settlement for 2023/24. We therefore await the provisional settlement for 2024/25, which will be in the late autumn of 2023.

5.3 To address pressures in the social care system, the Government announced grant funding as part of the Autumn Statement 2022 to support social care and hospital discharge, together with the continuation of the Services Grant and the delayed rollout of Adult Social Care charging reform from October 2023 to October 2025. While this will enable us to maintain a degree of financial stability for 2023/24, demand and costs will continue to grow, and there will be additional expectations arising from national reforms, bringing new and sustained financial and service pressures which will impact on our MTFP and ability to meet needs.

5.4 In 2022/23 Children's Services overspent against budget by £11.477m, with the largest pressures seen in Early Help and Social Care and Home to School Transport. Containing costs in Children's Services continues to be a significant challenge across the country, against the background of increased demand and complexity of needs emerging from the pandemic and acute supply side shortages. The department has developed a sustainability plan to improve outcomes for children, while reducing costs to the council. The MTFP contains significant increased investment in support of this plan, while the Senior Leadership Team continues to explore further mitigations and opportunities to save costs where possible.

5.5 The delay to the Fairer Funding Review has meant greater uncertainty about the shape of any long-term sustainable settlement for local authorities.

5.6 With all this uncertainty, it is not possible to present a draft MTFP to 2026/27. It is planned to work through the details required over the summer as more information becomes available and factor in the budget requirements for services. After this work, modelling will provide a set of balanced budget scenarios considering the local and national position that presents itself.

6. Capital Programme

6.1 The approved programme has now been updated to reflect the 2022/23 outturn and other approved variations, revising the gross programme down to £651.6m to 2032/33. The details are set out in Appendix 4, together with the revised programme.

6.2 The 10 year capital programme to 2032/33 and 20 year Capital Strategy 2023/24 to 2043/44 will be updated as part of the RPPR process over the autumn to add a year and to include consideration of the impact and management of inflation and supply chain issues, alongside any updates relating to Government funding and the risk metrics being developed as well as the procurement of the highways contract and other investment basic need.

7. Lobbying and Communications

7.1 Our strong local foundation of efficient and effective service delivery and careful financial management, coupled with additional short-term Government funding, has enabled us to provide another year of relative stability. We will continue to use this opportunity to develop our resilience and preparedness for challenges ahead and to ensure we are taking all possible steps to mitigate the increases in demand we expect to see in future years.

7.2 However, the medium term outlook remains highly challenging. We face a significant financial gap, the undefined impact of national reforms in major service areas and a lack of clarity on long-term funding arrangements. There are significant risks and uncertainties arising particularly from social care and SEND reforms, which makes planning for the future difficult. In the context of this ongoing uncertainty in our position, coupled with wider challenges in the economy and their impacts on our residents, our lobbying will continue to call for certainty of future funding for local government, and funding that is appropriately

reflective of local need and that fully reflects the impact of reforms. This will be paramount to ensuring we secure adequate resource to deliver what will be required to support East Sussex residents, communities and businesses with the core services they need, including opportunities to continue positive preventative work that could most effectively manage future demand for services.

7.3 We will continue to work with local MPs and local, regional and national partners to make this case.

8. Next Steps

8.1 Work will continue over the summer to refine our understanding of the medium term impacts on our services of national reforms, the evolving economic context, changing demand for services and the financial resources that will be available to us in the coming years. We will also consider any further steps we can take to support our future capacity. We will use our RPPR process to plan for the future as best we can in the context of a likely one year financial settlement once again.

8.2 We will report back to Members in the autumn with an updated assessment of our service demand and funding expectations to inform more detailed business and budget planning for 2024/25 and beyond.

8.3 Members will continue to be consulted on plans as they are developed through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, Whole Council Forums and specific engagement sessions throughout the 2023/24 Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive



State of the County 2023

Focus on East Sussex

Version number 1

Publication date August 2023

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Summary

Population - East Sussex has an older age profile than nationally, with a significantly higher proportion of the population aged 65+ than both England and the South East. Rother has the second highest percentage of the population aged 65 years and over in the country.

Housing - house prices in East Sussex remain higher than the national average. The ratio of median house prices to median earnings is also higher than the ratio in both the South East and England. Rented housing makes up a significant proportion of the housing sector in East Sussex, and there were significant rises in the cost of private rented housing between 2018 and 2022.

Cost of living - cost of living challenges are a significant concern to people, with nine out of ten adults nationally reporting an increase in their cost of living in April 2023. The level of concern is affected by the level of deprivation people experience, with those in the most deprived areas more concerned than those in the least deprived areas.

Refugees and asylum seekers - there has been a recent increase in the rate of people receiving asylum support within the county, particularly in our coastal communities. The county also has a high number of Ukrainians who continue to be supported through our Homes for Ukraine programme, many of whom are living in Wealden.

Environment - emissions of carbon dioxide have continued to fall in East Sussex over recent years. Although we had the lowest emissions of carbon dioxide per person of all the county council areas in England, further reductions will be needed.

Economy - employment rates have increased over the last year as the economy recovers from the pandemic. However, the challenges that existed pre-pandemic relating to productivity and average wages for those employed within the county remain and the unemployment rate in the county remains higher than the regional and national averages. Youth unemployment remains higher than the overall rate,

although this has also fallen over the last year.

Community safety - neighbourhood crime rates in East Sussex are lower than the national average in all categories. There was an increase in neighbourhood crime in 2022/23 compared to the previous year. There was also a slight increase in recorded Public Place Serious Violent Crimes in 2022/23, although rates of serious violence in the county remain low.

Schools - a higher proportion of 2 year olds take up a place at an eligible early years provider in East Sussex than nationally, and more children achieve a good level of development at the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, the levels of attainment at Key Stage 2, Progress 8 and Attainment 8 are lower than nationally.

Children - we continue to see higher levels of demand for children's social care and more complex cases which together have resulted in a higher number of child protection plans. The number of Looked After Children has also increased, 25% of those who became looked after last year were Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children. We have also continued to see increased demand for support for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Health - East Sussex has a consistently higher life expectancy for both men and women than the national average. However, there is a gap in life expectancy between the most deprived and least deprived areas in the county. There is a slightly higher percentage of people who are overweight or obese in East Sussex compared to nationally, and smoking levels are also higher in some parts of the county.

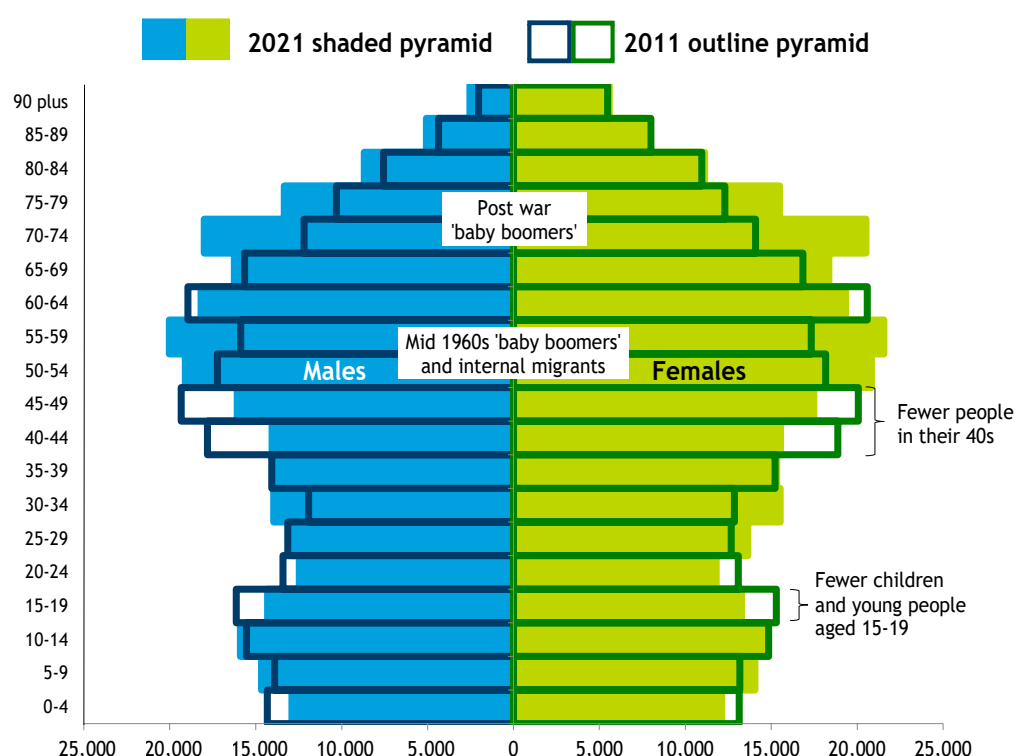
Adults - the number of clients receiving long term support reduced in 2022/23. However, projections indicate that the number of people with dementia, and those with two or more health conditions will continue to increase in the coming years. A higher percentage of the population were providing unpaid care in 2021 in East Sussex than nationally.

Population

Age and sex

Census 2021 data estimated the population of East Sussex to be 545,800.

Compared to England and the South East, East Sussex has a much older age profile. 26% of the population is comprised of people aged 65 or over, compared to 18% for England and 19% for the South East.

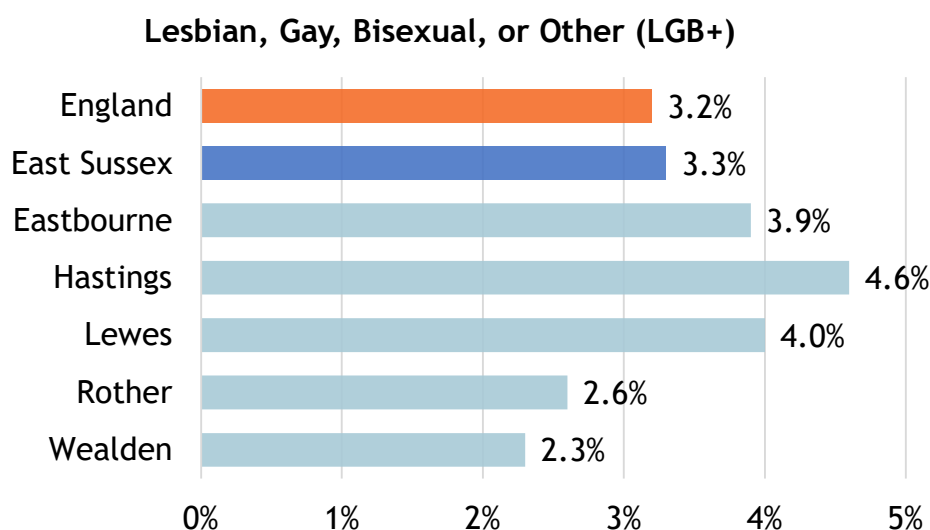


Source: Census 2021

52% of the county's population was estimated to be female and 48% male, similar to the national split. This ratio is the same as that seen in the 2011 Census, which estimated 48% of the population to be male and 52% to be female. For those aged 65 and above, it was estimated that 55% of the population was female and 45% male.

Sexual Orientation

The 2021 Census indicates that 3.3% of the East Sussex population identify as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Other (LGB+). This is similar to the national average of 3.2%. Hastings had the highest percentage of people identifying as LGB+ at 4.6%.

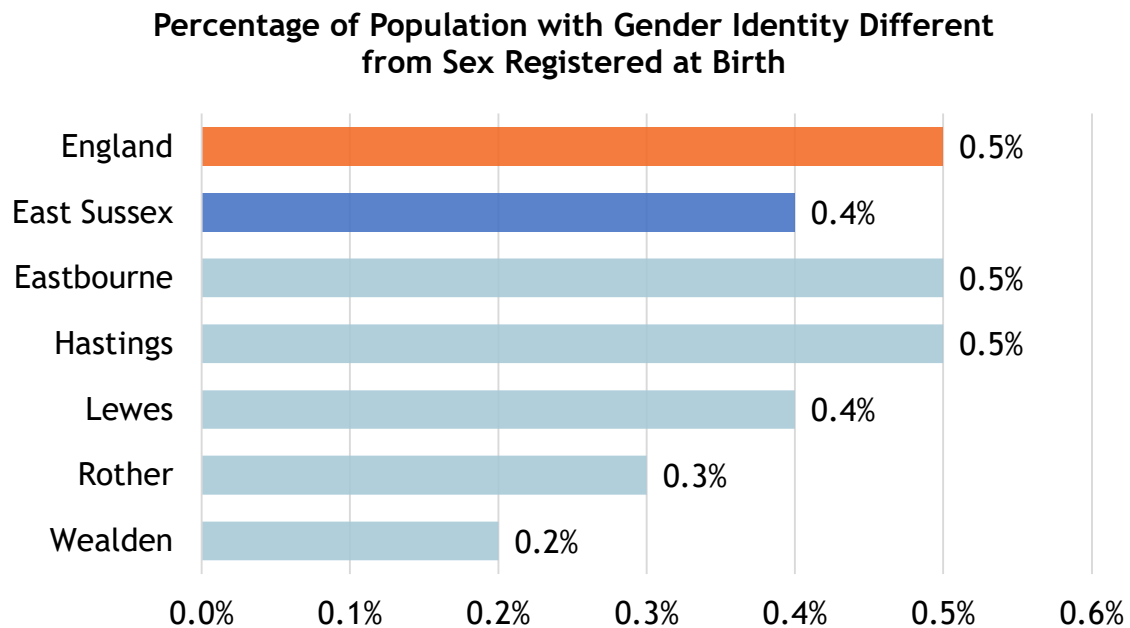


Note: A significant percentage of people across the county provided no response, therefore the percentage of people identifying as LBG+ could be either higher or lower than estimated.

Source: Census 2021

Gender identity

Gender identity was included in the national census questions for the first time in 2021. A significant percentage of people did not respond to this question, but this is still the best data we have on this topic. 0.4% of the East Sussex population recorded that their gender identity is different to their sex registered at birth. This equates to 1,640 people.



Note: A significant percentage of people across the county provided no response, therefore the percentage of people with a different gender identity to their sex registered at birth could be either higher or lower than shown.

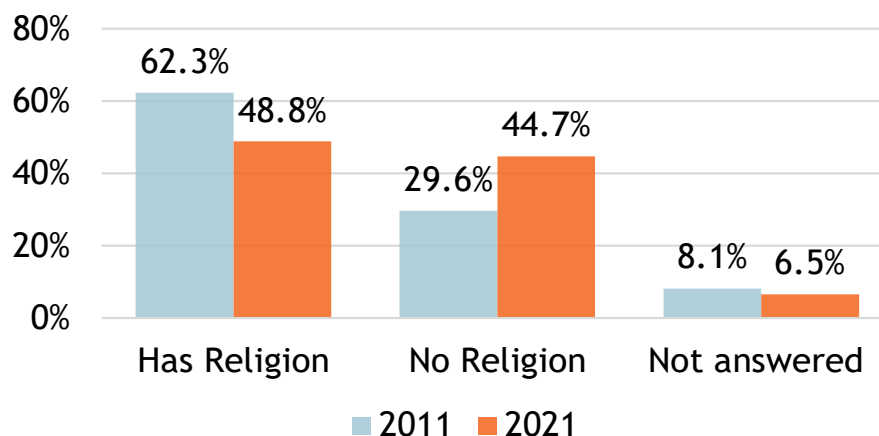
Source: Census 2021

Religion

For the 2021 Census, 45.9% of the population in East Sussex stated their religion was Christian, 1.1% stated their religion was Islam, 0.5% as Buddhism and 0.3% as Hindu. 44.7% of the population stated as having no religion.

The percentage of people of people with a religious belief fell between 2011 and 2021, while the number of people who stated they had no religious beliefs grew.

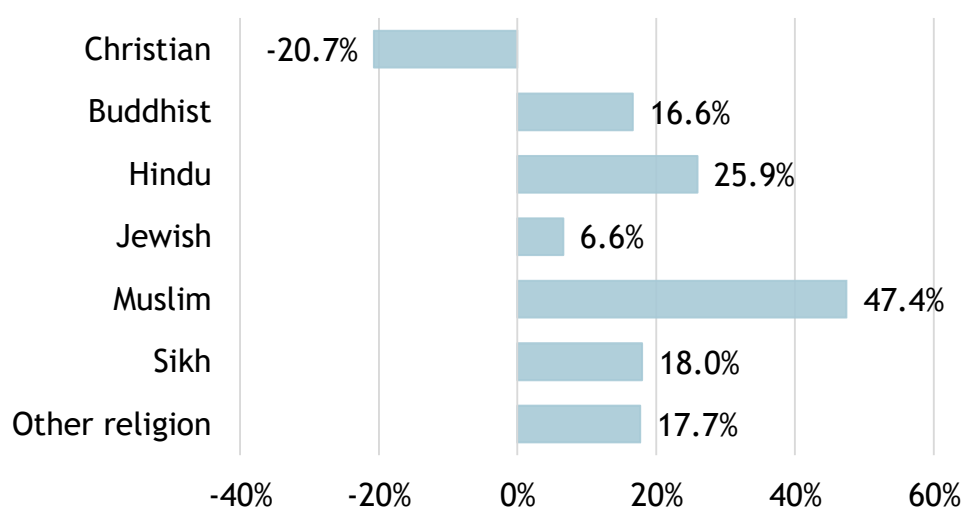
**Percentage Breakdown of Religious Beliefs:
2011 vs 2021**



Source: Census 2021

The percentage of the population in East Sussex who state their religion as Christian fell by 20.7% between 2011 and 2021, while the percentage for all other religious groups increased.

**Relative Percentage of Change in Religious
Communities within East Sussex between 2011 and
2021**



Source: Census 2021

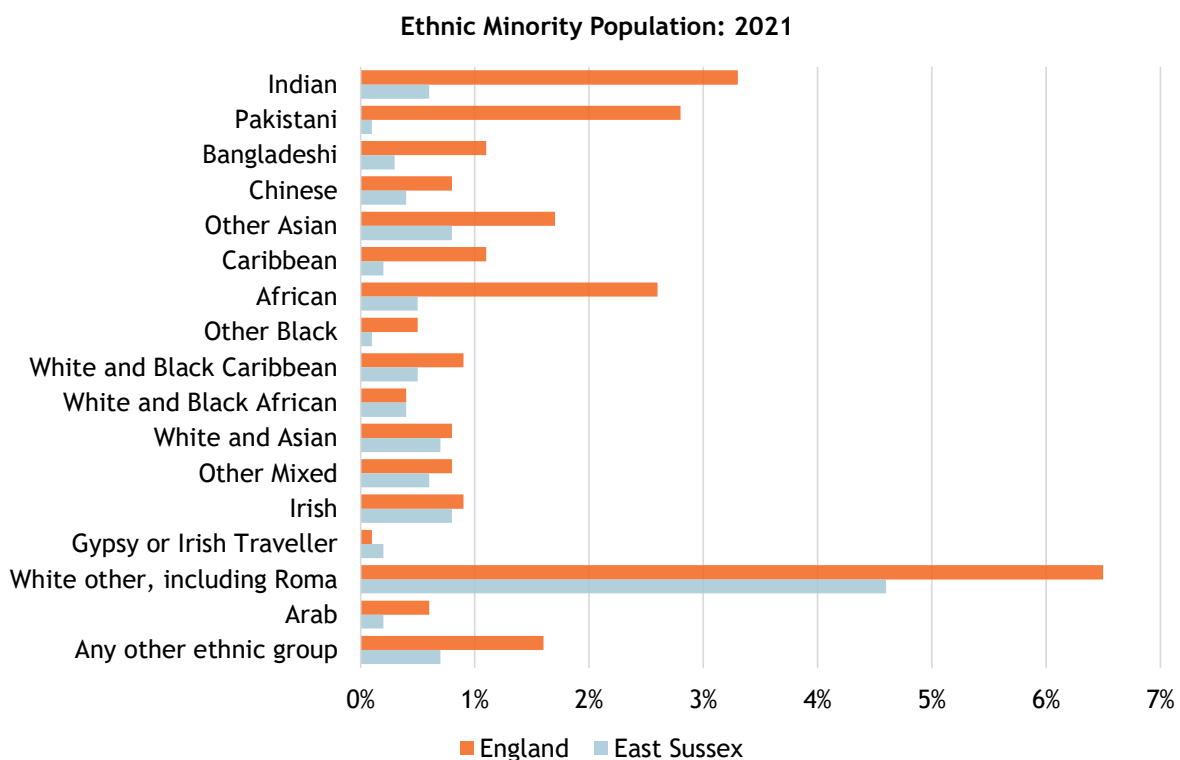
Marital status

Data from the 2021 Census shows that 31.9% of respondents from East Sussex were single, 46.8% of respondents were married or in a civil partnership, 2.3% of respondents were separated from their partners, 11.2% were divorced or had a civil partnership which was dissolved. The remaining 7.7% of respondents were widowed.

Source: Census 2021

Ethnicity

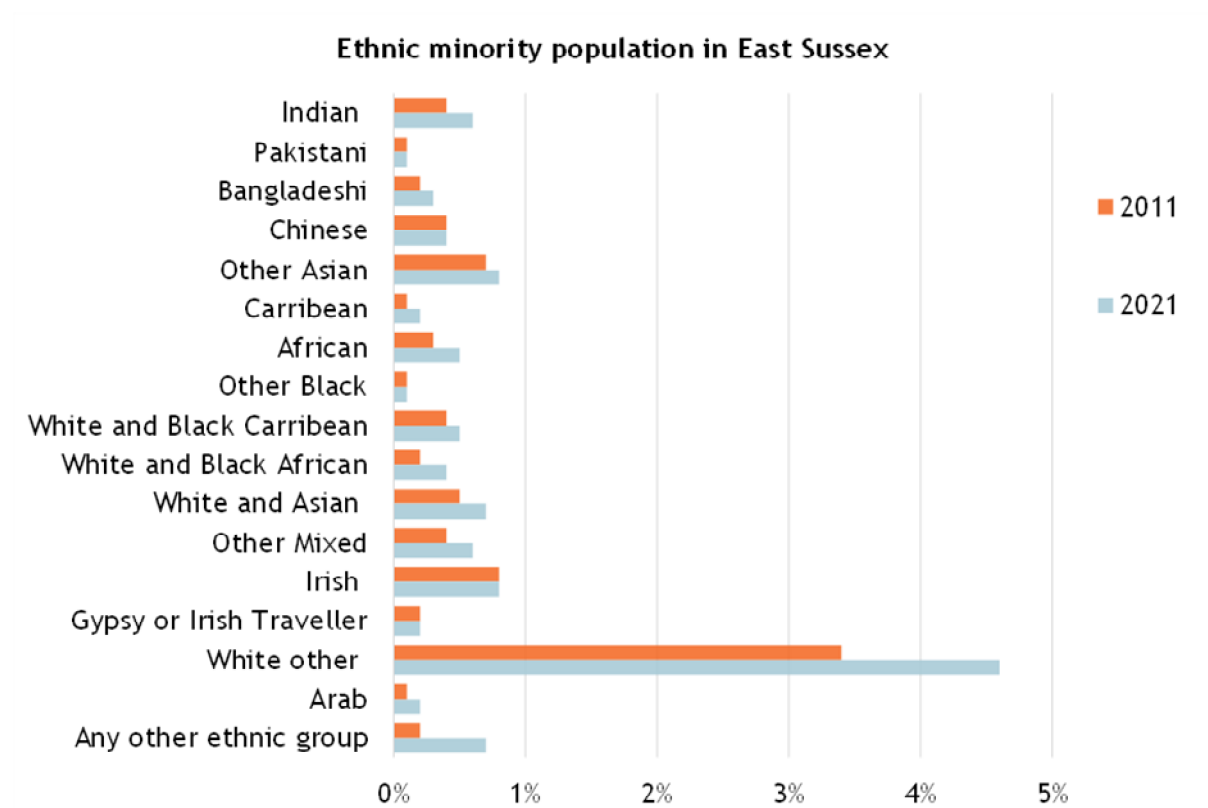
The latest ethnicity data for the county is from the 2021 census. 93.9% of the county's population identified as White British, compared to the regional average of 86.3% and the national average of 81.0%. A higher percentage of the population in East Sussex identified as Gypsy or Irish Traveller than the national average (0.2% compared to 0.1%).



Source: Census 2021

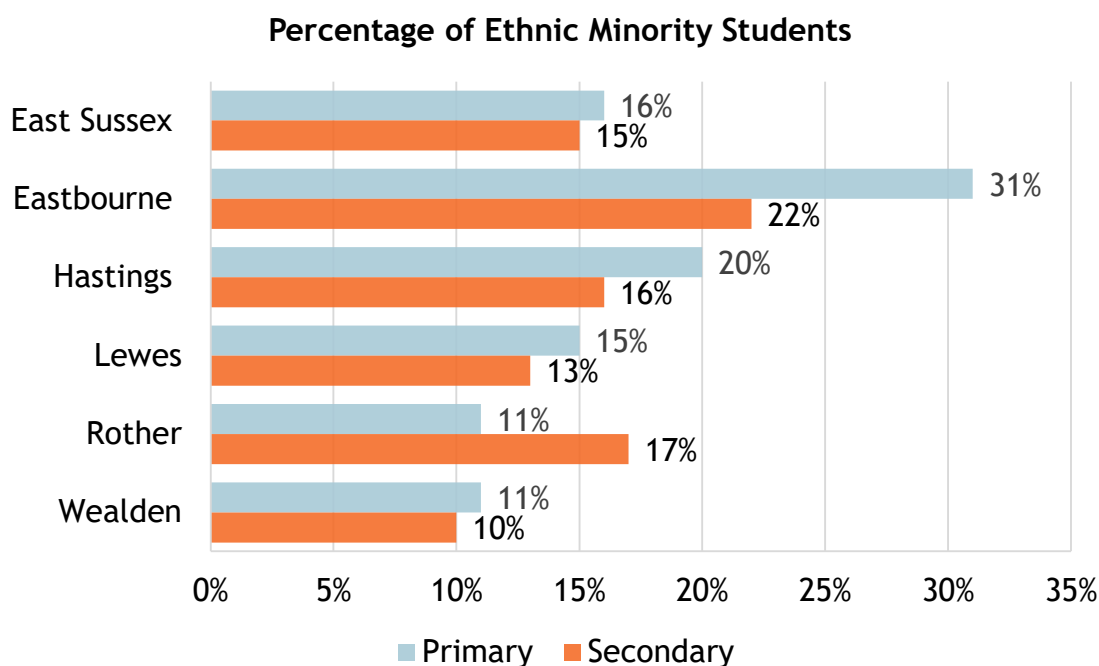
State of the County 2023: Focus on East Sussex

Overall the percentage of the population in East Sussex in each ethnic minority group has either stayed the same or increased between 2011 and 2021.



Source: Census 2021

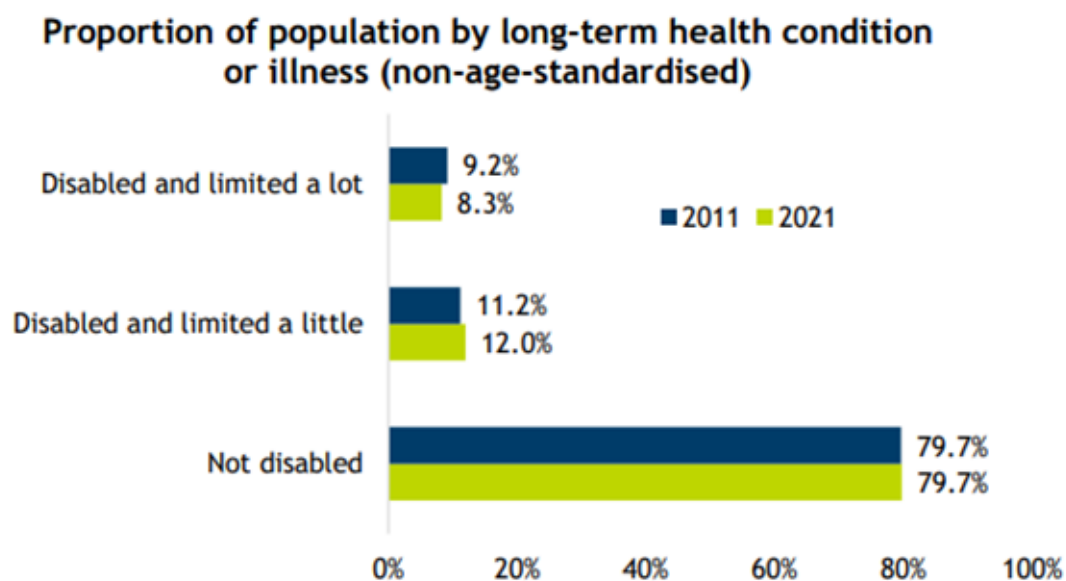
A higher percentage of pupils (15%) are from ethnic minority backgrounds, compared to the adult population. Overall, Eastbourne has the highest percentage of students from ethnic minority backgrounds for both primary (31%) and secondary (22%) schools.



Source: ESCC Schools Census January 2023

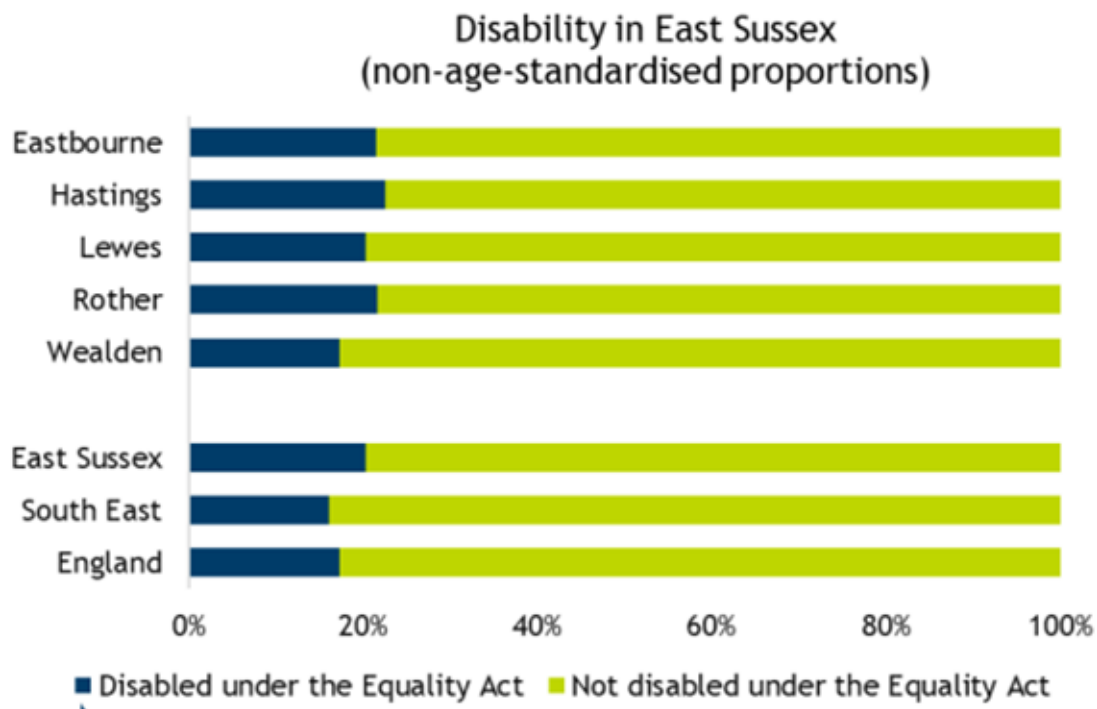
Disability

In the 2021 Census, the proportion of the East Sussex population that identified themselves as disabled was 20.3% (110,550). This is exactly the same as the proportion that identified as disabled in the 2011 Census (20.3%, 107,150).



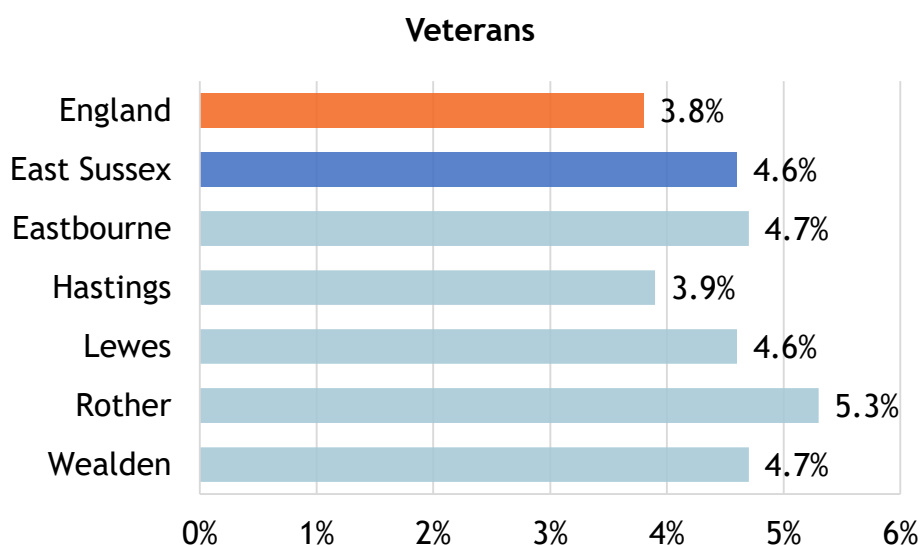
The percentage of people identifying themselves as disabled varied slightly across

the district and boroughs, but rates across the county were higher than the South East average.



Veterans

2021 Census data shows that 4.6% of the population in East Sussex were Veterans, compared to the national average of 3.8%. This equates to 21,200 Veterans living in East Sussex.



Pregnancy and maternity

The ONS births data provides an indication of the number of women in East Sussex who may be pregnant or on maternity.

| Protected characteristic: Pregnancy and maternity | East Sussex | Eastbourne | Hastings | Lewes | Rother | Wealden |
|--|----------------|------------|----------|-------|--------|---------|
| Live births - 2021 | 4,549 | 883 | 909 | 781 | 634 | 1,342 |
| Births per 1,000 females - 2020 | 15.7 | 16.8 | 19.6 | 15.0 | 13.2 | 14.6 |

Source: ONS

Population change

Based on the information currently available we estimate that around 550,400 people currently live in the county (ESCC 2023 interim projection). We expect that to increase to around 570,500 people in 2027, an increase of 3.6%.

We expect the increase in population to be driven by people moving into the county from elsewhere in the UK. Many of the people who choose to come to East Sussex are older adults, as a result the over 65 age group is growing faster than younger age groups. In 2027 we expect that just over half of our population will be aged 18-64 (53%), with over a quarter (29%) aged 65 and over.

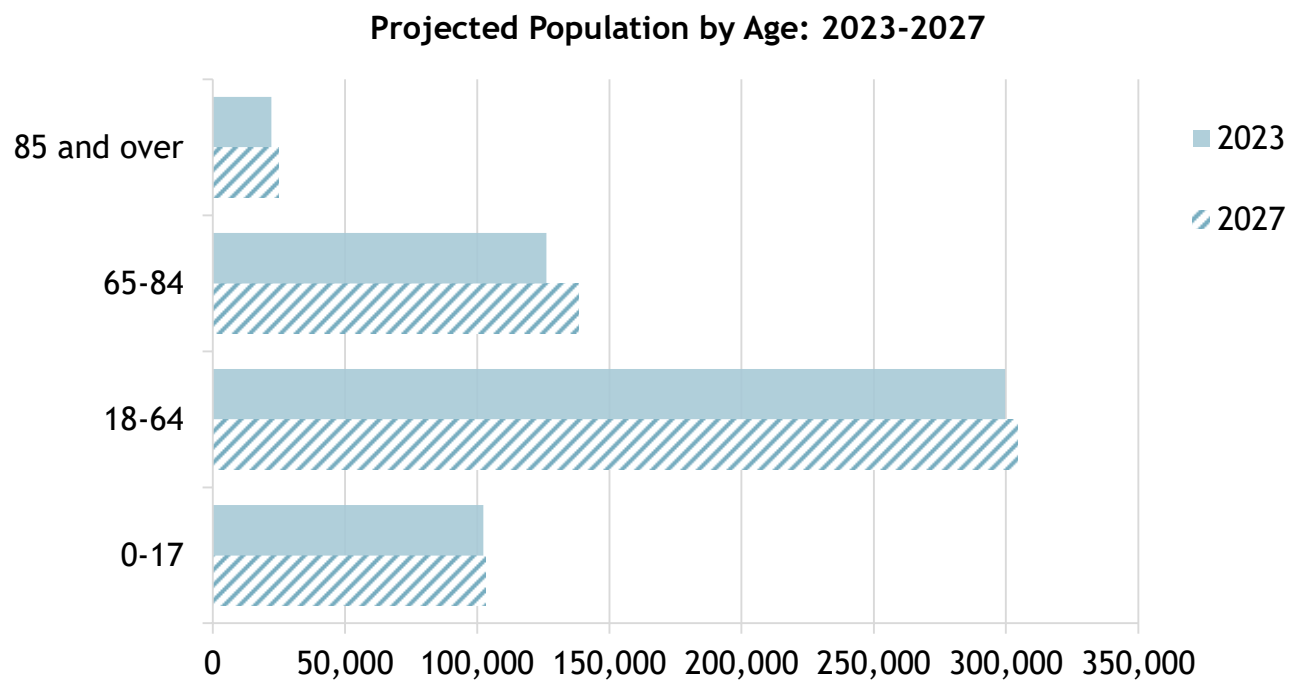
Between 2023 and 2027 we are expecting that there will be around 19,000 births in the county and around 26,000 deaths. This reflects the fact that we have a larger population of older adults in East Sussex. Over the same period, we are expecting around 136,900 people to move into the county, offset by around 111,900 people moving out of the county.

Overall, these changes mean that compared to 2023, we estimate that by 2027 there will be:

- An increase of 1.0% (1,000 people) in the number of children and young people.
- An increase of 1.5% (4,500 people) in the working age population.

- 9.8% more people aged 65-84 (11,900 people).

We also expect that 4.4% of people will be aged 85+, a proportion greater than the national average of 2.4% (Source: 2021 Census).



Note: Care should be taken when using the projected population figures. 2021 Census data indicates that the population of the county in March 2021 was considerably lower than the ONS' original mid-year estimate for June 2020. No re-based mid-year estimates for the period 2011-2020 have yet been released by the ONS, but we are expecting that the June 2020 population figure is likely to be substantially revised downwards. Therefore, the data above is based on Interim dwelling-led population projections which have been produced by ESCC using interim re-based mid-year estimates produced by the GLA's Demography Team, combined with the latest ONS 2021 mid-year estimate (which is based on Census 2021 population data). The interim projections will be revised when the official ONS revised mid-year estimates for 2011-2020 are released later this year.

Projected Population in 2027

| Age Range | East Sussex | England |
|-----------|-------------|---------|
| 0-17 | 18.1% | 20.7% |
| 18-64 | 53.3% | 58.9% |
| 65-84 | 24.2% | 17.6% |
| 85+ | 4.4% | 2.8% |

Population Change: 2023-2027

| Age Range | 2023 | 2027 | Actual change |
|------------|---------|---------|---------------|
| 0-17 | 102,300 | 103,300 | +1,000 |
| 18-64 | 299,700 | 304,100 | +4,500 |
| 65-84 | 126,200 | 138,200 | +11,900 |
| 85+ | 22,200 | 24,900 | +2,600 |
| All people | 550,400 | 570,500 | +20,100 |

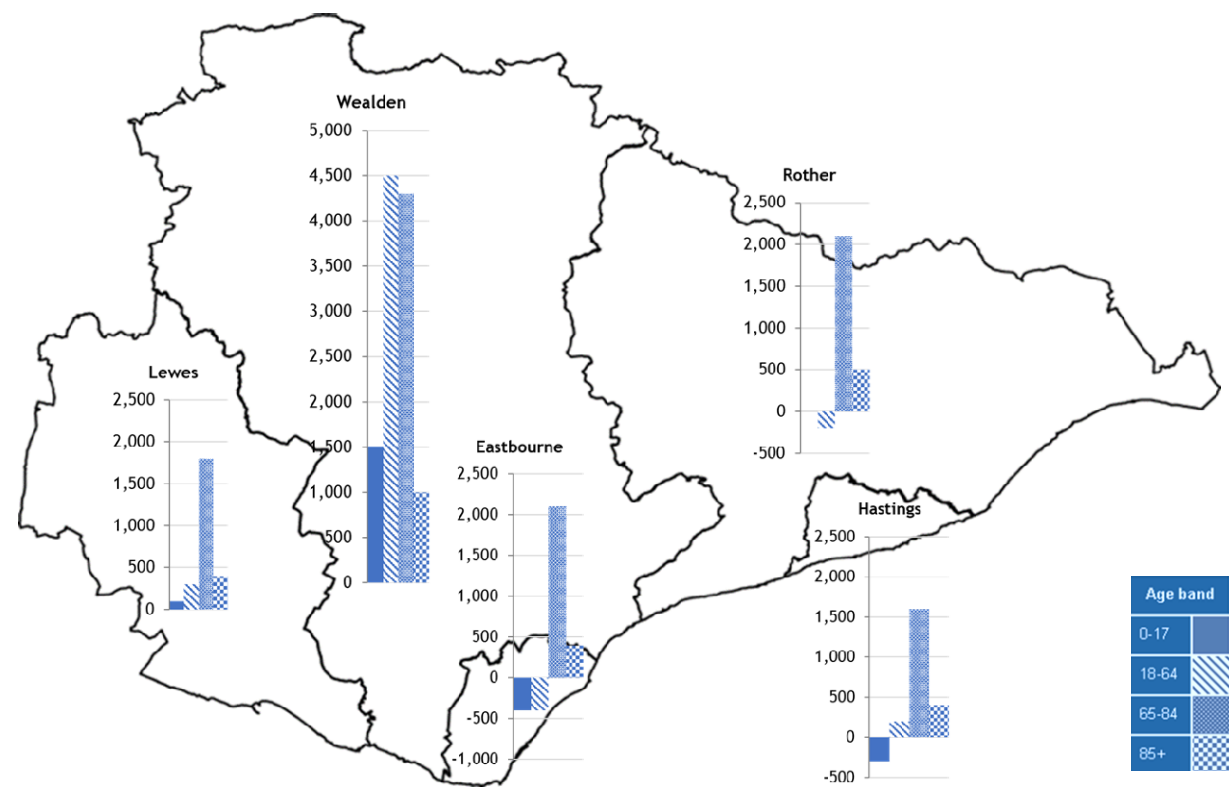
Source: ESCC data, ESCC interim population projections (dwelling led) April 2023. National Data, ONS trend-based projections, from 2020. All figures have been rounded to the nearest 100 and therefore may not sum.

District population change

We expect that how our population changes will be different in different parts of the county. By 2027 our interim projections suggest:

- An increase of 15% (1,000) more people aged 85+ in Wealden; the smallest increase will be in Eastbourne, 9% (400).
- 11% (4,300) more people aged 65-84 in Wealden, and 10% (2,100) more people in Eastbourne, Lewes will see an 8% (1,800) increase.
- Only Wealden is projected to see a significant increase in the working age population (18-64) of 5% (4,500).
- Eastbourne (down 0.7%, 400 people) and Rother (down 0.5%, 200) are projected to see falls in the working age population over this period.

District population change 2023 - 2027

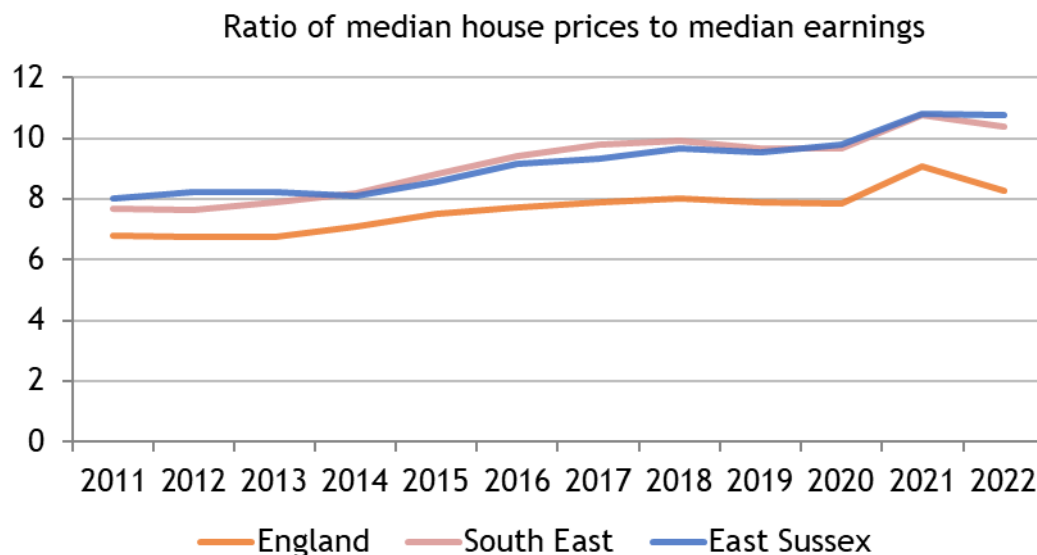


Housing

Housing affordability

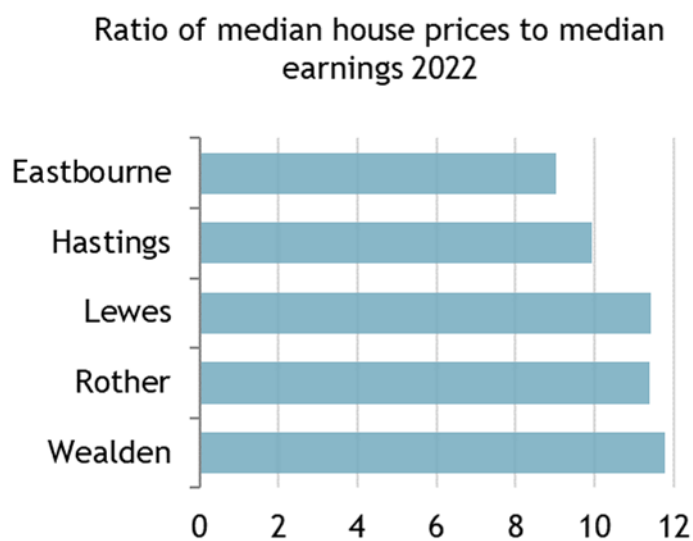
East Sussex is an attractive area to live, however this means that house prices are higher than the national average. In 2022 in East Sussex the average (median) house price was £335,000, 10.8 times the average annual earnings of residents, which were £31,145. In comparison the average house price in England was £275,000, 8.3 times average annual earnings, which were £33,208.

The average ratio of median house prices to median earnings in East Sussex is higher than for England and is now also slightly higher than the South East average.



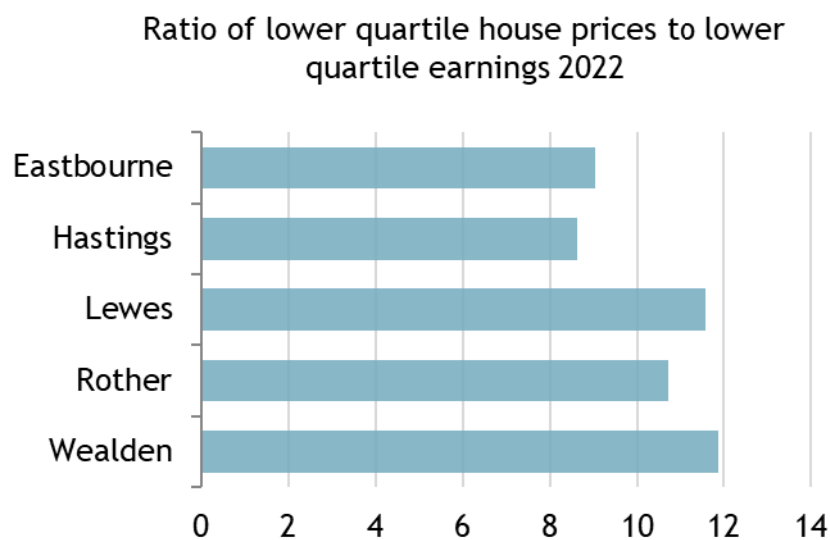
Source: ONS

The median average house prices were over 10 times the average annual earnings of residents in all East Sussex districts and boroughs except for Eastbourne and Hastings.



Source: ONS

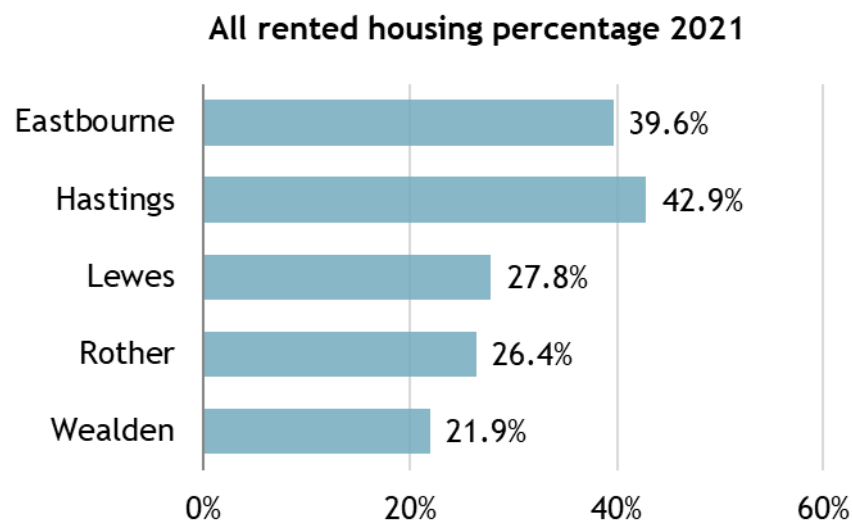
The same pattern can be seen when comparing the cost of some of the less expensive houses to the earnings of those on lower incomes. Lower quartile (25% least expensive) house prices were over 10 times lower quartile earnings in all districts and boroughs except Eastbourne and Hastings.



Source: ONS

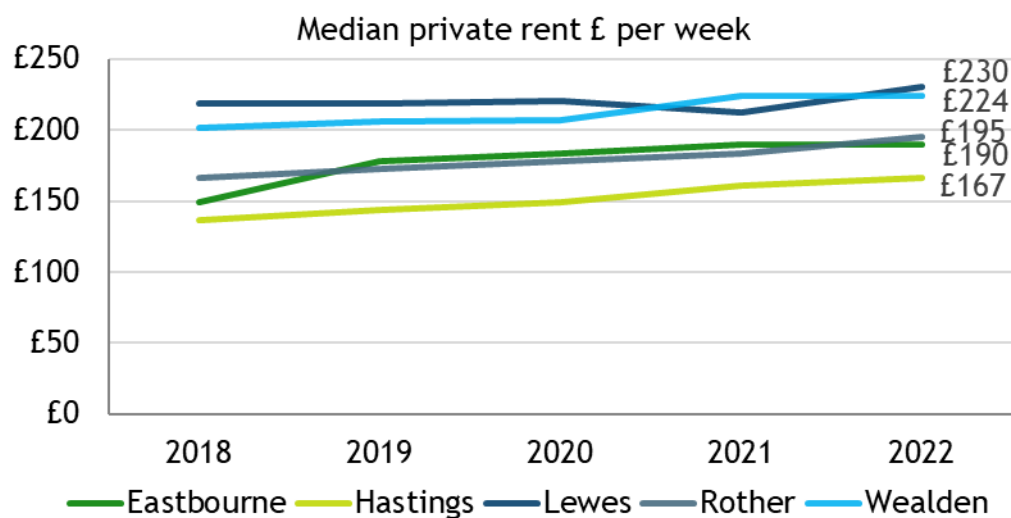
Rented housing is a significant sector in East Sussex, making up 21.9% of housing in

Wealden and 42.9% in Hastings.



Source: Census 2021.

The cost of private rented housing rose by up to 27% between 2018 and 2022. Average private rents range from £167 to £230 a week across districts.



Source: ONS/Valuation Office Agency

The Council's Children's Services Department have a duty to help children whose families face destitution. As some immigrant families with children have no recourse to public funds the Council provides assistance to prevent them from

becoming homeless. The total number of people assisted with accommodation over the last three years has fluctuated, but the number of households has been very consistent.

| Year | Number of adults | Number of children | Total households |
|---------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 2020/21 | 23 | 40 | 22 |
| 2021/22 | 31 | 53 | 22 |
| 2022/23 | 21 | 34 | 21 |

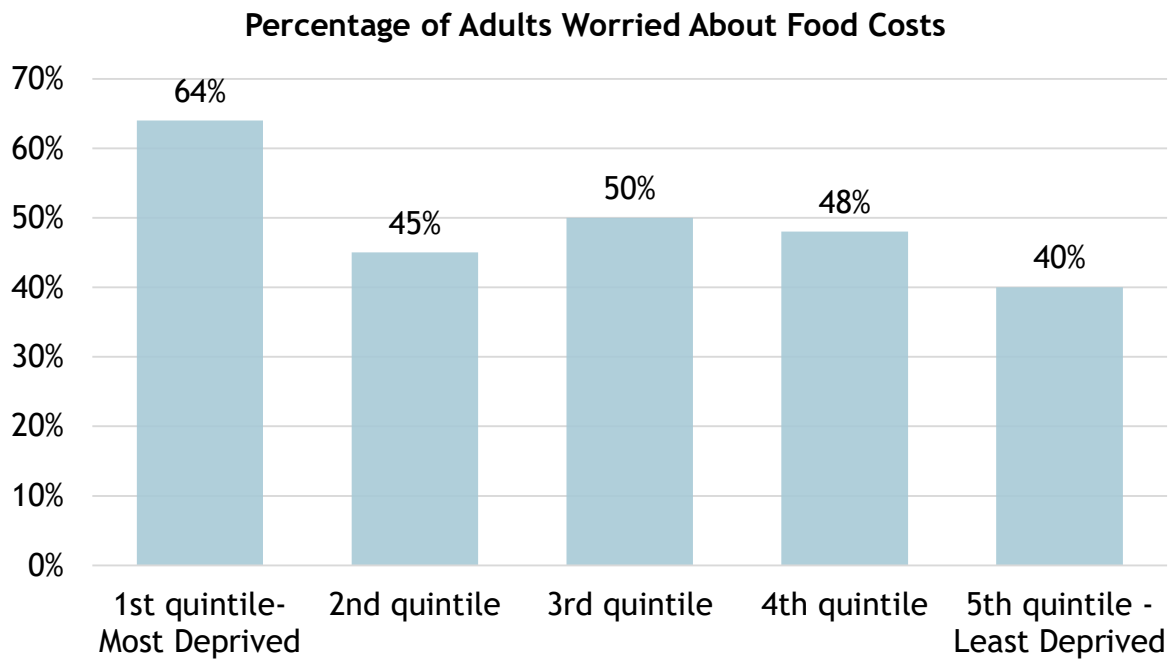
Source: ESCC Children's Services department

Cost of living

Nationally nine out of ten adults reported an increase in their cost of living in April 2023, with increases in the price of food, utility bills and fuel the most common reasons given (ONS Opinions and Lifestyle Survey).

Nationally people were most concerned about the cost of energy and the cost of food, with almost five out of ten people concerned about these in April 2023. The level of concern is affected by the level of deprivation people experience, with those living in the most deprived areas being more concerned about these factors than those living in the least deprived areas.

Proportion of all adults in England reporting that they were worried about the cost of food, by deprivation quintile.

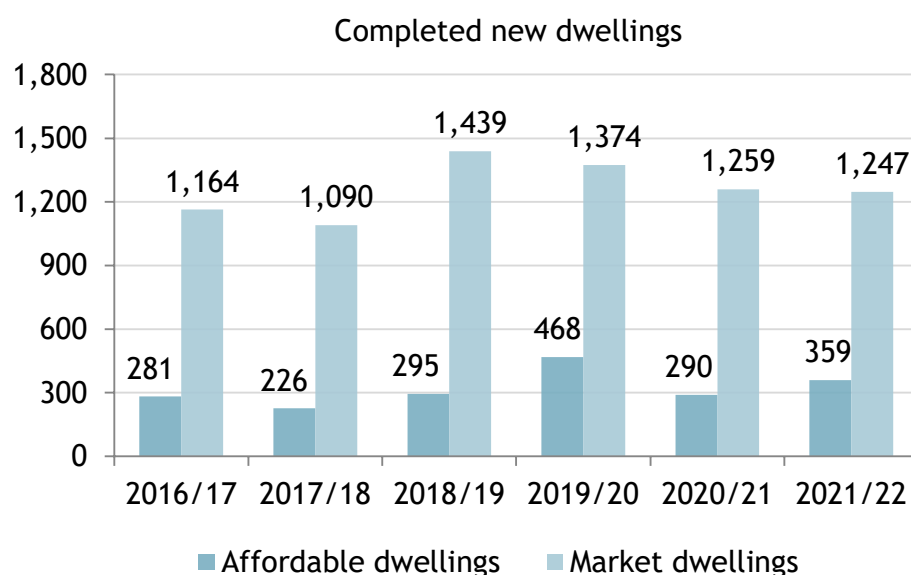


Note: Please note confidence intervals apply to this data, see Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, Office of National Statistics for further information.

Source: Opinions and Lifestyle Survey, Office of National Statistics.

Households and housing delivery

In 2021/22 1,606 new dwellings were completed, of these 350 (22.4%) were classed as affordable.



Source: ESCC Housing Monitoring Database, Lewes District Council housing monitoring system.

Households in temporary accommodation

There has been an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation. Hastings had the second highest rate of households in temporary accommodation in the South East, behind Brighton and Hove in September 2022.

| District/Borough | Number of households in temporary accommodation (31 December 2022) |
|------------------|---|
| Eastbourne | 351 |
| Hastings | 524 |
| Lewes | 93 |
| Rother | 128 |
| Wealden | 39 |

Refugees and asylum seekers

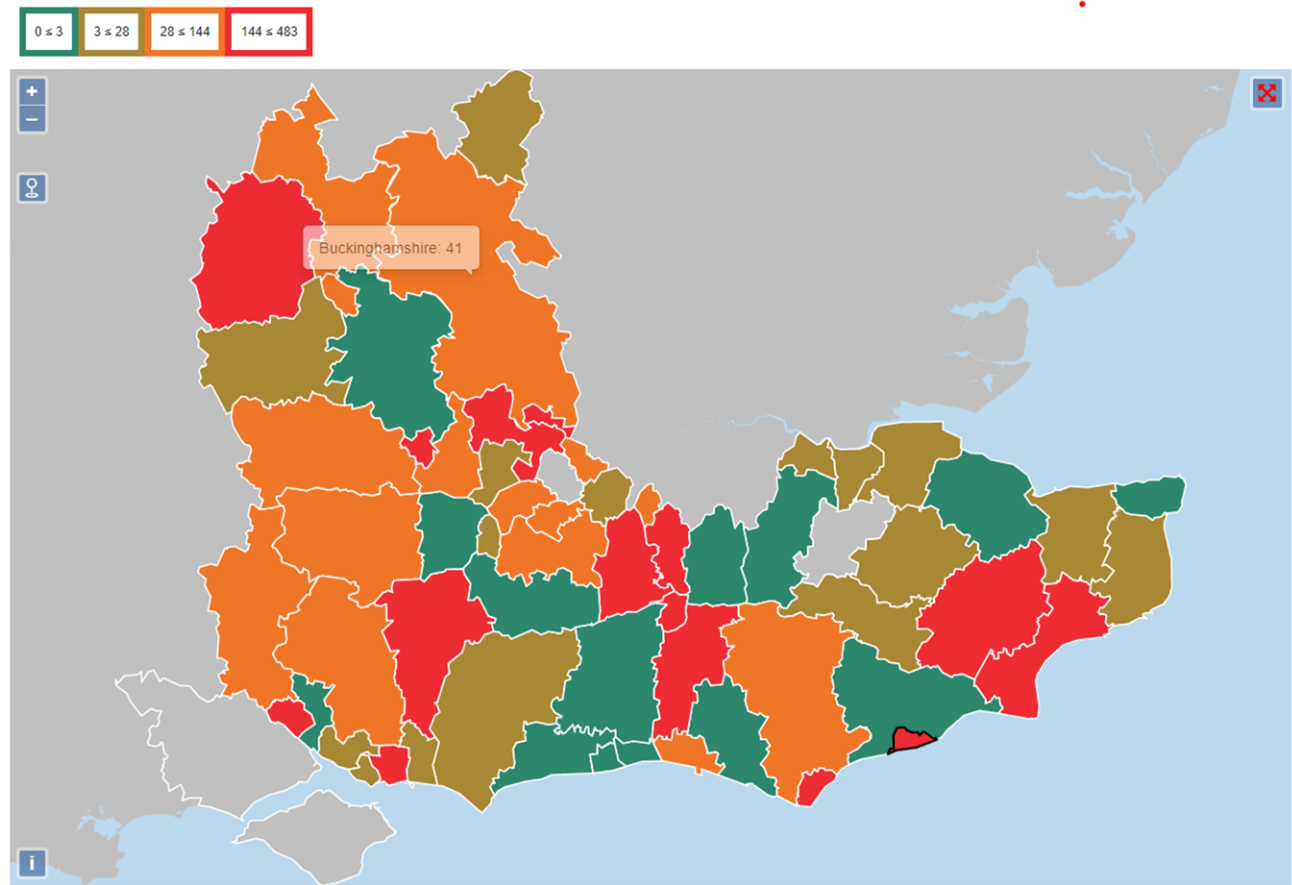
The number of people receiving asylum support from the Home Office across the South East increased last year. In East Sussex numbers increased in Eastbourne, Hastings and Wealden, however most of the people receiving asylum support in December 2022 were in Eastbourne and Hastings.

This has a greater impact on some of our communities due to the use of multiple sites in a small area to accommodate asylum seekers. The Government is currently exploring the use of larger sites to reduce the use of hotels and other private accommodation. As part of this there are Government proposals to house up to 1,200 asylum seekers at the Northeye site in Bexhill by December 2023.

State of the County 2023: Focus on East Sussex

No. of people receiving local authority section 4, 95 or 98 support (per 100,000 people) (Q4 (Oct-Dec) 2022) for All single tier and district local authorities in South East

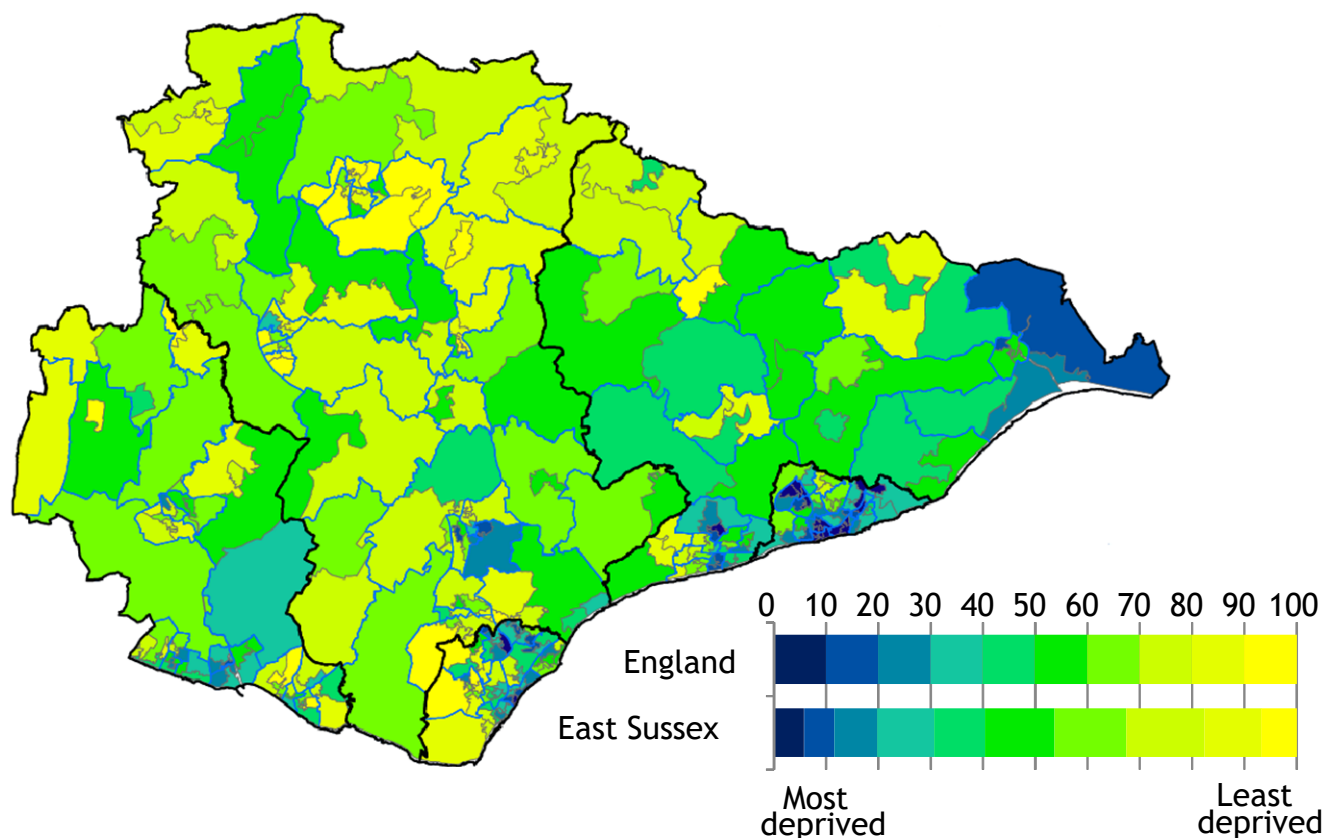
Quartiles for All single tier and district local authorities in South East



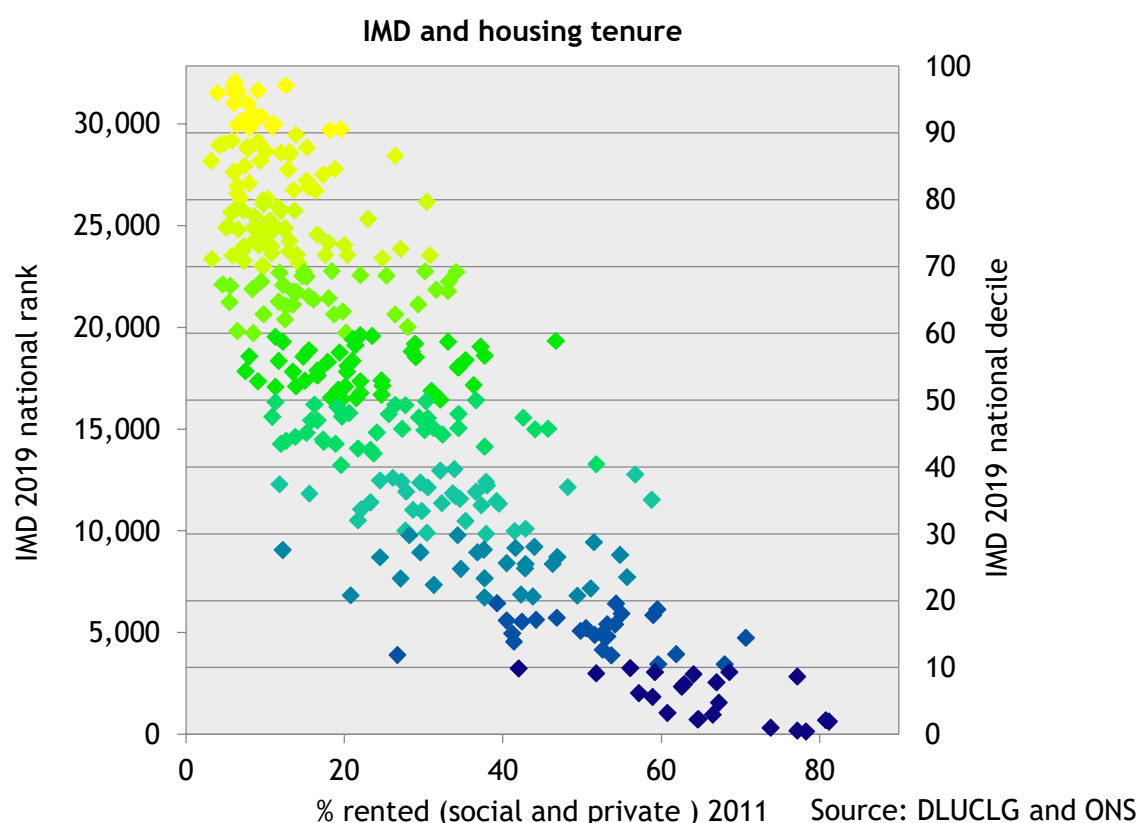
Source:
Calculated by LG Inform

Deprivation

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2019 measures relative deprivation for small areas in England. It takes into account a number of factors including health, access to services, environment, crime and housing, however income and employment have the greatest effect on the deprivation score given to an area. The map shows how deprived individual parts of the county are compared to the national average.



The IMD is calculated for small areas called LSOAs, as shown on the map, each of which have approximately 1,500 residents. In East Sussex there are 329 LSOAs, 22 are in the most deprived 10% nationally. 16 of these are in Hastings, four in Eastbourne, and two in Rother. 21 LSOAs are in the least deprived 10%, 13 are in Wealden, six in Lewes, and two in Eastbourne.



Areas of high deprivation correlate with some areas of predominately rented housing. This includes concentrations of social rented properties (up to 70%) and private rented properties (up to 68%), and both (up to 81%). Measures of deprivation include the indoor living environment, and in these areas, more properties (excluding social housing) may be in poor condition or without central heating, leading to higher heating costs and other negative outcomes.

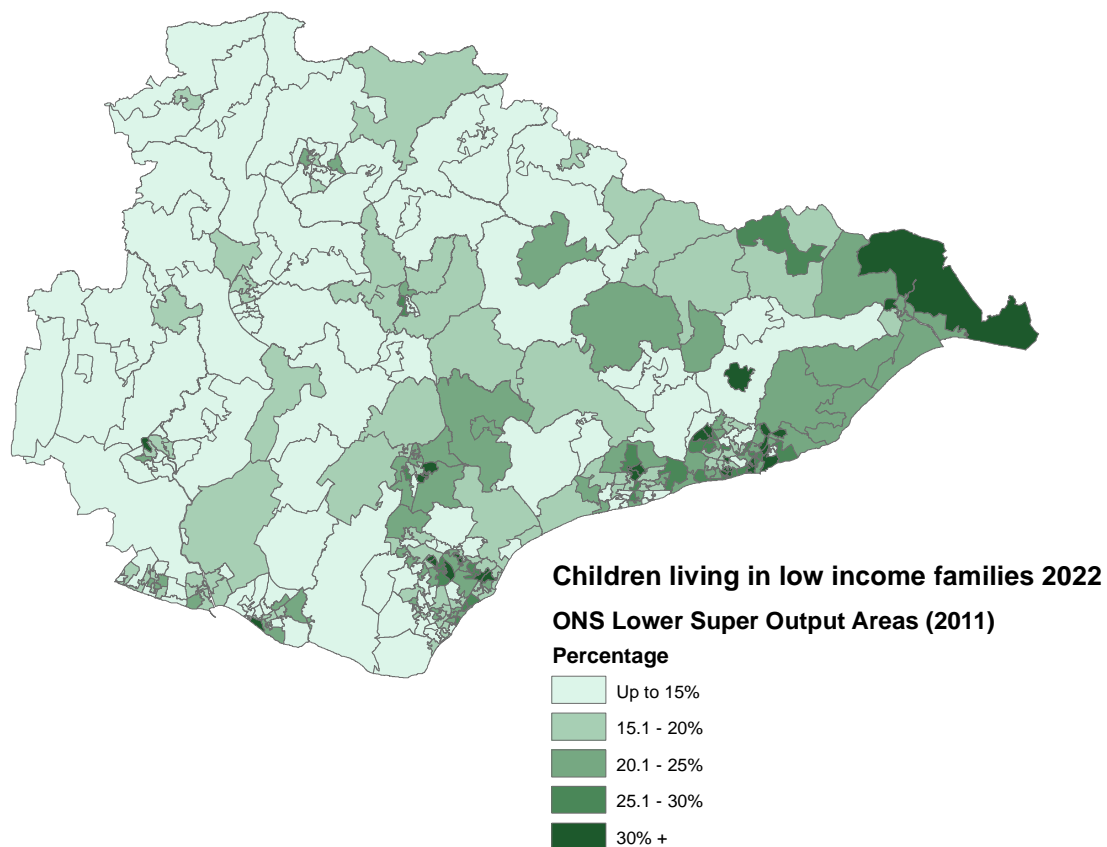
People living in more deprived areas are often facing multiple challenges and therefore may be more likely to access Council and other public services. However, it is important to note that the IMD is based on averages across an area, so it is possible to have people with low levels of deprivation in an area classified as being more deprived and vice versa.

The relationship between multiple deprivation, low income and poor-quality housing means it can be hard to change relative deprivation for people living in an area of predominantly low-cost housing without addressing housing quality.

Some of the data that the IMD is based on is now several years old. However, the

latest child poverty data, relating to children living in families with relative low-income, shows a similar pattern in income deprivation across the county.

In 2021/22, there were 20,910 children in East Sussex living in families with relative low-income, which was 18.6% of all children and young people aged 0-19. This is a slightly lower rate than the national average of 19.8%. 87% of all children in relative low-income families in East Sussex were in working families. This compares to the national picture, where 71% of children in relative low-income families were in working families. Only 13% of East Sussex children in low-income families were in families where no-one was in work.



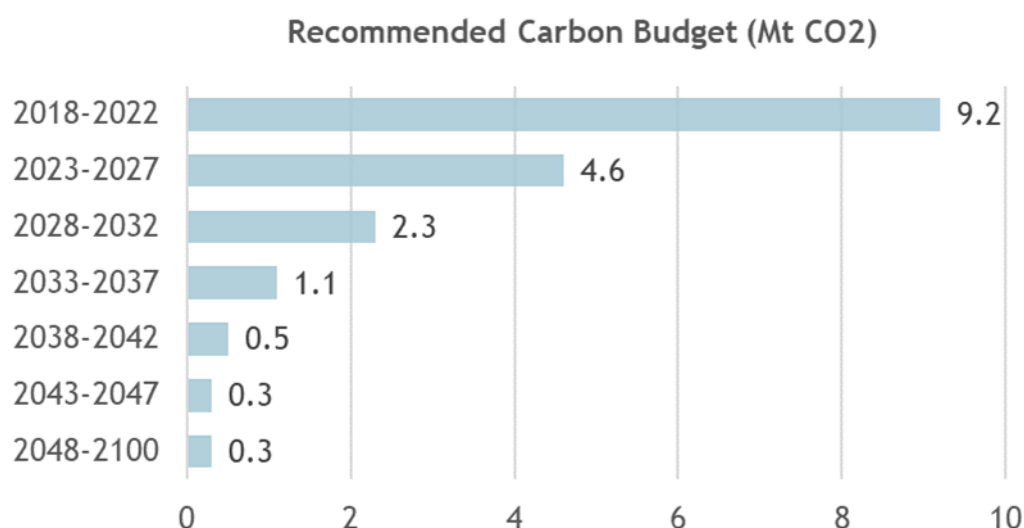
23.5% of East Sussex pupils are known to be eligible for Free School Meals (January 2023). The latest England figure is 22.5% (January 2022).

Environment

The Cumulative CO_{2e} emissions budget

Emissions of the main greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide (CO₂), in East Sussex fell by 45% between 2005 and 2020, while the population grew by about 8%. This excludes emissions that occur outside the area due to demand for goods and services that are consumed in the county. This reduction is similar to the decrease seen nationally and driven by the same changes (e.g. the switch from coal to gas and renewables to generate electricity).

The Tyndall Centre for Climate Change has calculated the emissions reductions necessary for East Sussex (and other local authority areas) to make a fair contribution towards keeping the increase in global average temperature below 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. This requires cutting emissions from the county area by an average of about 13% per year, which roughly equates to halving total emissions every 5 years.

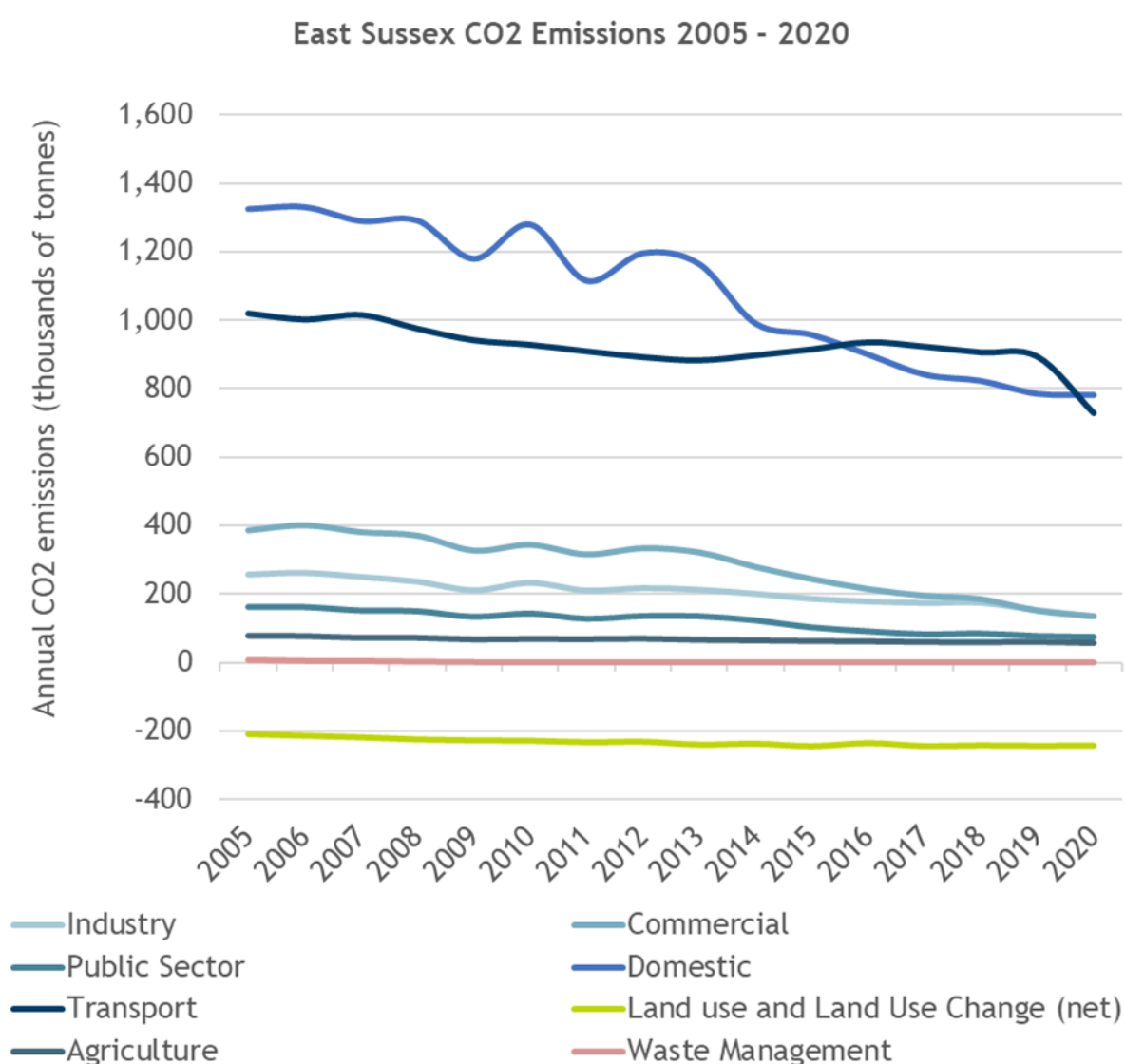


Source: Tyndall Centre for Climate Change, 2022.

Emissions from domestic properties and transport are the greatest contributors to overall emissions across the county. Domestic emissions fell by 41% between 2005 and 2020. Transport emissions fell at a slower pace, with a sharp fall seen in 2020

due to pandemic related travel restrictions.

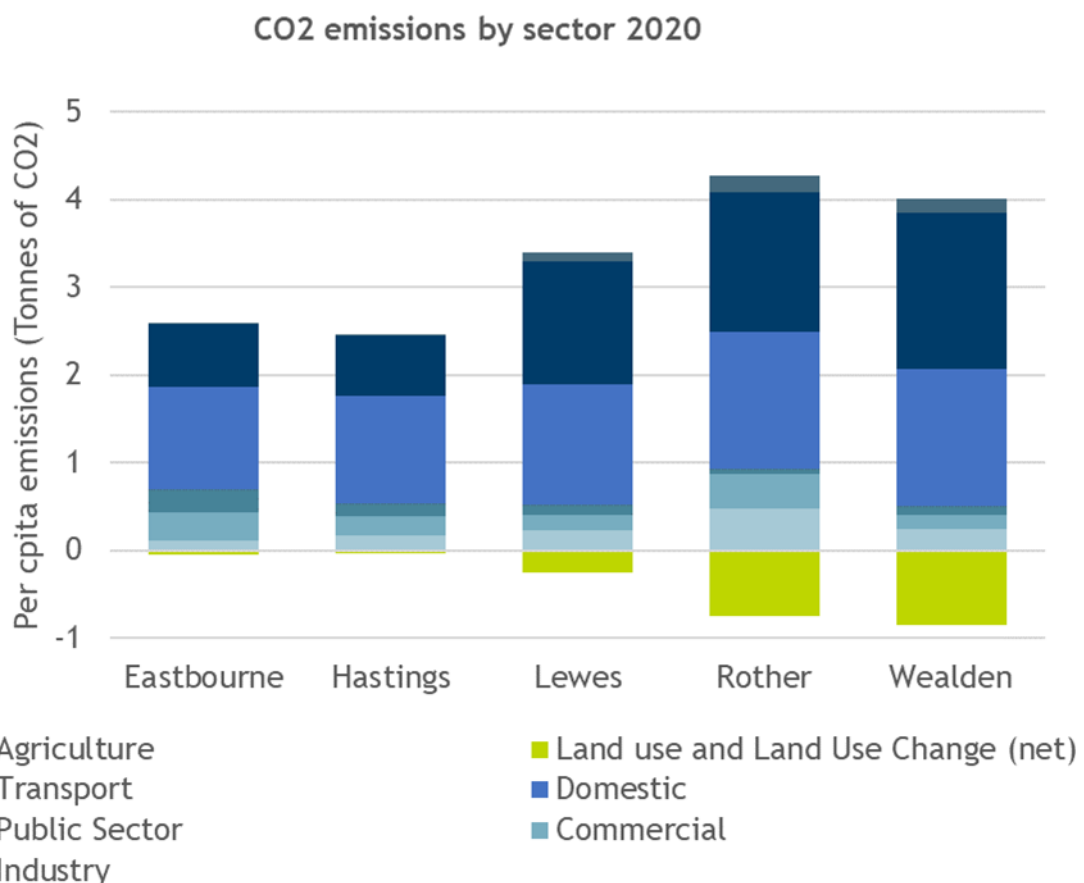
Land use (and land use changes) both absorb and emit carbon, however on an overall (net) basis carbon emissions from land use in East Sussex are negative. Carbon is absorbed by forests and grasslands, while carbon losses occur on existing cropland and when natural land (e.g. grassland) is converted to croplands or settlements. Lewes, Rother and Wealden all have significant (net) negative land use emissions, whilst land use emissions in the urban boroughs of Eastbourne and Hastings are negligible.



Source: BEIS

Domestic emissions make up a larger share of emissions in the county's two urban

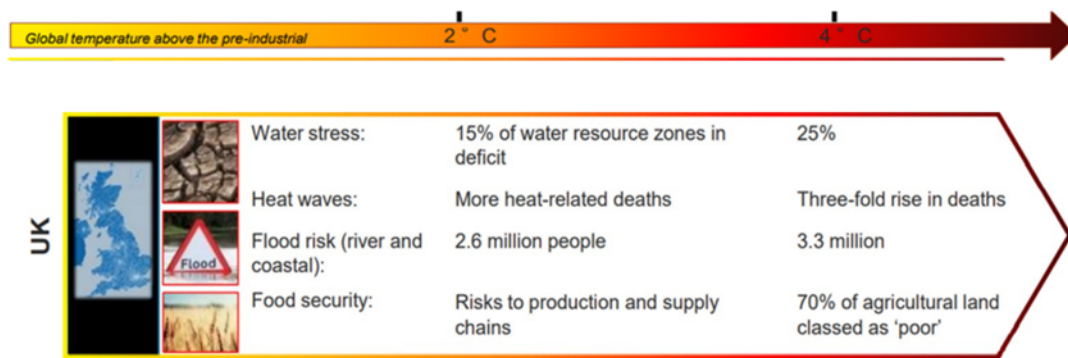
areas, Eastbourne and Hastings than the three more rural areas; whilst transport emissions are lower. This is due to the smaller road networks in the urban areas, and smaller, higher density housing. Per capita domestic emissions are higher in the rural areas, as houses tend to be larger, and many properties use higher carbon forms of heating such as oil and coal.



Source: BEIS

Climate adaptation

Even if global warming can be limited to 1.5°C, significant additional investment will be needed in measures to adapt to the effects of climate change that are already locked in due to past emissions of greenhouse gases.

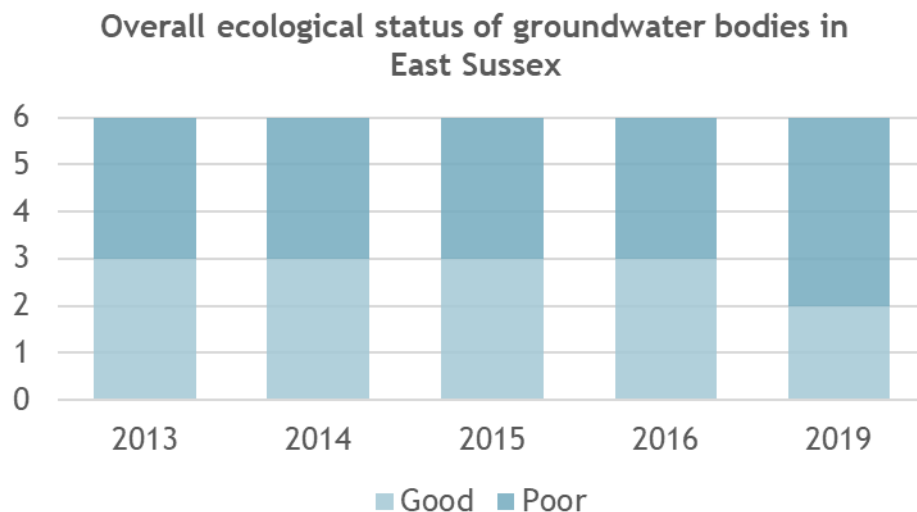


Source: Met Office

UK Met Office predictions of the effects of climate change in East Sussex include hotter and drier summers, milder and wetter winters, more droughts, more flooding, and more intense and frequent storms. This is predicted to 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, greater coastal erosion, and impact on coastal habitats.

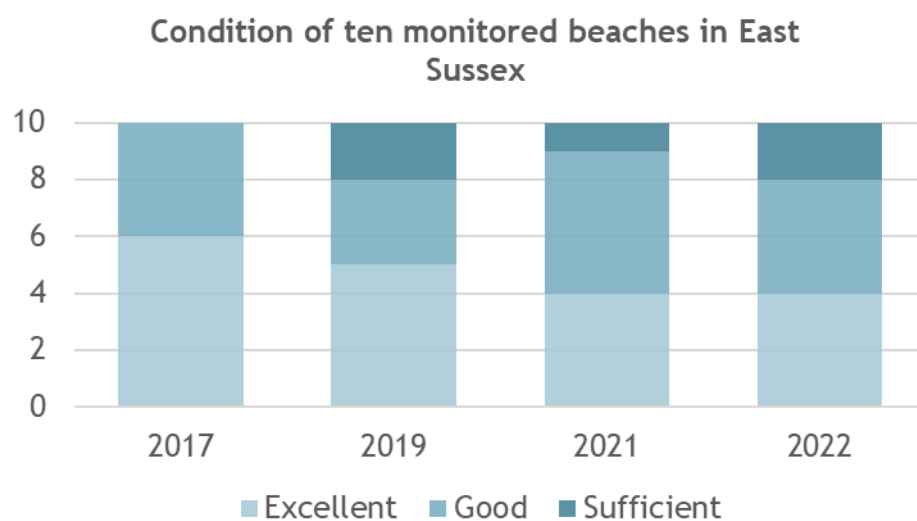
Water quality

Water pollution is mostly caused by land management practices (e.g., agricultural run-off), wastewater treatment plants, and urban and highway run-off. The most recent data available for groundwater bodies is for 2019. The quality of water bodies in East Sussex has deteriorated slightly in recent years. The number of groundwater bodies in East Sussex rated as good reduced from three to two between 2016 and 2019. The quality of some ground waters, which provide about 70% of drinking water, have deteriorated due to rising nitrate levels, mostly due to historic farming practices.



Source: Environment Agency

The quality of bathing waters has also decreased in recent years. Between 2017 and 2022, the number of monitored beaches rated excellent fell from six to four, whilst the number rated sufficient grew from zero to two.



Source: Environment Agency

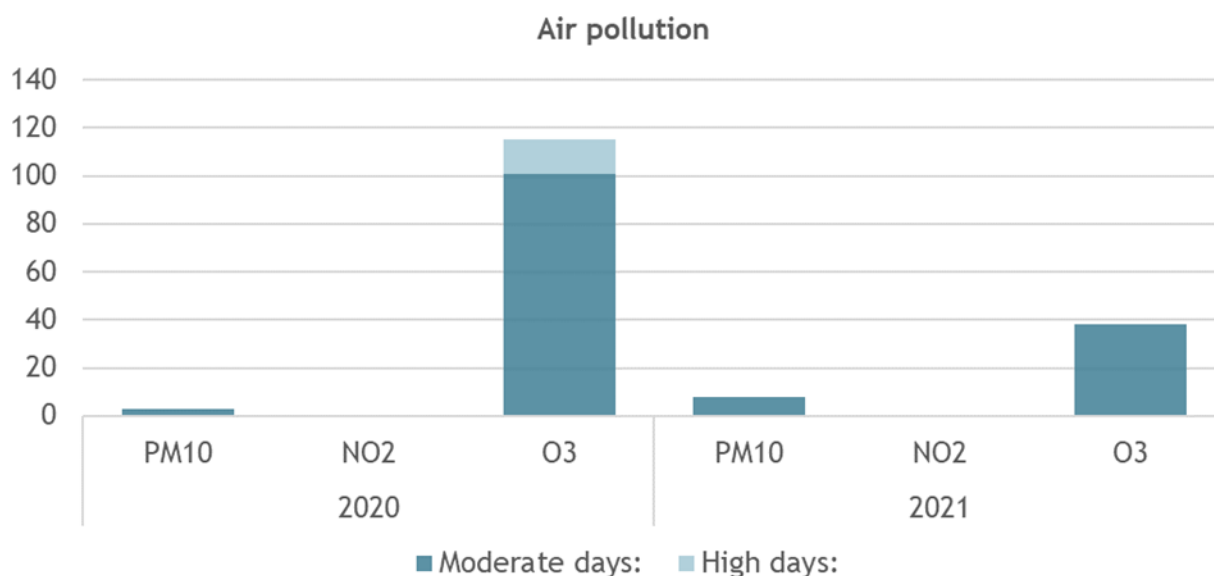
Air quality

Poor air quality has an impact on both human health and the natural environment. The concentration of pollutants in the air is affected by emissions, and also factors such as building layout and weather conditions. In East Sussex, there are three

main pollutants of concern:

- Nitrogen dioxide (NO₂). The main sources of NO₂ are road vehicles and domestic combustion.
- Particulates (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}). The main sources of particulates are road vehicles and solid fuel combustion.
- Ozone (O₃). Ozone is a secondary pollutant, created by other pollutant gases reacting in sunlight. It is a long-lived pollutant and tends to be a problem in urban background and rural locations, rather than at roadsides.

In Sussex, air quality is monitored by a small network of automatic monitoring stations. Ozone is the primary pollutant of concern in East Sussex, monitored at five sites. In 2020 there were 115 days where ozone was 'moderate' or 'high', falling to 38 in 2021 - this is for 'monitor days', e.g., if all five monitors recorded moderate ozone on the same calendar day, it would be counted as 5 days. The difference between the two years is largely due to weather conditions.



There are two Air Quality Management Areas in East Sussex. These have both been declared for nitrogen dioxide by Lewes District Council: one in Lewes town centre, and one in central Newhaven. These are areas where local monitoring suggests that legal air quality limits are unlikely to be achieved.

Designated sites and reserves

East Sussex has a rich natural environment, with over two thirds of the county covered by one or more environmental designations. The table shows how much of the county is covered by which type of designation.

| Designated sites and reserves | | Area (ha) |
|-------------------------------|--|-----------|
| International | Ramsar | 6442.36 |
| | Special Area of Conservation (SAC) | 7192.92 |
| | Special Protection Area (SPA) | 5546.39 |
| National | Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) | 87979.64 |
| | National Nature Reserve (NNR) | 320.86 |
| | National Park | 24364.93 |
| | Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) | 15379.81 |
| Local | Country Park | 692.27 |
| | Local Geological Site (LGS) | 765.52 |
| | Local Nature Reserve (LNR) | 1434.67 |
| | Local Wildlife Site (LWS) | 9429.68 |
| | Notable Road Verge | 24.35 |
| Reserve/ Property | Environmental Stewardship Agreement | 31592.2 |
| | National Trust | 1839.31 |
| | RSPB Reserve | 276.12 |
| | Sussex Wildlife Trust Reserve | 1118.38 |
| | Woodland Trust | 483.53 |

Source: Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre

Habitats

The key habitats in East Sussex are grassland, arable farmland and woodland.

| Habitat | % of East Sussex |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Water bodies | 1.5% |
| Arable | 22.7% |
| Grassland | 40.0% |
| Heathland | 0.9% |
| Intertidal | 0.7% |
| Coastal | 0.4% |
| Built up Areas and Gardens | 9.1% |

| Habitat | % of East Sussex |
|----------|------------------|
| Woodland | 19.9% |
| Other | 4.8% |

Ecology

Protected Areas

Over half of the county is designated for its landscape value, either as part of a National Park or an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There are 65 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), covering about 8% of the county, which recognises and protects their biological and or geological value. About half of these SSSIs are additionally designated as being internationally important for biodiversity, either as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the Habitats Directive, a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the Birds Directive, or a Ramsar site (an internally important wetland site).

There are 26 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), four National Nature Reserves (NNRs) - considered to be the “jewel in the crown” of SSSIs, and 285 Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs). About a third of the county supports priority habitats, which are identified as being of principal importance for conservation.

Condition

About three quarters of the SSSIs are in favourable or favourable recovering condition and the rest have either been partially destroyed or are in unfavourable condition. About half of the LWS are currently known to be in positive conservation management.

Assets at Risk

Sussex Nature Partnership Natural Capital Investment Strategy 2019 identifies priority habitats as being at high risk, because they:

- a) Are not adequately protected under existing mechanisms.
- b) Are fragile or vulnerable and/or already highly fragmented.
- c) May be of particular significance in a Sussex context.

- d) Are irreplaceable or not easily recreated (either on-site or elsewhere) if destroyed.

The priority habitats are:

- Lowland heath - particularly significant in East Sussex, notably at Ashdown Forest, due to small amounts present in the south of England, the fragmentation of the habitat type (especially outside Ashdown Forest) and provides a range of benefits, notably clean water.
- Mudflats and saltmarsh - these habitats provide a range of benefits yet are under increasing pressure from climate change, development, and construction of hard sea defences. The national picture is one of medium risk, but the East Sussex context (with high levels of coastal squeeze) increases the risk to these habitats and the benefits they provide. There are small amounts at Newhaven Tide Mills, Cuckmere Estuary and Rye Harbour.
- Vegetated shingle - a globally restricted and internationally important habitat, for which East Sussex is a stronghold in the UK, mostly at Rye Harbour.
- Reedbed, fen and grazing marsh - small and highly fragmented areas remain in East Sussex, notably at Pevensey, yet they have the potential to provide a wide range of benefits, particularly flood risk mitigation in flood plains and provision of clean water.
- Floodplain woodlands - a fragmented habitat type which plays a very important role in floodplain function.
- Species rich grassland - highly fragmented and those areas outside formal designated areas have little/no protection from further loss. These areas are a priority for loss to development.

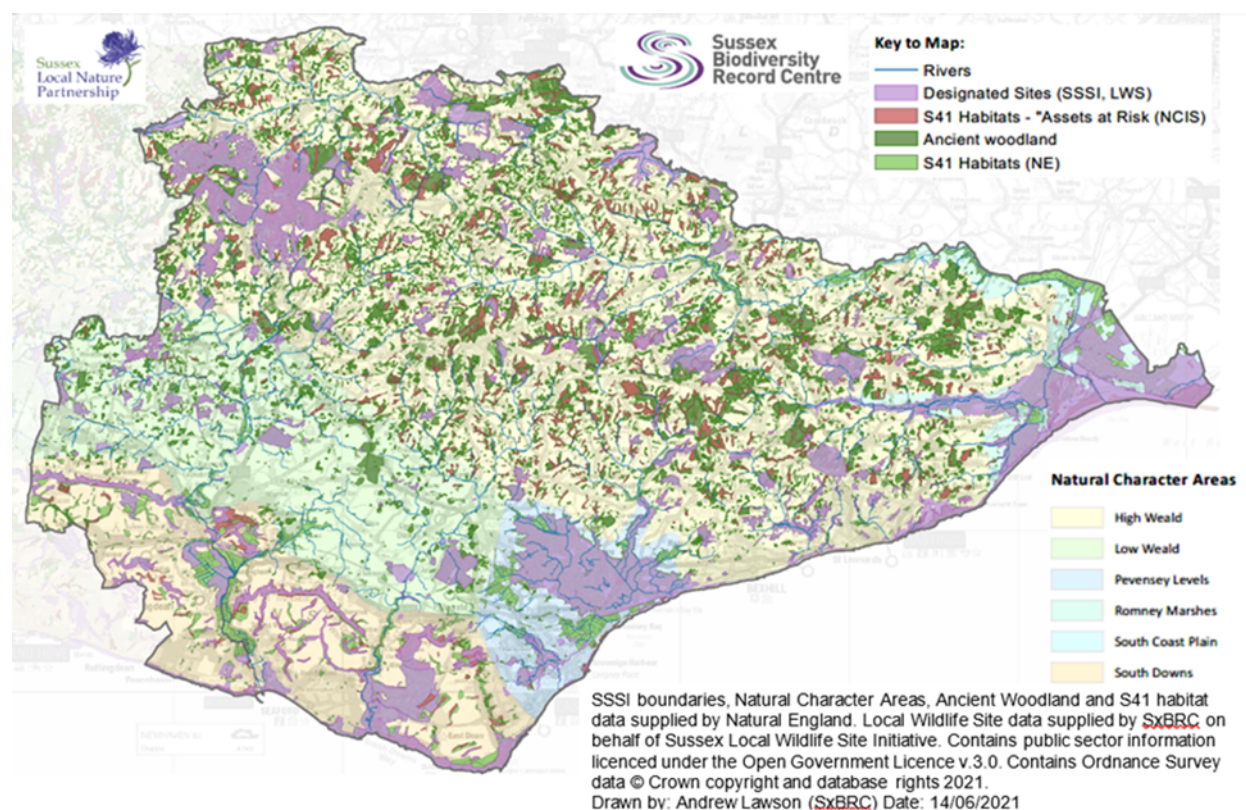
Marine Conservation Zones

There are two Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs) off East Sussex, with two other offshore sites under consideration. Designated under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009, MCZs protect areas that are important to conserve the diversity of national rare, threatened, and representative habitats and species. These are Beachy Head West which stretches along coastline from Brighton Marina to Beachy

Head, with a gap at Newhaven and Beachy Head East which contains two marine Sites of Nature Conservation Importance: the Royal Sovereign Shoals and the Horse of Willingdon Reef. This large inshore area runs to Hastings, out to just beyond six nautical miles from the coast at its furthest points.

Nature Recovery Network Mapping

The map below shows the fragmented state of the most important species rich habitats that are to be conserved under section 41 of the National Environment and Rural Communities Act.



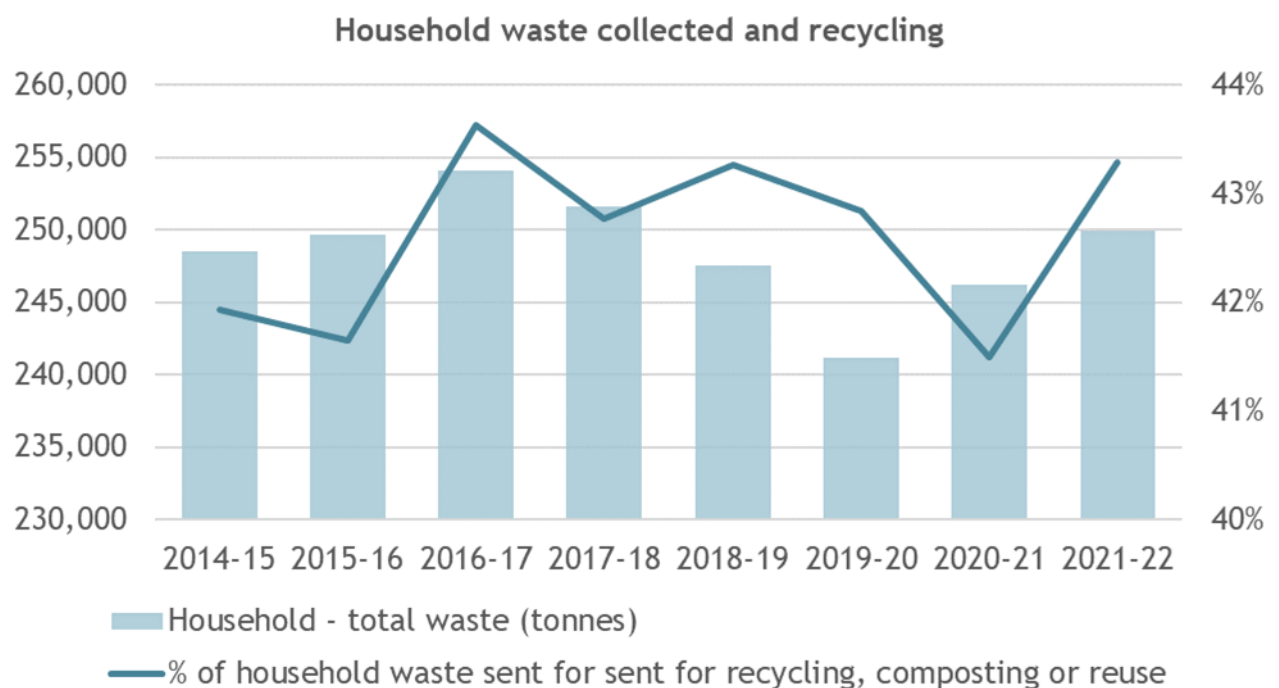
Local Nature Recovery Strategies

The Council has been appointed as a provisional Responsible Authority to produce a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove, under the Environment Act 2021. Local Nature Recovery Strategies are a new system of spatial strategies for nature. They are designed to work closely alongside other measures in the Act and will help support delivery of mandatory biodiversity net gain, provide a focus for a strengthened duty on all public authorities to conserve

and enhance biodiversity, and will underpin a national Nature Recovery Network.

Waste

The overall quantity of household waste collected has risen since 2019/20. This is thought to be due to changes in working patterns, with more people working from home. The recycling rate fell slightly during the first year of the pandemic - mainly due to the impact on waste management procedures - but has now recovered.



Source: Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

In 2021/22 East Sussex sent 0.6% of all waste collected to landfill. This was the third lowest amongst authorities who operate similar services to us, and the lowest of any county council. 43% of waste was recycled or reused, whilst 55% was sent for energy recovery. Note these figures differ slightly to the chart above due to additional waste collected (non-household waste) and stockpiling at waste management facilities. Our Energy Recovery Facility supplies power for over 25,000 homes.



Source: Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Flooding

The tables below show the number of residential and non-residential properties identified as at risk of flooding between 2016 and 2026. The data shows that the majority of the flood risk is concentrated in the highly populated coastal towns, and in settlements situated in the flood plains of the rivers Ouse, Cuckmere and Rother.

| Settlement | Residential Properties at Risk 2016-2026 Assessment |
|-------------|--|
| Eastbourne | Greater than 1,000 |
| Seaford | 500 to 1,000 |
| Newhaven | 50 to 150 |
| Peacehaven | 150 to 500 |
| Lewes | 50 to 150 |
| Hailsham | 150 to 500 |
| Bexhill | 500 to 1,000 |
| Battle | 50 to 150 |
| Hastings | Greater than 1,000 |
| Rye | Fewer than 50 |
| Heathfield | 50 to 150 |
| Crowborough | 50 to 150 |
| Uckfield | Fewer than 50 |
| Forest Row | Fewer that 50 |

Note: A comparison of residential properties at risk from a 1 in 30 year surface water flood event (3% chance in any given year) between 2016-2026 Assessments of

Local Flood Risk. Source: ESCC Flood Risk Strategy

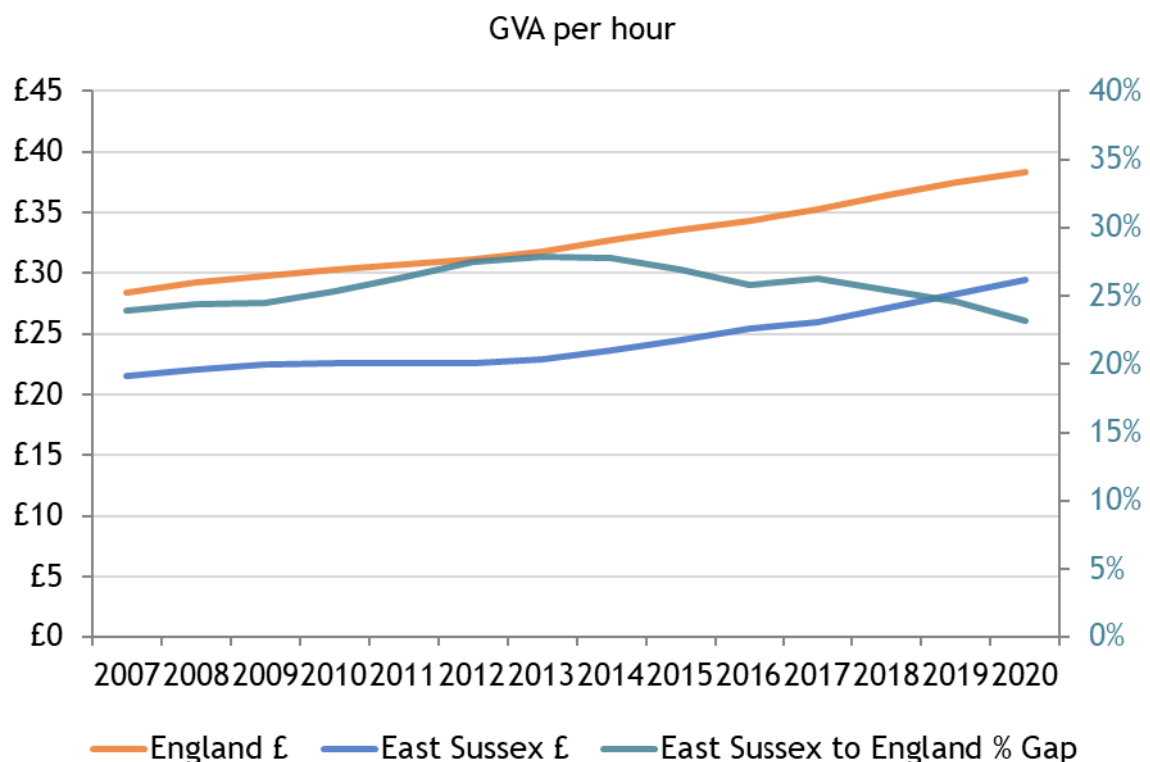
| | Non-Residential Properties at Risk |
|-------------|------------------------------------|
| Settlement | 2016-2026 Assessment |
| Eastbourne | Greater than 200 |
| Seaford | 25 to 50 |
| Newhaven | Fewer than 25 |
| Peacehaven | Fewer than 25 |
| Lewes | Fewer than 25 |
| Hailsham | 25 to 50 |
| Bexhill | 25 to 50 |
| Battle | Fewer than 25 |
| Hastings | Greater than 200 |
| Rye | Fewer than 25 |
| Heathfield | Fewer than 25 |
| Crowborough | Fewer than 25 |
| Uckfield | Fewer than 25 |
| Forest Row | Fewer than 25 |

Note: A comparison of non-residential properties at risk from a 1 in 30 year surface water flood event (3% chance in any given year) between 2016-2026 Assessments of Local Flood Risk. Source: ESCC Flood Risk Strategy.

Economy

GVA per hour

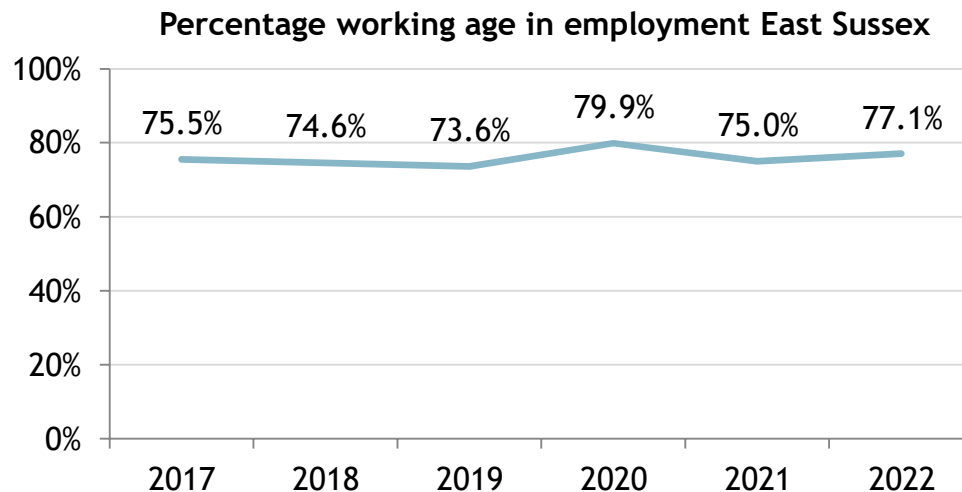
Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour is used to assess the productivity of an area. It measures the value of goods or services produced in an area per hour worked in that area. GVA per hour for East Sussex in 2020 was £29.41, 23.2% below the England level of £38.29.



Source: ONS

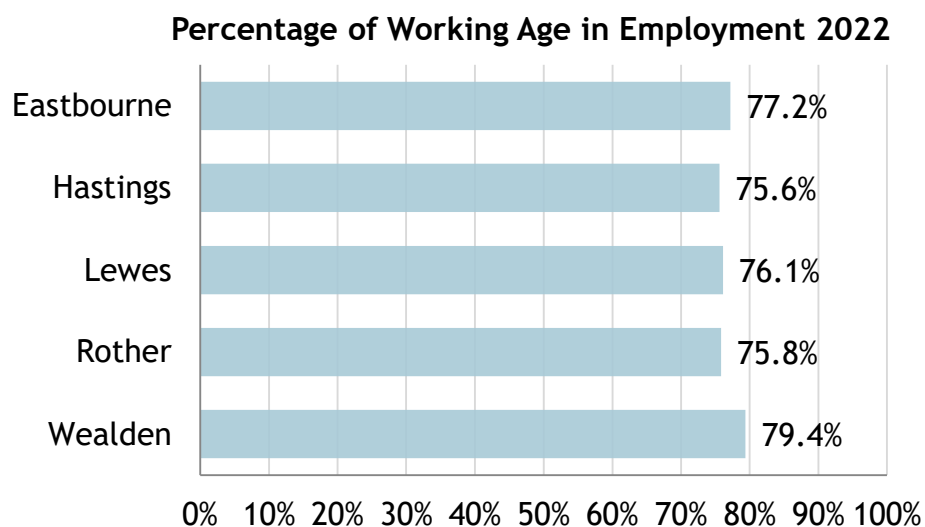
Employment

77.1% of the East Sussex working age population (age 16-64) were in employment between January - December 2022 (up from 75.0% in 2021). This was higher than the national average of 75.4% but below the average across the South East of 78.1%.



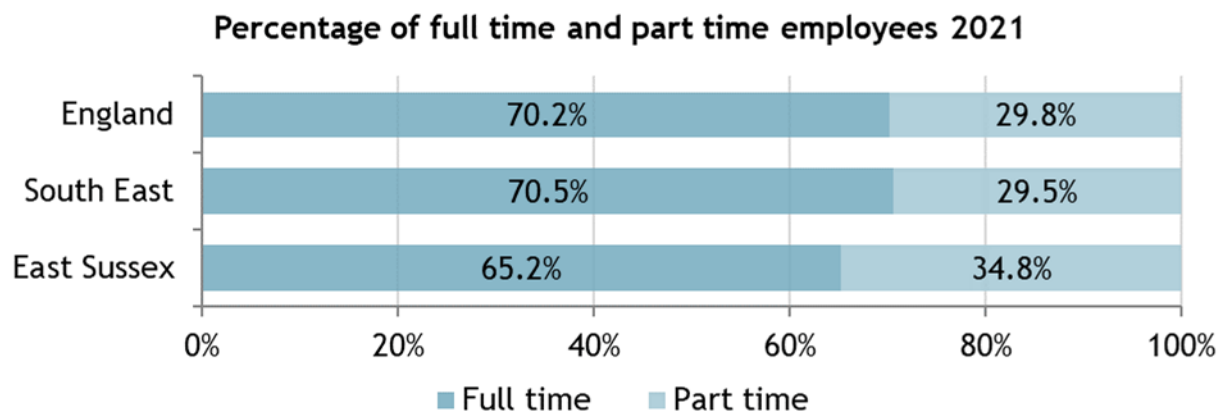
Sources: Annual Population Survey/Labour Force Survey, NOMIS/ONS

Wealden experienced a surge of almost five percentage points since 2021, giving it the highest rate of employment at 79.4%. Meanwhile, Hastings had the lowest at 75.6% following a dip of four percentage points compared to the previous year.



Sources: Annual National Survey/Labour Force Survey, NOMIS/ONS

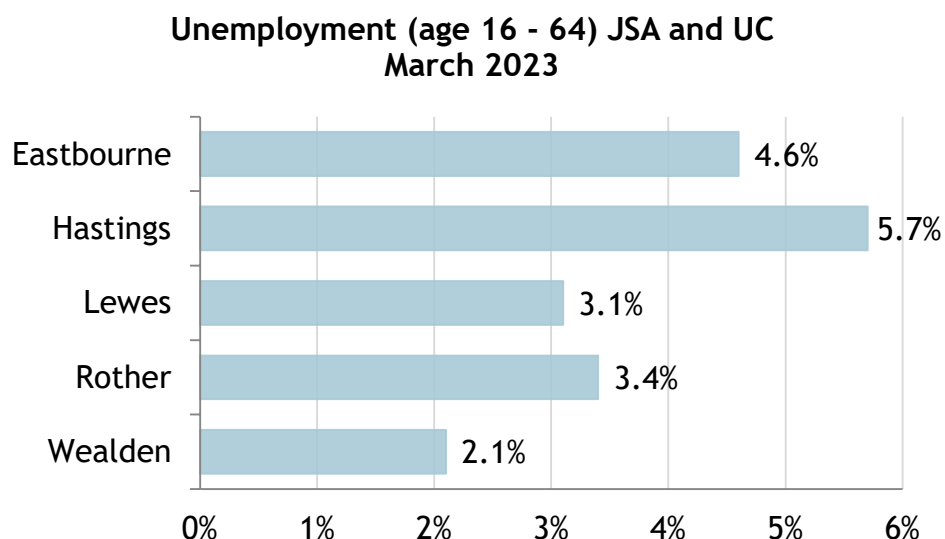
A higher proportion of people work part time in East Sussex (34.8%) than in the South East (29.5%) or England (29.8%).



Sources: Census 2021

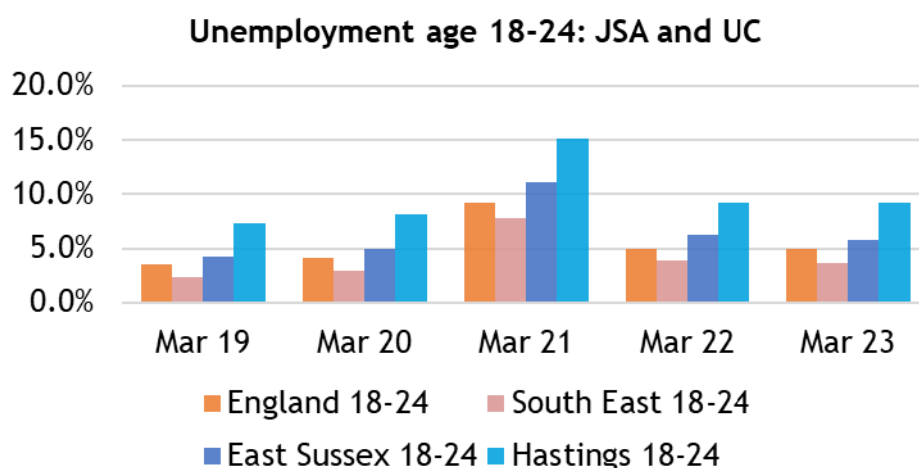
Unemployment

The unemployment rate for March 2023 was 3.6% for East Sussex, slightly lower than the national average of 3.8%, but above the regional average of 2.9%. Hastings had the highest rate of the districts and boroughs at 5.7%.



Source: Office for National Statistics/NOMIS - claimants of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Universal Credit (UC) who are searching for work age 16 - 64

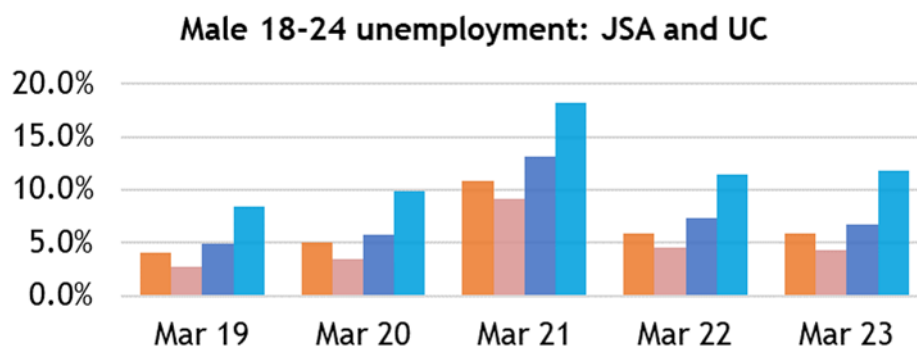
Youth unemployment (age 18-24) is normally higher than the overall rate and this trend is greater at time of economic stress. At March 2022 youth unemployment for East Sussex was 6.2%, whilst the England rate was 4.9%. Hastings had the highest district and borough rate at 9.2%. Rates in East Sussex fell for March 2023 to 5.8%, compared to 4.9% nationally. Youth unemployment in Hastings remained higher than the county average at 9.2%.



Within this female unemployment is usually lower than male unemployment. For example, in March 2023 female youth unemployment for Hastings was 6.8%, male 11.8%.



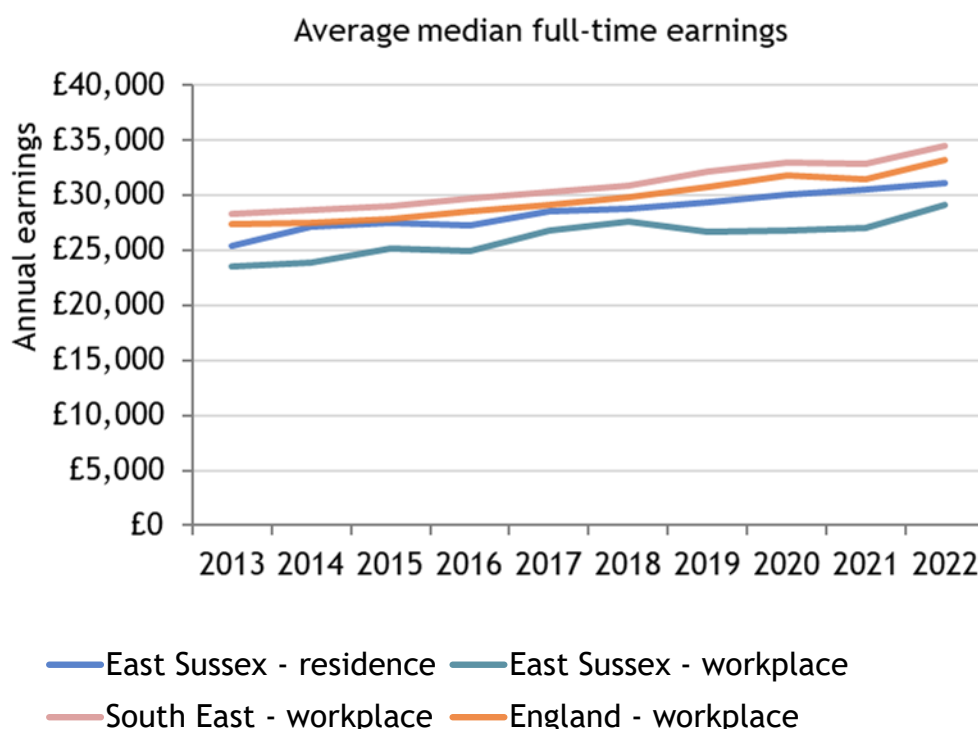
More males are usually economically active meaning the unemployment rate results in relatively more unemployed males than the same rate for females. 610 young people were unemployed in Hastings in March 2023, 215 were female and 395 were male.



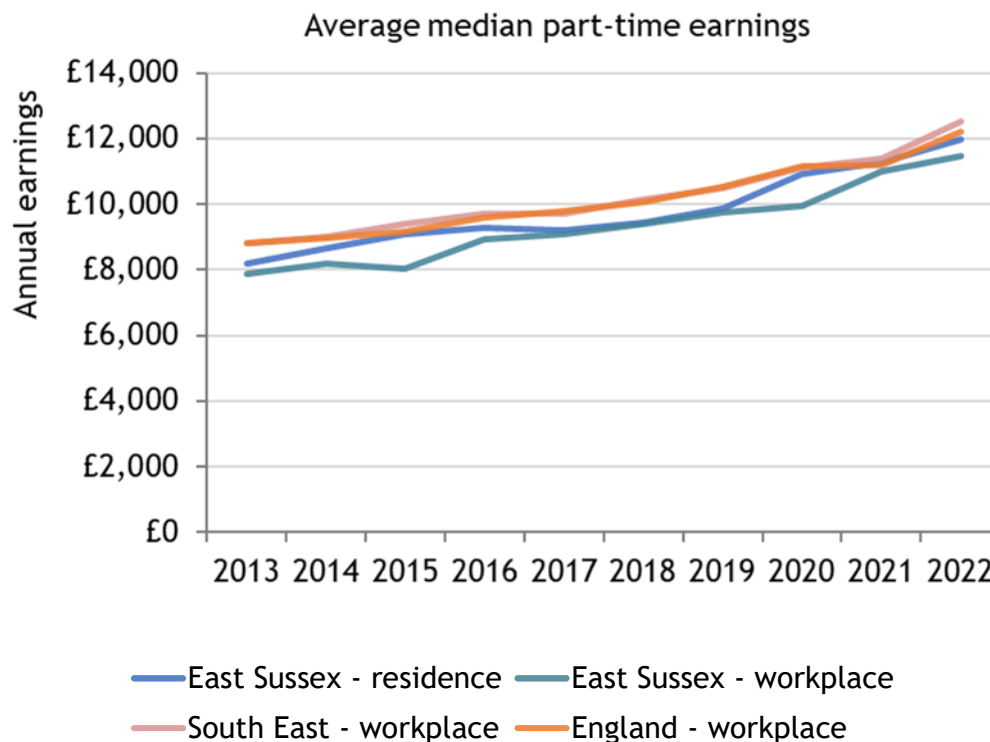
Source all: Office for National Statistics/NOMIS

Earnings

Residence based earnings are close to the England average workplace earnings for both full and part-time employees. However, for full-time employees in East Sussex, workplace earnings are lower than the rates in the South East and England. Residence based earnings are those of people living within East Sussex, some of whom have workplaces outside East Sussex; workplace earnings are those of people whose workplace is within East Sussex.



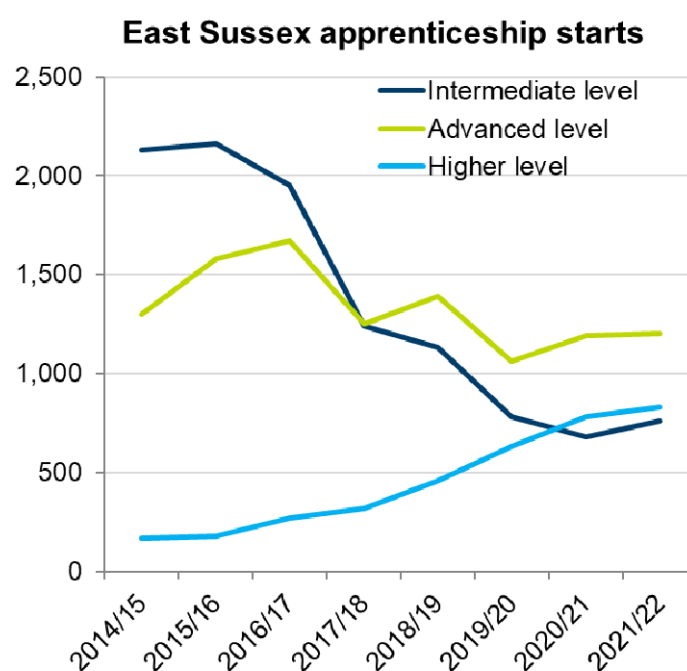
Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Office for National Statistics



Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), Office for National Statistics.

Skills

There were 13,780 apprenticeship starts in East Sussex between 2017 and 2022. Apprenticeship starts in East Sussex in 2021/22 were up 5% on the previous year. Higher level apprenticeship starts in 2021/22 rose by 6%



Source: Department for Education further education data library, apprenticeships

Qualification levels across the county are broadly in line with the regional and national averages. Both Lewes and Wealden have a significantly higher proportion of better qualified people compared to the rest of districts and boroughs in the county.

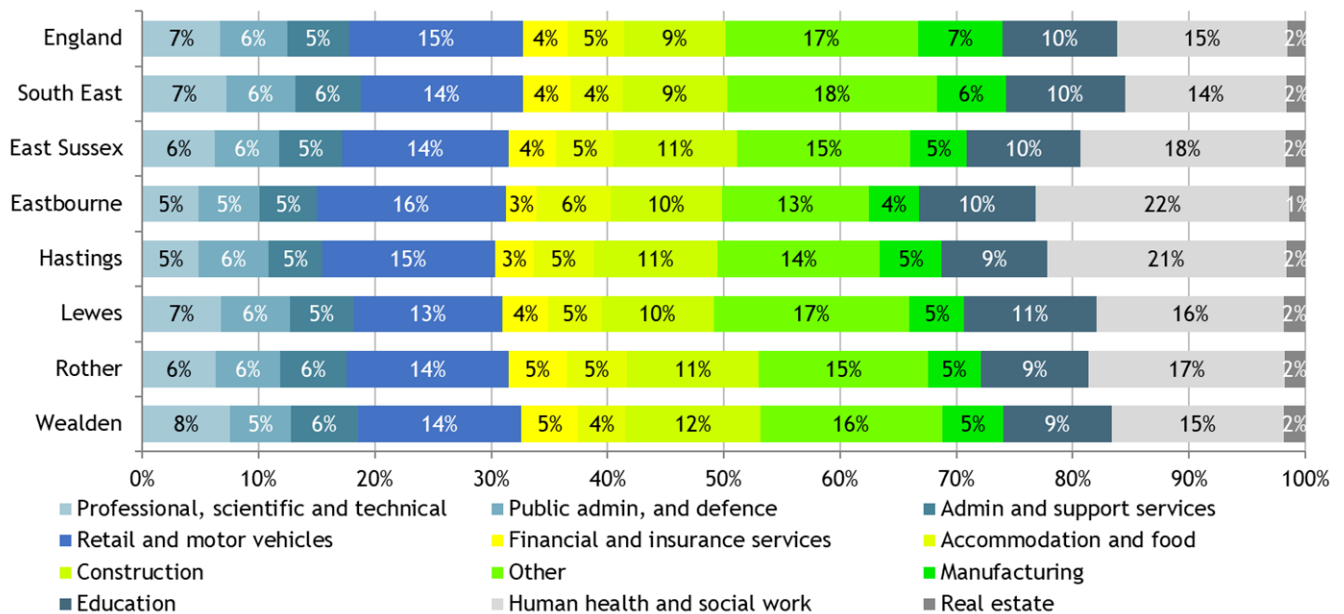
| | Qualifications of working age population 2021 (16-64) | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|---------|---------|---------|----------|-------|
| | None | Level 1 | Level 2 | Level 3 | Level 4+ | Other |
| Eastbourne | 12.2% | 11.6% | 16.7% | 20.6% | 32.2% | 6.7% |
| Hastings | 14.1% | 11.9% | 17.4% | 19.8% | 30.6% | 6.2% |
| Lewes | 9.2% | 10.7% | 16.5% | 20.4% | 37.4% | 5.7% |
| Rother | 11.0% | 11.7% | 17.5% | 21.1% | 32.6% | 6.1% |
| Wealden | 8.1% | 10.5% | 17.9% | 22.1% | 35.3% | 6.0% |
| East Sussex | 10.6% | 11.2% | 17.2% | 21.0% | 33.8% | 6.1% |
| SE region | 10.0% | 9.9% | 15.3% | 20.1% | 38.8% | 5.9% |
| England | 12.4% | 9.9% | 14.8% | 19.5% | 37.1% | 6.3% |

Source: Census 2021

Employment by industry

Across East Sussex as a whole the proportion of people employed in different industries is broadly similar to the national picture. We have a higher proportion of people employed in human health and social work and a lower proportion employed in professional, scientific and technical, and manufacturing than the national average. However, employment by industry varies significantly across the county. It is interesting to note that the proportion of people employed within the Accommodation and Food industry reduced by half in Rother compared to 2020 (from 10% to 5%), possibly linked to the impacts of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.

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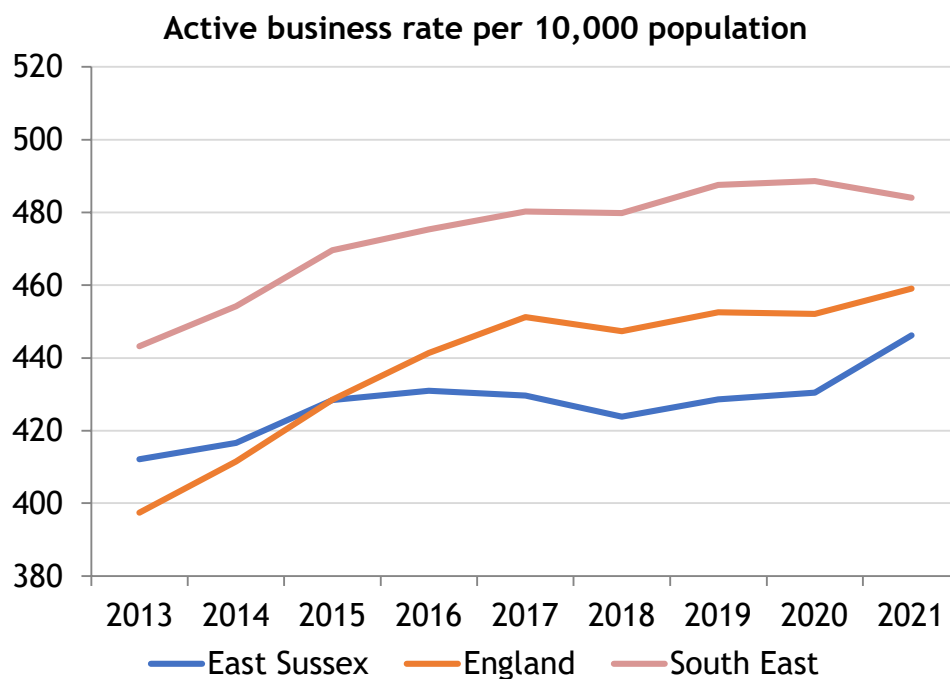
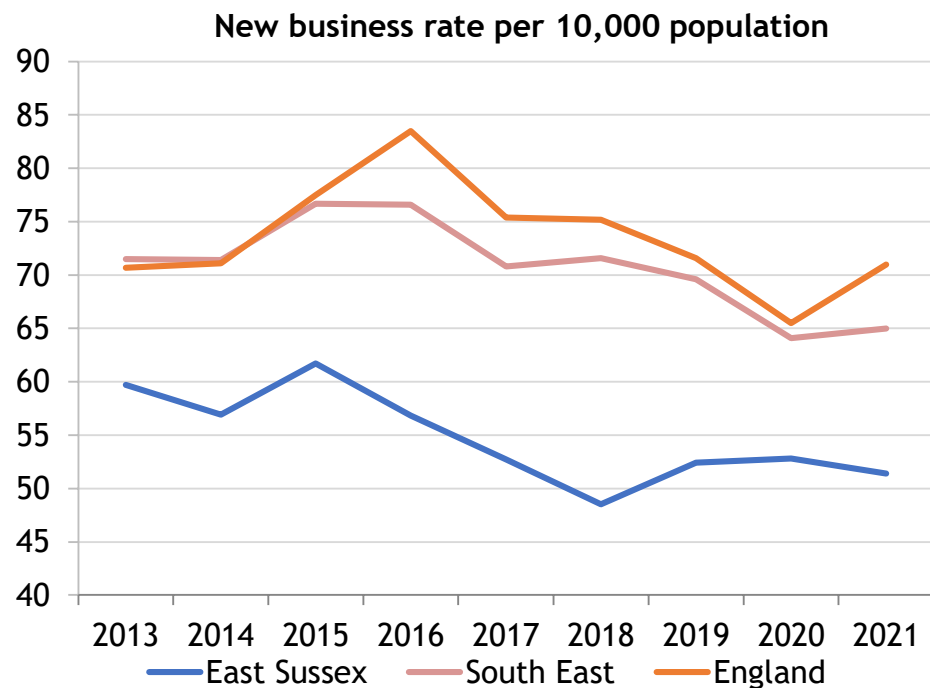


Other includes- Arts, Entertainment and other; Agriculture energy and water, Transportation and storage; and Information and communication.

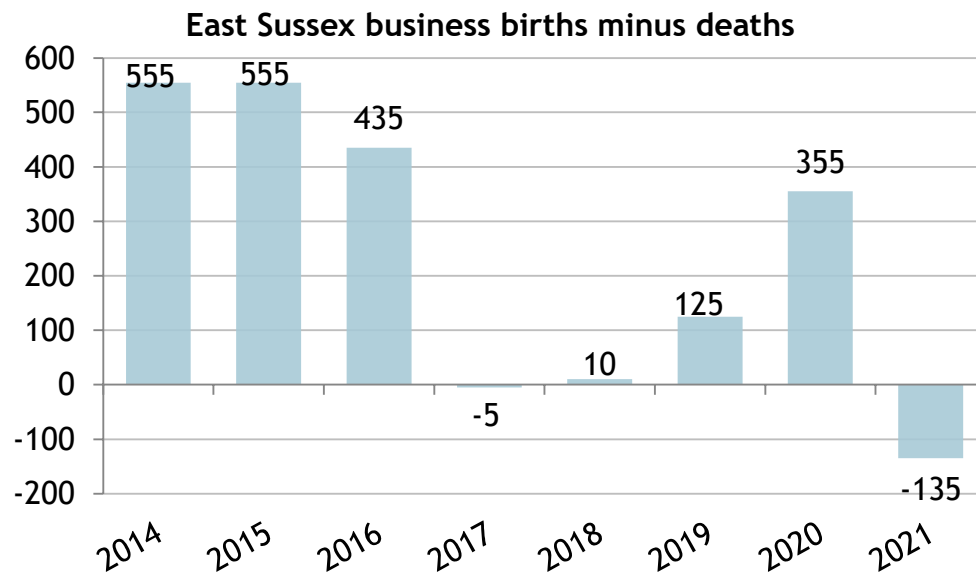
Source: Census 2021

Businesses

The information on business registrations and closures dates to the time of the pandemic. In 2021 there were 2,385 business starts and 2,520 business closures. The East Sussex new business registration rate per 10,000 people decreased between 2020 and 2021 to 51.4. The highest rate was in Wealden at 55.9, whilst the lowest was in Lewes at 47.1.



The data shows that there was a small net loss in businesses in 2021, which was a difficult year for businesses across the country due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

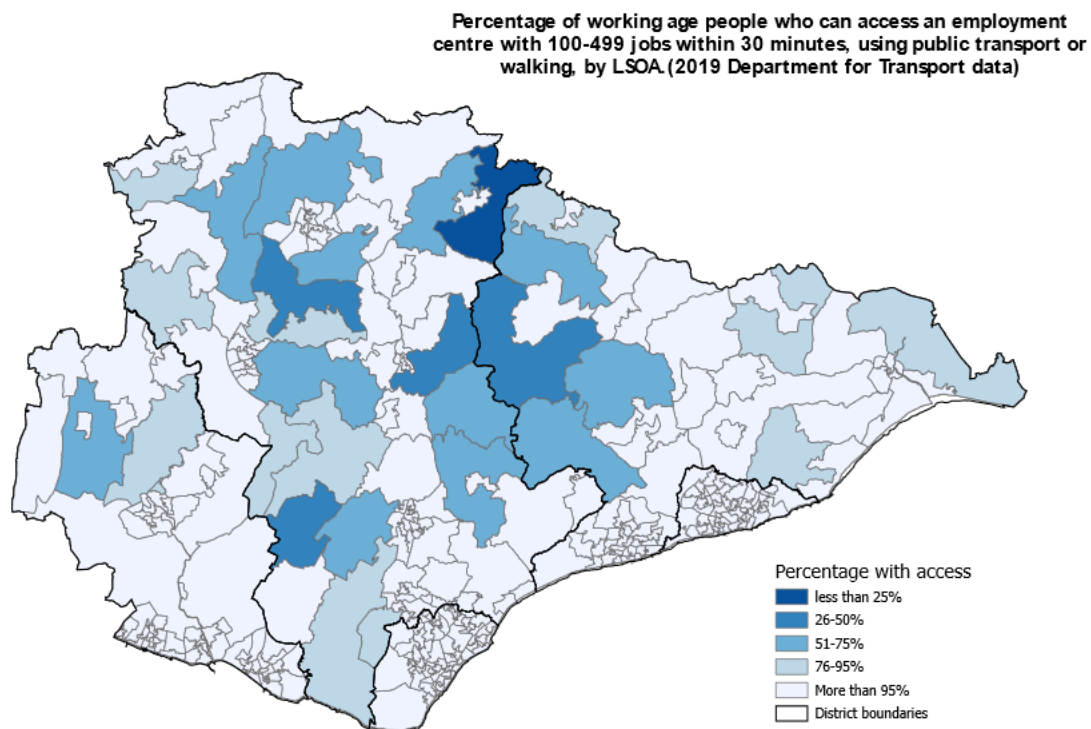


Source for all: ONS Business Demography

Infrastructure

The latest Department for Transport data from 2019 shows there was good access to services by car. However, accessing services by public transport or walking can be more challenging in rural areas.

Access to employment centres (100-499 jobs) within 30 minutes by public transport/walking.



This table details the projects which will improve the infrastructure in East Sussex in the coming years.

| Key | | |
|-------------------|--|----------------------|
| Local Growth Fund | | Other Funds |
| Area | Project | Value |
| Countywide | Infrastructure at business sites | £1.7m |
| Countywide | Walking and cycling improvements | £20.7m |
| Countywide | Developing EV infrastructure provision across the county | Awaiting Bid Outcome |
| Countywide | Broadband - Superfast coverage (>30 Mbps) 98% Ultrafast coverage (>100Mbps) 32% | £32m |
| Countywide | Bus priority measures | £18.5m |
| Countywide | Potential A259 Major Road Network Improvements | N/A |
| Countywide | Exceat Bridge Levelling Up Fund | £7.9m |
| Countywide | A27 improvements | £75.0m |
| Countywide | Potential A27 offline solution | N/A |
| Countywide | Lewes to Newhaven rail signalling improvements | £18.0m |
| Countywide | A22 junction improvement package | £46.5m |
| Countywide | Blackfriars road infrastructure | £8.7m |

| Key | | |
|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Local Growth Fund | | Other Funds |
| Area | Project | Value |
| Countywide | Centres of Digital Excellence across Sussex | £2.3m |
| Countywide | Greener Sussex land management & Decarbonisation Academies | £7.2m |
| Countywide | Agri-Food Centre for training, education and skills development | £4.4m |
| Bexhill | North Bexhill Access Road | £18.6m |
| Bexhill | Bexhill Enterprise Park North | £1.9m |
| Bexhill | Bexhill Enterprise Park Development | £46.0m |
| Eastbourne | Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package (Terminus Road) | £11.3m |
| Eastbourne | Eastbourne and South Wealden walking and cycling package | £6.6m |
| Eastbourne | Hailsham, Polegate and Eastbourne Movement and Access Corridor | £2.1m |
| Eastbourne | Devonshire Park - redevelopment to maximise conference and tourist markets | £54.0m |
| Eastbourne | Bedfordwell Road - site preparation for housing development | £1.2m |
| Eastbourne | Levelling Up Fund | £19.9m |
| Hastings | Bexhill and Hastings Movement and Access Package | £9.0m |
| Hastings | Potential HS1 rail extension (also to Bexhill and Eastbourne) | N/A |
| Hastings | Town Deal | £24.3m |
| Hastings | The Observer Building, Hastings (Phase 2) | £2.2m |
| Lewes | North Street Quarter | N/A |
| Lewes | Seven Sisters Country Park Visitor Infrastructure Uplift | £0.3m |
| Newhaven | Newhaven Flood Defences | £17.0m |
| Newhaven | Newhaven Port Access Road | £23.0m |
| Newhaven | Newhaven Port - new border infrastructure | £6.2m |
| Newhaven | Future High Streets | £5.0m |
| Newhaven | Town Deal | £19.3m |
| Newhaven | Levelling Up Fund | £12.7m |
| Newhaven | UTC Maritime & Sustainable Technology Hub | £1.3m |

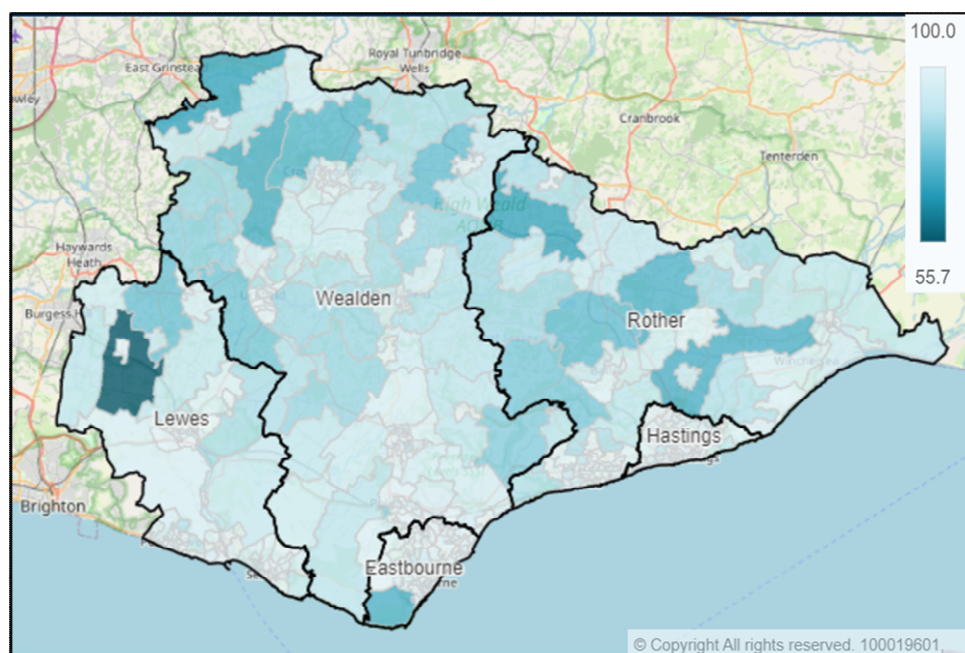
| Key | | |
|-------------------|---|-------------|
| Local Growth Fund | | Other Funds |
| Area | Project | Value |
| Rother | Levelling Up Fund | £19.2m |
| Rye | Rye Harbour Nature Reserve Discovery Centre | £0.9m |
| Uckfield | Bus station improvements | £0.5m |
| Uckfield | Potential Movement and Access Corridor improvements | £0.8m |

N/A = Not Allocated at present

Demand for commercial units is strong, however, there is recognition that there is less new workspace being made available to meet that need across the county. As well as improvements in physical infrastructure there is also ongoing work to improve digital connectivity.

Broadband

Over 98% of East Sussex premises had access to superfast broadband in 2022, with 53% having access to Gigabit capable broadband. 0.45% of properties have less than the Legal Universal Service Obligation (at least 10Mbps).

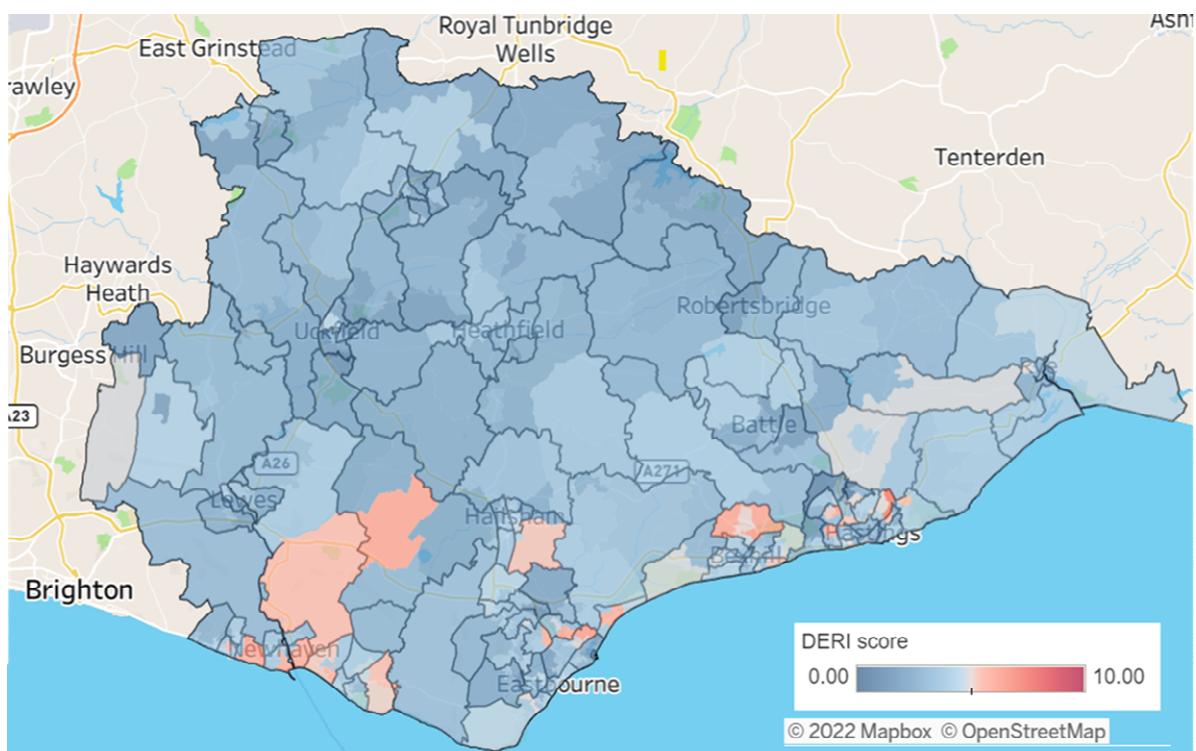


Source: Ofcom fixed broadband coverage data (2021) shown for LSOAs.

Digital Inclusion

As more businesses and services use digital channels to engage with residents those people who are digitally excluded are likely to face increasing challenges. Access to broadband is one part of being able to access digital services. People also need to have the necessary skills and confidence to use digital services, as well as being able to afford the devices and data connections needed for these.

A digital exclusion risk index has been developed by the Greater Manchester Office of Data Analytics that shows where people at higher risk of digital exclusion live. This index is based on a range of data including data on population, relative deprivation and broadband coverage. Areas where people have a higher risk of digital exclusion have a higher score, for East Sussex the areas with the highest risk of digital exclusion scores are in the south of the county. It should be noted that the index includes the proportion of population aged over 65 as one of the risk factors due to national research indicating lower digital skill levels in this age group. We have a large population of over 65s in East Sussex, many of whom will have strong digital skills.



Source: Digital Exclusion Risk Index (Greater Manchester Office of Data Analytics)

Civil Society

Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector and volunteering

We have a diverse range of VCSE organisations working at every level, neighbourhood, town/parish, and district/borough, there are over 3,000 not-for-profit groups and organisations providing activities and support to residents and communities that bring about positive change and improve people's lives.

Some of the organisations the Council funded or supported during 2022:



Source: ESCC VCSE Team.

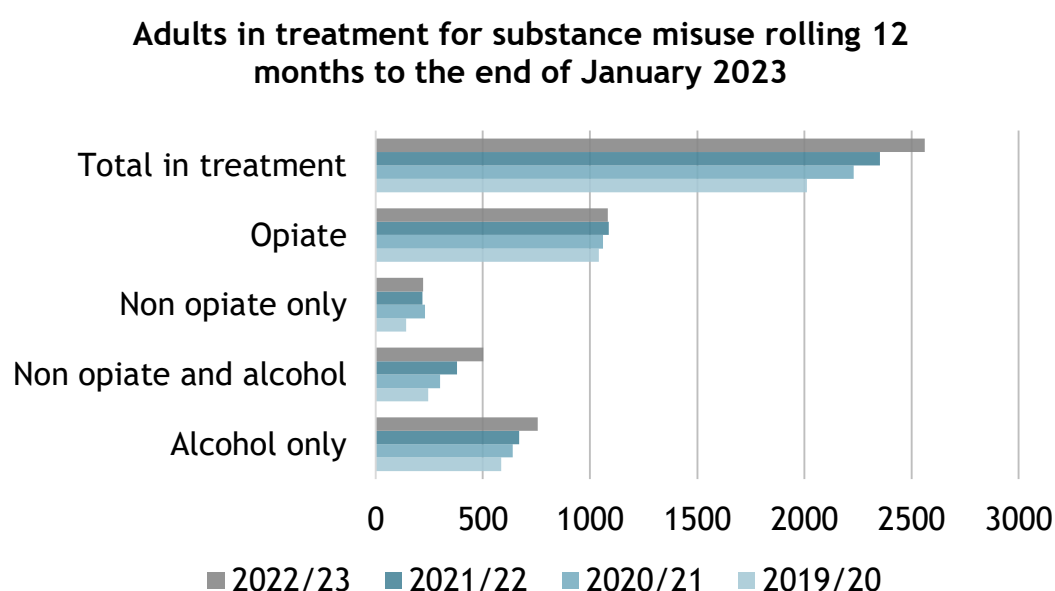
A quarter of the population volunteer at least once a month in East Sussex, giving their time to local causes, groups, and communities that aim to make communities a better place where helping people themselves is part of everyday life. The sense of community that volunteering brings enables people to feel connected and that they are making a positive difference.

Community Safety

Drug and alcohol-related harm

The number of East Sussex adults in substance misuse treatment in the 12 months to the end of January 2023 increased by 8.88% to 2,562, compared to the 12 months to the end of January 2022. This is notable when compared to the national data which saw an overall 0.33% decrease in the number of adults in treatment year on year. Of these 19.63% (503) were in treatment for use of alcohol and non-opiates, this is an increase of 32.72% on the previous year, and 106.15% on the 12 months to 31st January 2020. Nationally, the increase between the 12 months to the end of January 2023 from the end of January 2022 was 2.9%.

The proportion in treatment for opiate use dropped to 42.27% from 46.24% in the previous year while the number in treatment for opiate use dropped slightly from 1,088 to 1,083 individuals. The number of adults in treatment solely for alcohol use increased 13.0% year on year, compared to a 1.12% increase nationally.



Source: National Drug Treatment Monitoring System

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and

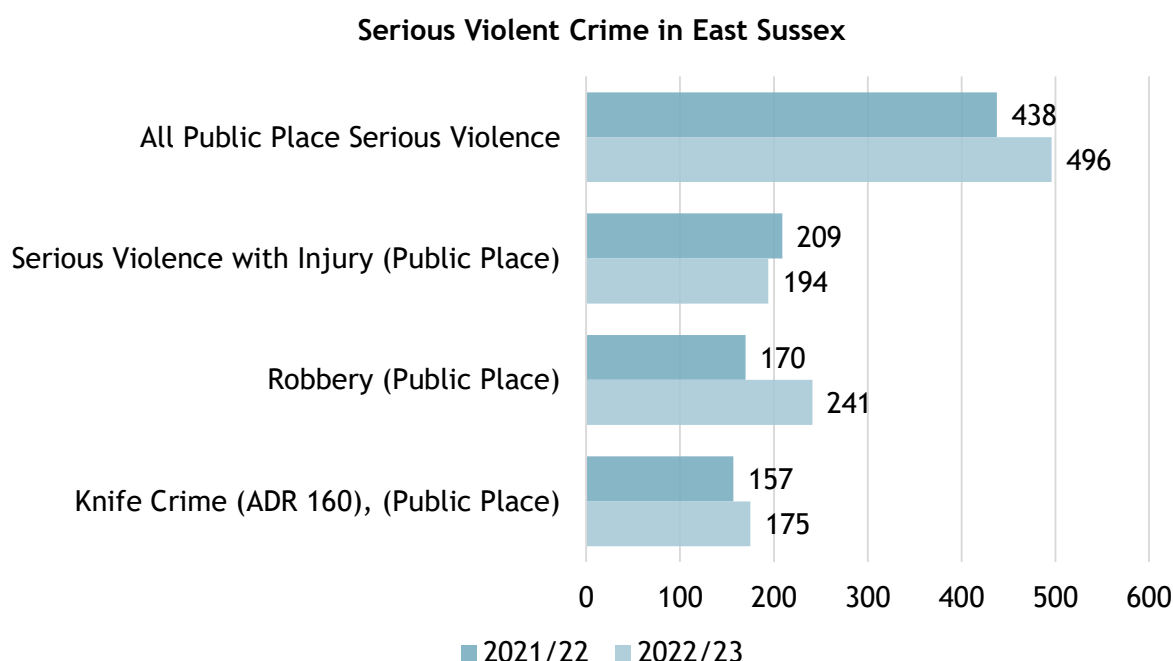
referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. Nationally in 2022, the NRM received 16,938 referrals of potential victims of modern slavery, which represents a 33% increase in referrals compared to 2021 (12,706). 2022 recorded the highest number of annual referrals since the NRM began in 2009. Of all referrals nationally, 52% (8,854) were for potential victims who claimed exploitation as adults whilst 41% (7,019) claimed exploitation as children, and for the remaining cases the age at exploitation was unknown. 80% of potential child victims referred to the NRM in 2022 were male (5,607) and 20% were female (1,978) and the most common form of exploitation reported for potential child victims was criminal exploitation. UK nationals represented the second highest nationality referred to the NRM. Of all the UK nationals referred, 80% were potential child victims.

In East Sussex, two adults and nine minors (child 17 or under) who were potential victims of modern slavery and human trafficking were referred by the authority through the NRM in 2022, compared to two adults and ten minors in 2021 (Source: National Referral Mechanism statistics).

Serious Violence

Serious Violence is one of the areas that is under increasing national scrutiny. We have an active focus on this through our partnership working, however rates of serious violence in East Sussex are low.

In 2022/23, there were 496 Public Place Serious Violent Crimes in East Sussex. This was an increase of 13.2% compared to the previous year (438). The highest percentage increase has been for Robberies (41.8%). There has been a decrease of 7.2% in Serious Violence with Injury and an increase in Knife Crime of 11.5%.



Source: ESCC Adult Social Care and Health Department

Child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation

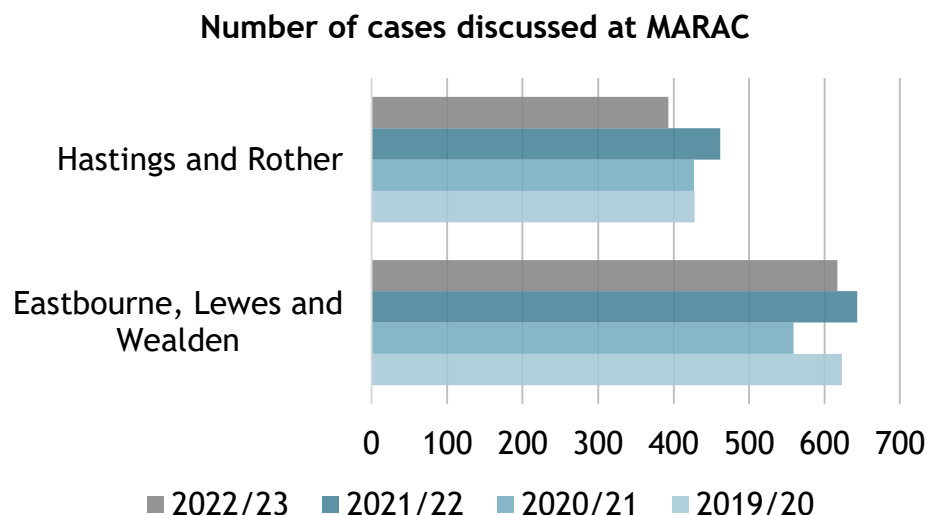
Between April 2022 and January 2023, 33 East Sussex children were experiencing either criminal or sexual exploitation or both. This is in line with the number of children experiencing exploitation in the same period the previous year.

Three quarters of children experiencing exploitation were male and 85% were aged 15 or older. These children receive support from the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group. 21 children were removed from MACE during the year due to a lowering of their risk level, the average time it took for a child to be removed from MACE was just under six months.

Domestic violence and abuse

During 2022, nationally there was a 2% increase in referrals into Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) compared to 2021. The MARACs are meetings where the highest risk domestic abuse cases are discussed. In East Sussex there was a 4% decrease for the Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden (ELW) MARAC, and an

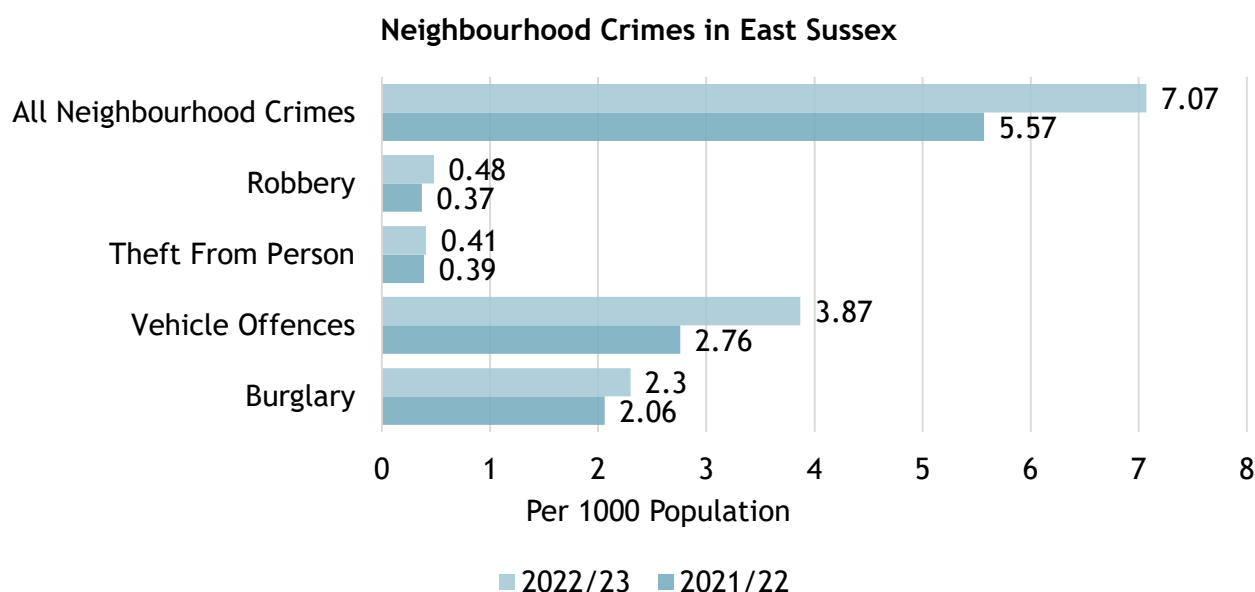
15% decrease for Hastings and Rother (HR) MARAC. This is the first time there has been a decrease in referrals to a MARAC in East Sussex since 2015, aside from the impact of national lockdowns which saw a 3% decrease in referrals to HR MARAC in 2020. However, East Sussex has a historically high number of referrals into MARAC and both ELW and HR remain over the recommended number of 40 cases per 10,000 population.



Source: ESCC Adult Social Care and Health Department

Neighbourhood Crime

Neighbourhood crime includes burglary, vehicle offenses, theft from person and robbery. In total, neighbourhood crimes in East Sussex increased by 27% in 2022/23 compared to 2021/22, with the biggest increase observed for vehicle offenses with an increase of 40.5%. However, neighbourhood crime rates in East Sussex are lower than the national average across all categories.



Source: ESCC Adult Social Care and Health Department

Road Safety

The rate of people being killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions in East Sussex has historically been higher than the average for England. For the three-year period 2017-2019 (the latest period not impacted by the national lockdowns) the average rate of people killed or seriously injured for East Sussex was 68.1 per 100,000 population compared to 43.2 in England. Note that standard road safety reporting is based on a three-year reporting period. 2017-2019 has been used as this is the last period not affected by COVID-19.

Although East Sussex has had higher rates of people killed or seriously injured than the national average and many other areas, direct comparisons between rates are uncertain due to both methods of data collection and recording across police forces, and the differences in road networks and infrastructure.

The number of people killed or seriously injured in East Sussex has fluctuated in recent years. Please note the 2020 and 2021 figures were affected by COVID-19 restrictions/lockdowns. The figures also include crashes on the Strategic Road Network which is managed by National Highways.

State of the County 2023: Focus on East Sussex

Number of people killed or seriously injured in East Sussex

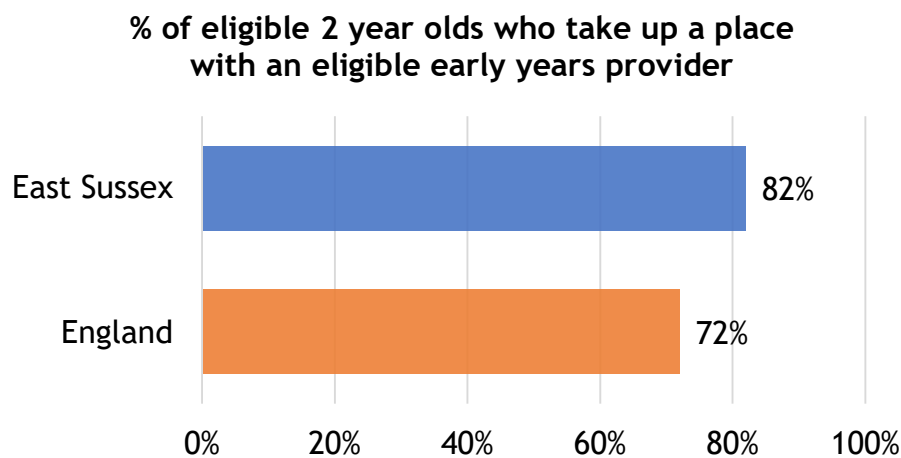
| Year | Seriously injured | Fatalities | Total |
|------|-------------------|------------|-------|
| 2022 | 374 | 20 | 394 |
| 2021 | 321 | 18 | 339 |
| 2020 | 278 | 17 | 295 |
| 2019 | 395 | 14 | 409 |
| 2018 | 334 | 21 | 355 |
| 2017 | 344 | 26 | 370 |
| 2016 | 358 | 24 | 382 |

Source: Sussex Safer Roads Partnership

Schools

Early Years

East Sussex received 1,598 applications for a funded place for eligible 2-year-olds in the spring 2023 funding period. Of these, 275 children were not eligible to receive funding. 82% (1,085) of the remaining 1,323 eligible children have accessed a place with an early year's provider, compared to the national average of 72%.



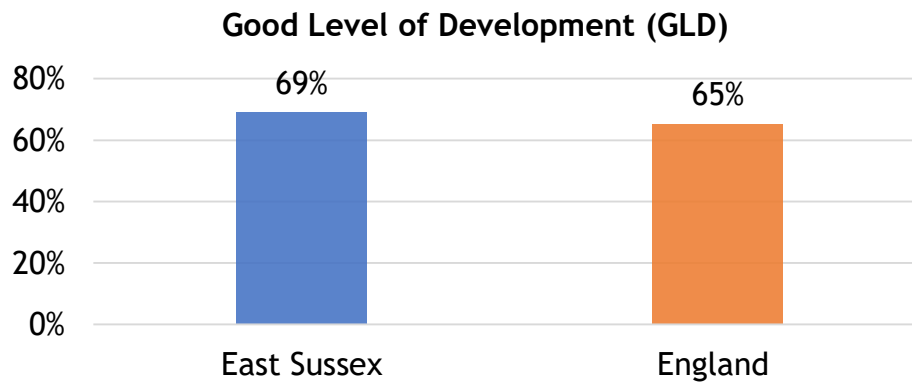
Source: ESCC Children's Services

Attainment

Academic Year 21/22

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Early Years Good Level of Development is achieving the expected standard for: communication and language; physical development; personal, social and emotional development; literacy and mathematics.



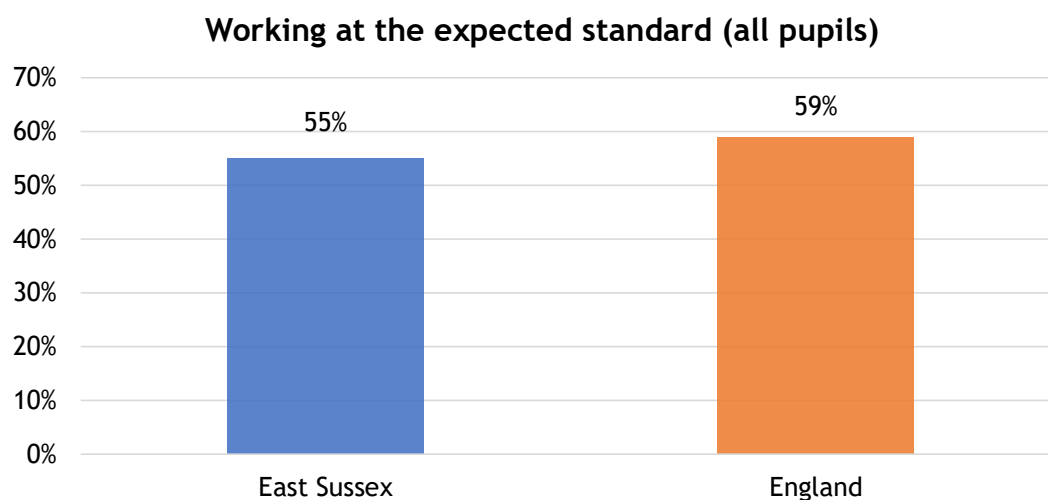
Source: ESCC Children's Services

The percentage point gap between children eligible for free school meals (FSM) achieving a good level of development and their peers is -16.5. The national average gap for this cohort for 2022 is -19.6.

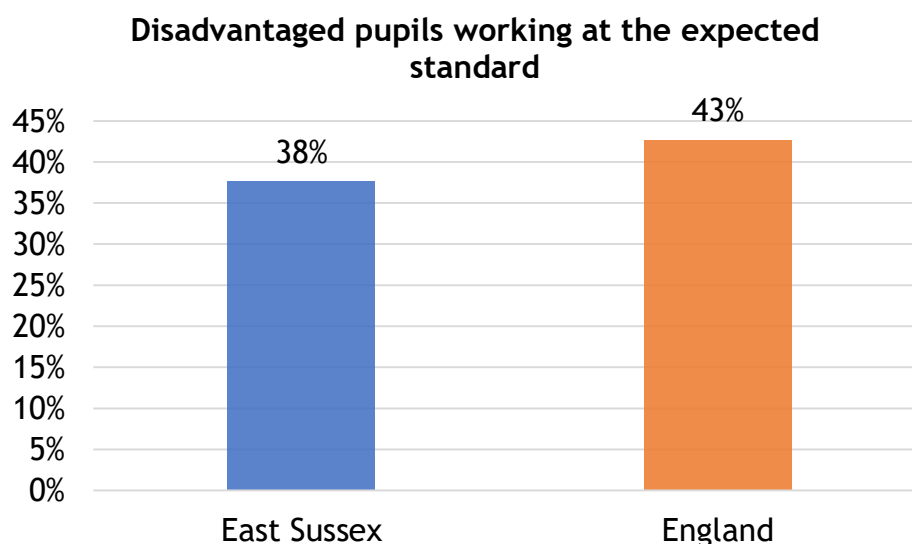
Key Stage 2 Attainment

Key Stage 2: Reading, writing and mathematics.

The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths combined at Key Stage 2.



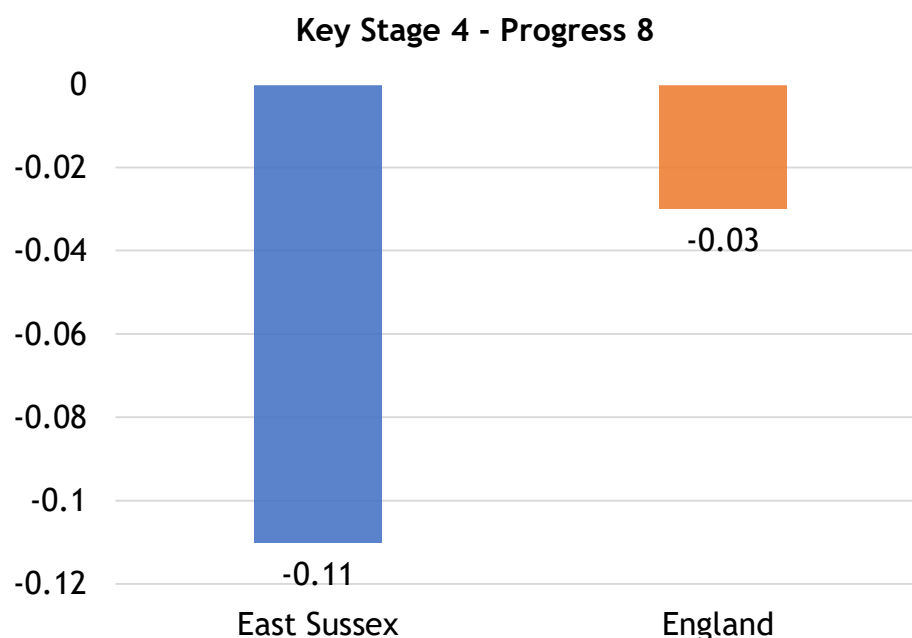
Source: ESCC Children's Services



Source: ESCC Children's Services

Key Stage 4: Progress 8

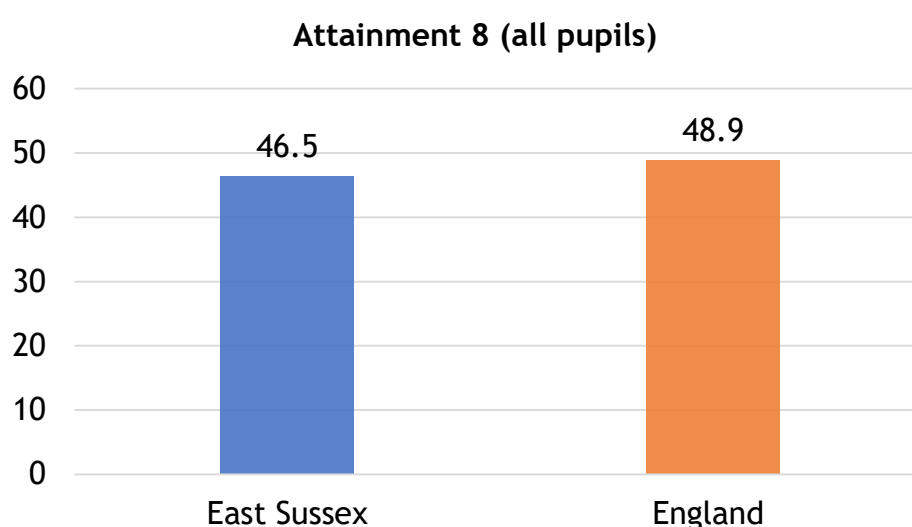
Progress 8 is a measure of students' progress across the Attainment 8 subjects from the end of primary school (Key Stage 2) to the end of secondary school (Key Stage 4). Scores for East Sussex are below national.



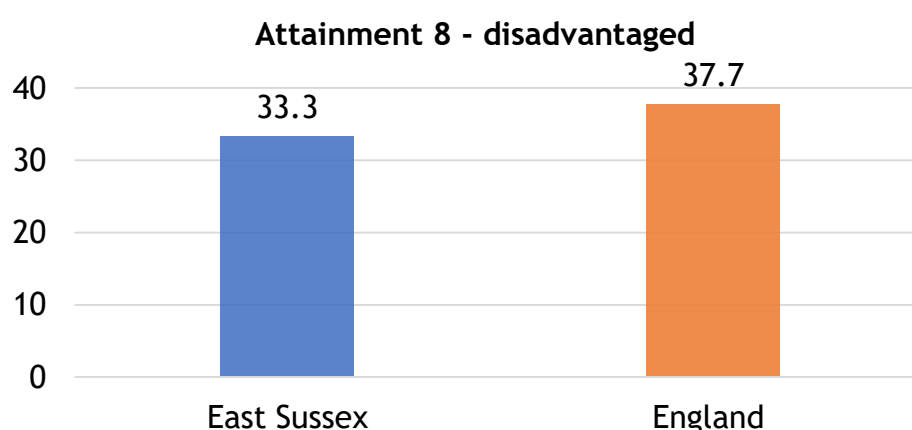
Source: ESCC Children's Services

Key Stage 4: Attainment 8

Attainment 8 is the students' average achievement across eight subjects: English, mathematics, three English Baccalaureate (EBacc) subjects (from sciences, computer science, geography, history and languages), and three further subjects, from the range of EBacc subjects, or any other GCSE or approved, high-value arts, academic, or vocational qualifications.



Source: ESCC Children's Services



Source: ESCC Children's Services

Attendance

The pandemic has had a significant adverse impact on school attendance, with

both nationally and locally, the proportion of children persistently absent from school, defined as missing more than 10% of sessions, doubling. The Government has published new attendance guidance to clarify responsibilities for local authorities, schools, parents and carers. By September 2023, the expectation is that all councils should strengthen their oversight of attendance through regular individual dialogue with all schools, and provide whole family early help support, free of any charge, to schools and all families of children whose attendance is less than 50%.

Absence as of 31st March 2023:

| School type | Persistent Absence (%) | Overall Absence (%) |
|----------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| East Sussex Primary Schools* | 18.96 | 6.38 |
| East Sussex Secondary Schools* | 30.41 | 10.36 |
| East Sussex Special Schools* | 44.81 | 15.67 |
| East Sussex schools overall* | 24.29 | 8.24 |
| FFT National Primary Schools** | 20.0 | 6.3 |
| FFT National Secondary Schools** | 27.0 | 9.2 |

* Please note that this local data is unverified and does not include schools that do not use SIMS for recording attendance. Persistent absence is the number of pupils with attendance of 90% or lower, expressed as a percentage of pupils on the roll. Overall absence is the total number of sessions missed as a percentage of the total number of possible sessions available.

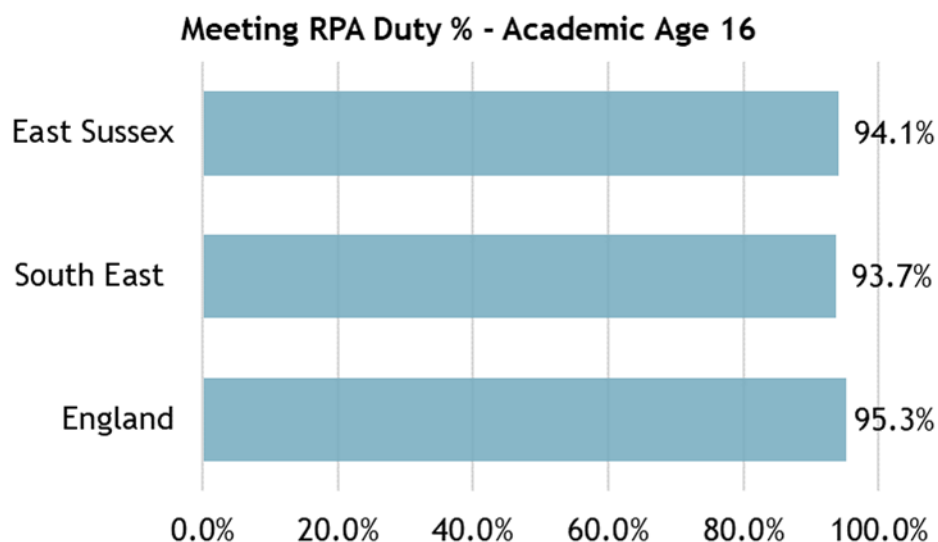
** The Fisher Family Trust (FFT) Attendance Tracker provides a national figure, it is based on the approximately 9,500 schools that participate. This is out of about 22,000 schools and so the FFT national figure needs to be seen in that context.

East Sussex has high levels of suspension and exclusion, and these are rising further in line with national trends. School leaders are experiencing increased levels and complexity of need in their school populations and the demand for support services remains high.

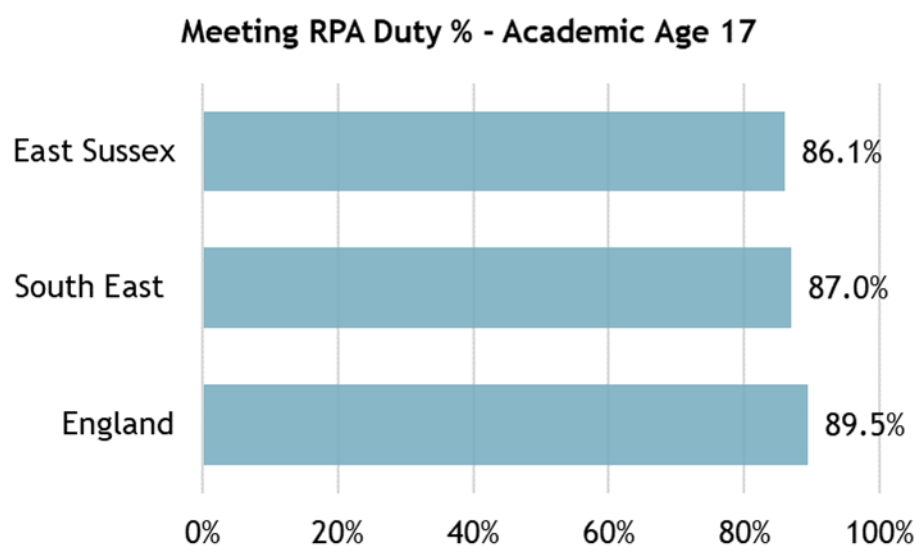
| Academic Year 2021-22 | |
|--|--------|
| The percentage of exclusions in primary schools per school population in that year: | |
| (i) Fixed term | 1.81% |
| (ii) Permanent | 0.04% |
| The percentage of exclusions in secondary schools per school population in that year: | |
| (i) Fixed term | 19.19% |
| (ii) Permanent | 0.06% |

Young people in education, employment and training

94.1% of young people at academic age 16 (year 12) and 86.1% age 17 (year 13) were participating in education, training, or employment with training under the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) Duty in quarter 4. However, 96.4% of 16 years old and 93.6% of 17 year olds were participating in some form of education, training or employment - this includes those in employment without DfE regulated training, or part-time/temporary employment. The number of 16- and 17-year-olds who were not in education, employment or training was 4.1%, below pre-COVID levels of 4.4% Jan 2020. There are concerns about the impact of the further reduction in the vocational/work-based learning offer for young people, with the national Traineeship programme ceasing from summer 2023, as well as European Social Fund not in education, training or employment (NEET) provision.



Source: ESCC Children's Services



Source: ESCC Children's Services

School places

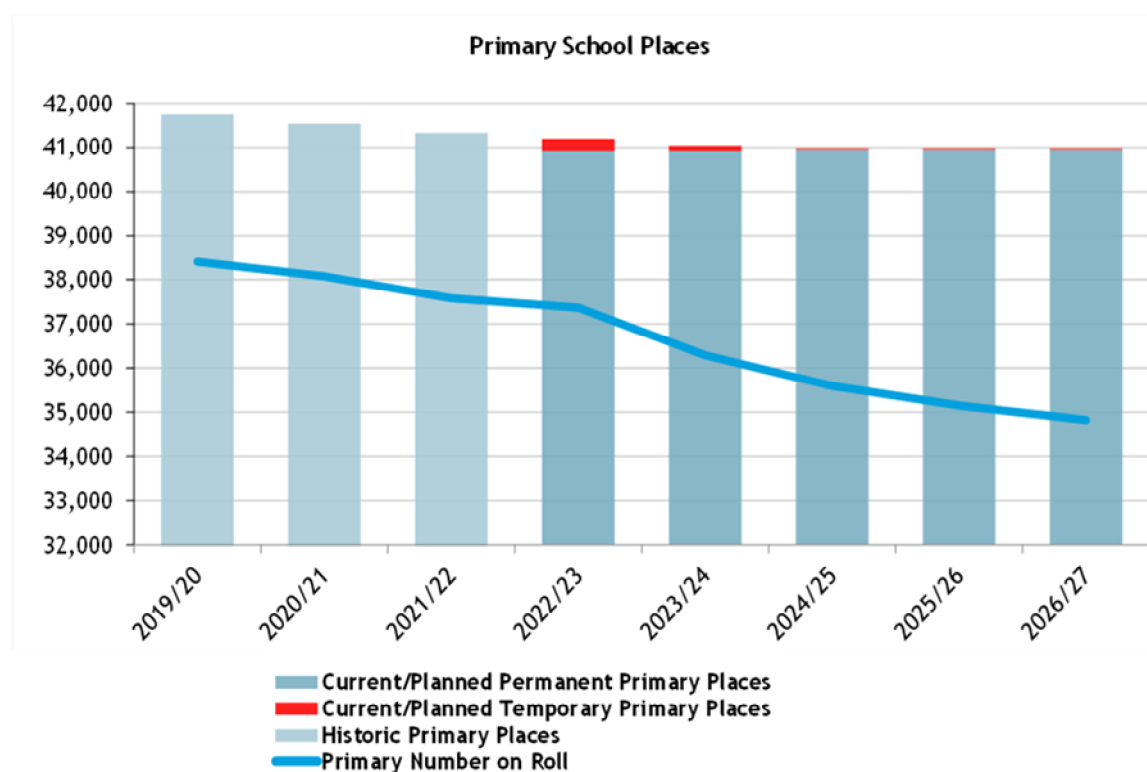
Although our overall population of under 18s is expected to increase slightly over the period 2023 - 2027, the highest rate of growth is expected in those aged 16 - 17, with an expected fall in numbers of children aged 4 - 10.

| Age/year | 2023 | 2026 | % change 2023-2026 | 2027 | 2031 | % change 2027-2031 |
|----------|--------|--------|-----------------------|--------|--------|-----------------------|
| 0-3 | 19,650 | 20,150 | 2.5% | 20,180 | 20,840 | 3.3% |
| 4-10 | 39,190 | 38,870 | -0.8% | 38,770 | 39,390 | 1.6% |
| 11-15 | 31,180 | 31,390 | 0.7% | 31,160 | 30,600 | -1.8% |
| 16-17 | 12,280 | 12,870 | 4.8% | 13,190 | 12,890 | -2.3% |

Source: ESCC population projections by age. Interim - April 2023, LDS-based, dwelling-led, numbers rounded to 10

Note: Care should be taken when using the projected population figures above. Due to ONS revised mid-year population estimates not currently being available these are interim projections based on dwelling-led population projections. Please see the note under the Population section for further details.

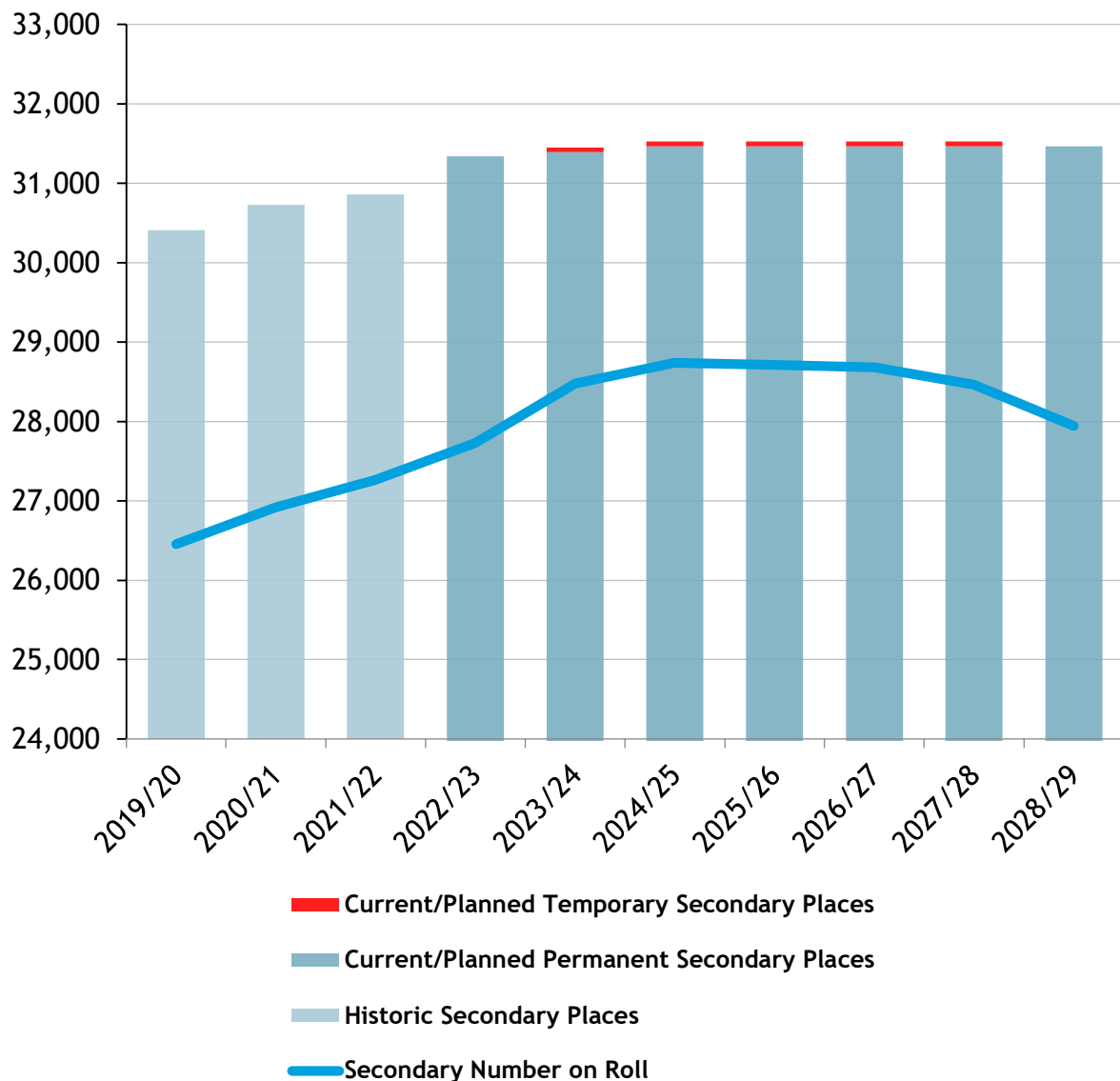
The total numbers of pupils in primary schools peaked in 2018/19 and are now in decline. As a result the temporary additional capacity in schools that was put in place to accommodate the peak will be removed, leading to a net reduction in capacity of 240 places, between 2022/23 and 2026/27.



Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model, May 2023

In contrast, secondary pupil numbers are expected to continue to increase and peak around 2024/25. 605 additional permanent places and 60 additional temporary places will be added between 2022/23 and 2024/25 to meet forecast demand in local areas.

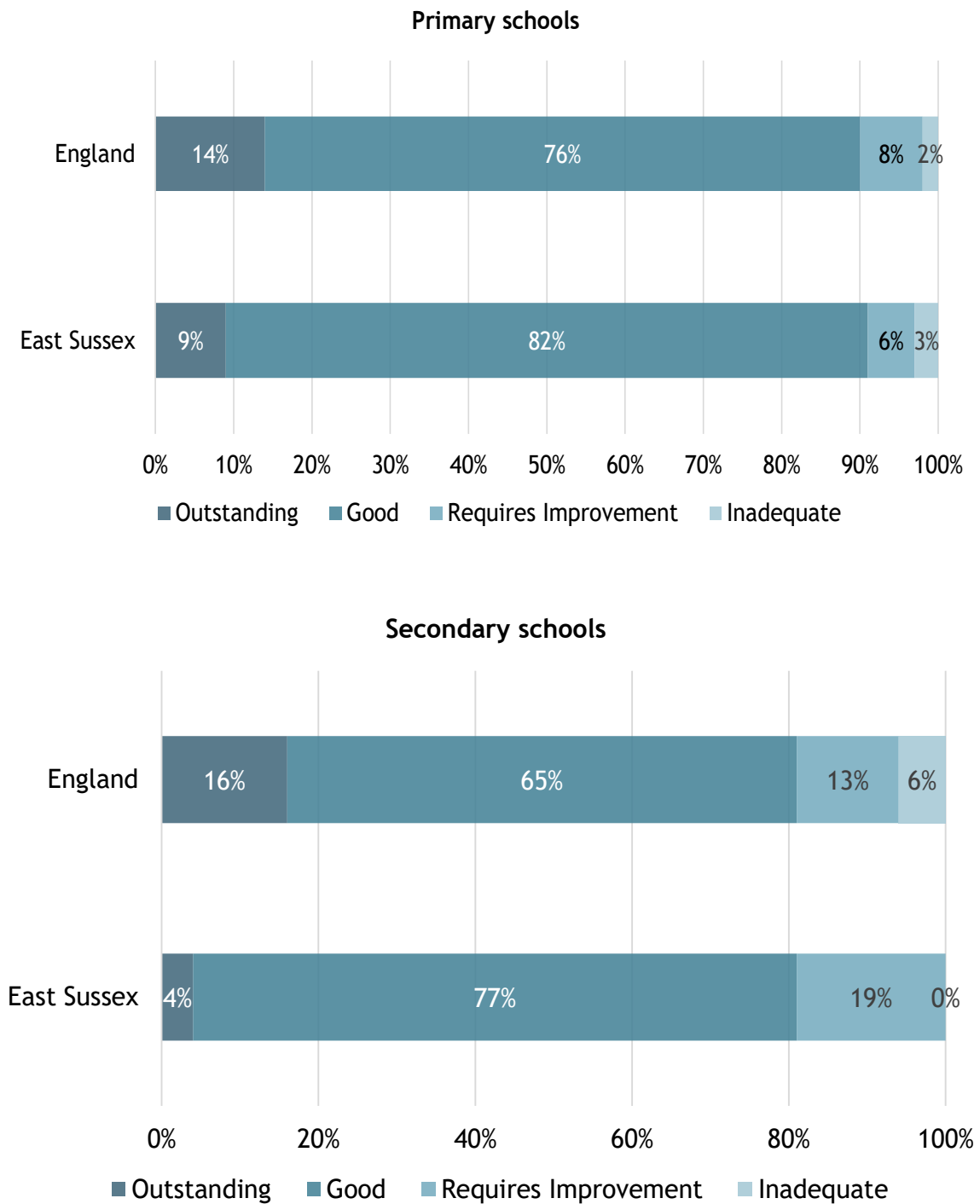
Secondary School Places

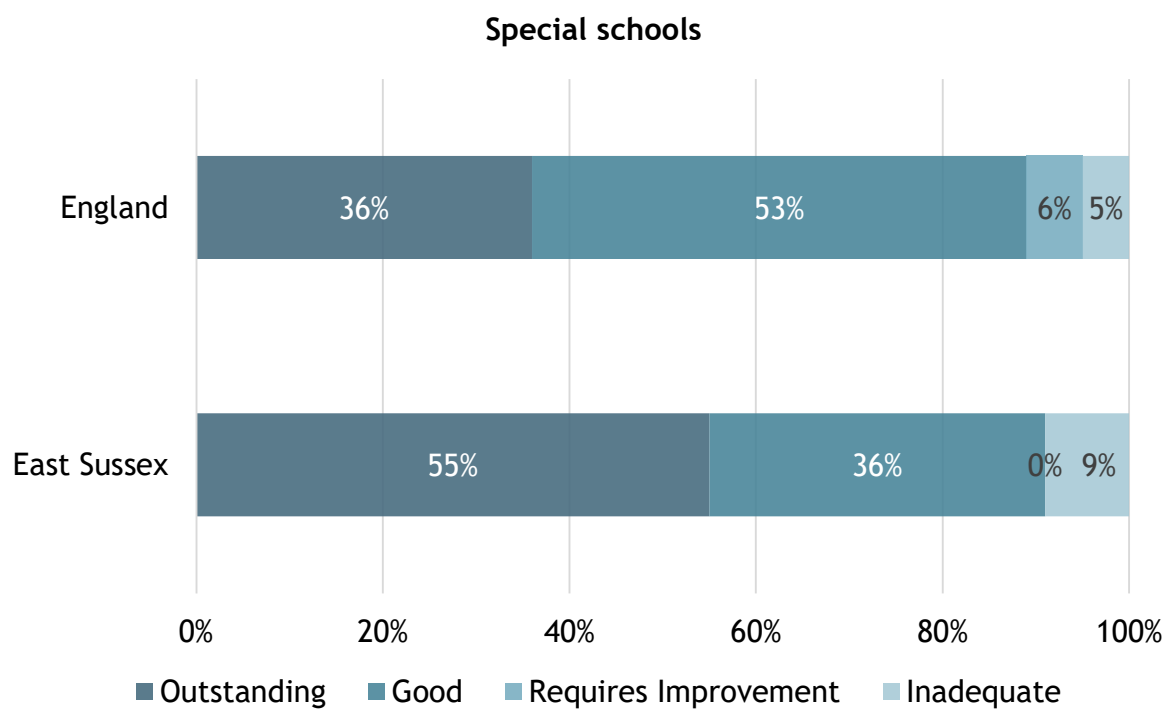


Source: ESCC Pupil Forecasting Model, May 2023

State funded schools, percentage overall effectiveness Ofsted 2021

The majority of schools in East Sussex are outstanding or good as assessed by Ofsted.





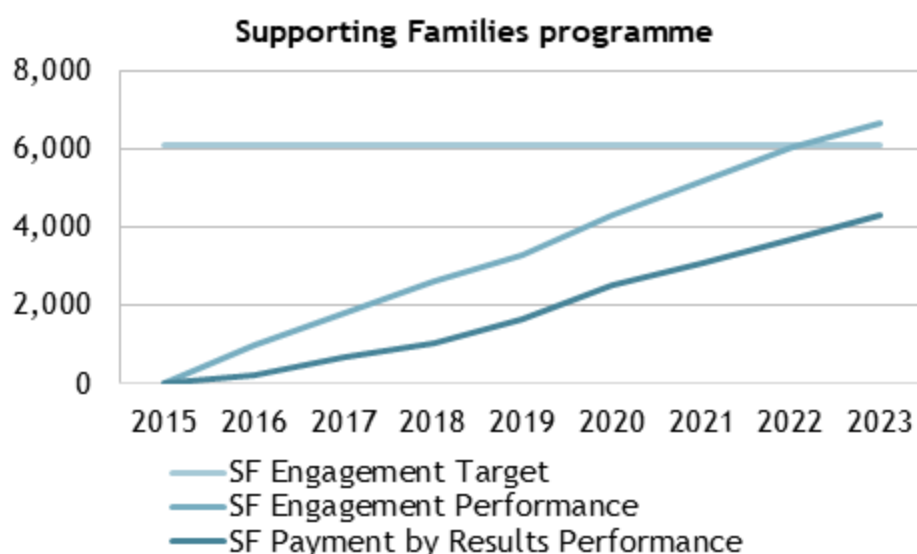
Children

Supporting Families

Our Supporting Families programme supports vulnerable families who are facing multiple challenges to achieve better outcomes. The key outcomes for the programme are:

- Getting a good education.
- Good early years development.
- Improved mental and physical health.
- Promoting recovery and reducing harm from substance use.
- Improved family relationships.
- Children safe from abuse and exploitation.
- Crime prevention and tackling crime.
- Safe from domestic abuse.
- Secure housing.
- Financial stability.

We receive payment from Government for each family that we help to achieve significant and sustained progress across each of the outcomes where they need support. By the end of 2022/23, 6,633 families had received or were receiving support and 4,276 had achieved Payment by Results outcomes.

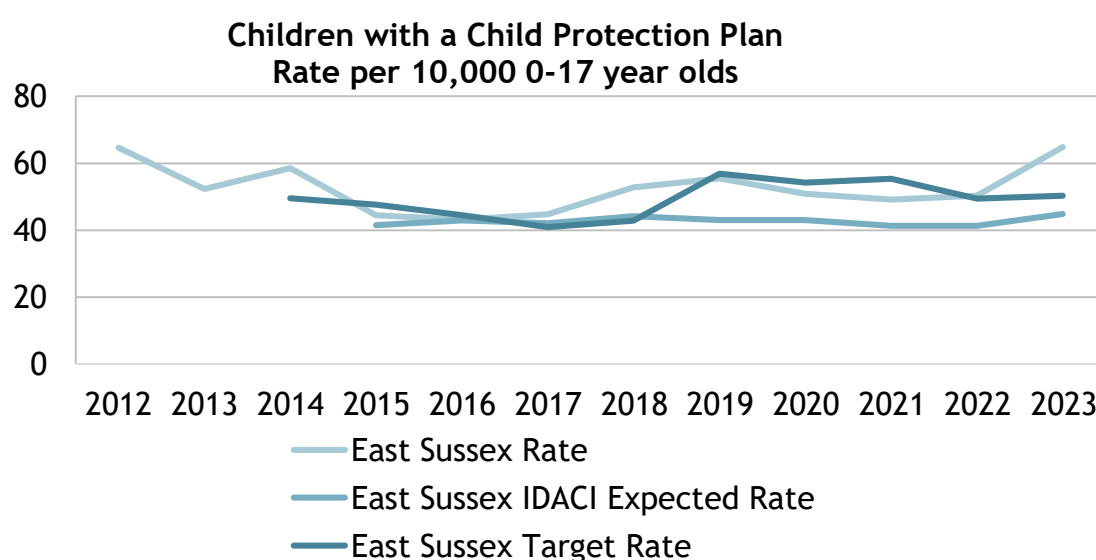


Source: ESCC Children's Services

Child Protection (CP) Plans

At the end of March 2023, the number of children with CP plans was 691, a rate of 64.8 per 10,000 children. This is above the expected rate benchmarked for child deprivation; the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).

This increase reflects the significantly higher levels of demand and complexity seen over the past four years due to the pandemic, the impact of cost-of-living pressures and an increase in child and adult mental health concerns. We have a continued emphasis on enabling children to live safely at home where possible, resulting in relatively lower rates of looked after children.

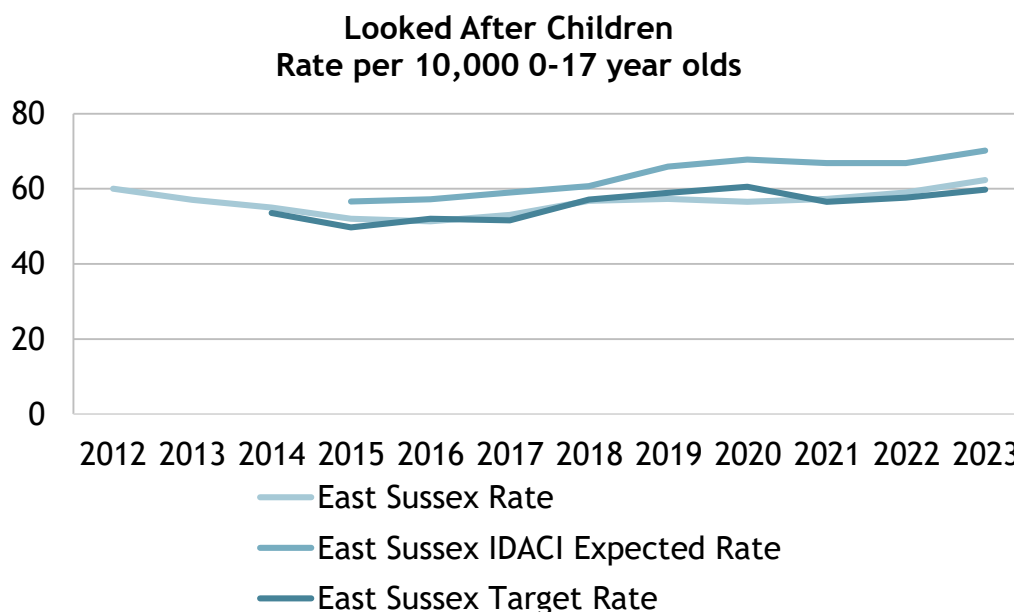


Source: ESCC Children's Services

Looked After Children

At the end of March 2023, the number of LAC was 664, a rate of 62.3 per 10,000 children. Of the 664 children, 73 are Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC), this group represented 25% of our new entrants to care in 2022-23.

Our strategy of using Early Help, Child in Need and CP plans to help families to stay together has enabled us to have a rate of Looked After Children (LAC) which is below the expected rate benchmarked for child deprivation.



Source: ESCC Children's Services

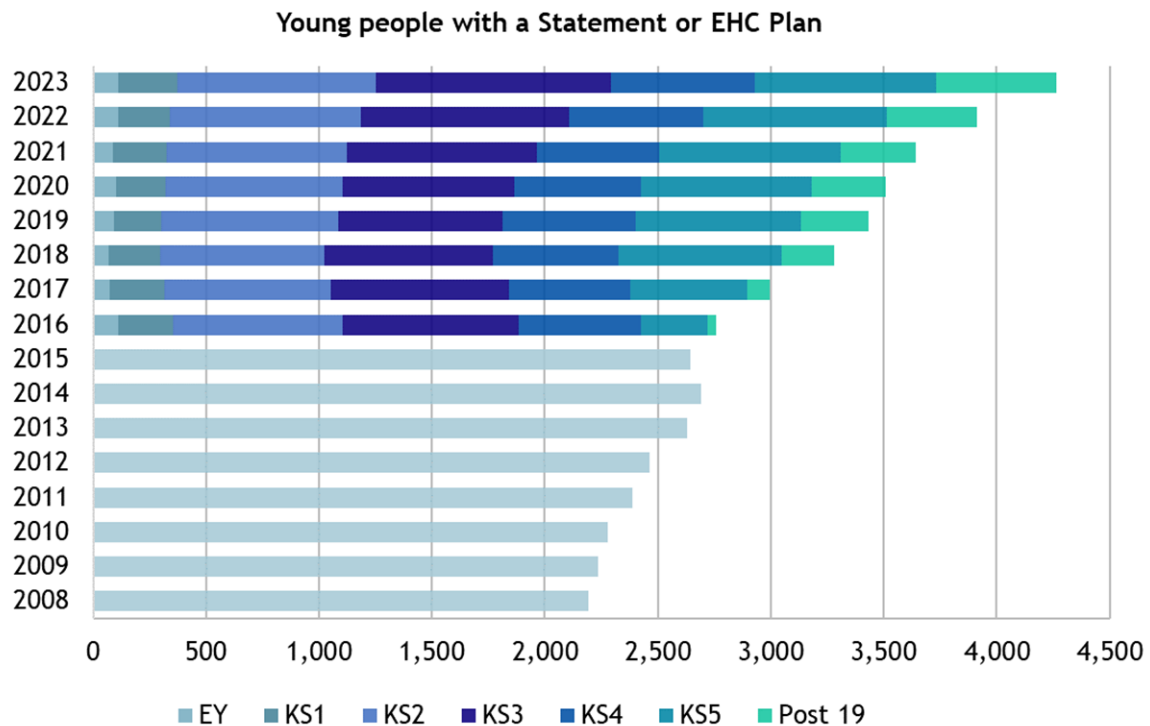
Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

In line with the national picture, East Sussex continues to see significant increases in demands for statutory assessments and specialist provision for children and young people with SEND.

Over 40% of all children and young people aged 0-25 with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in East Sussex are placed in special schools which is over three percentage points higher than the England average. 47.8% of all new EHCPs were placed in mainstream schools, compared to 66.9% nationally. Council funded high-cost placements at Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools have increased significantly since 2015 and account for 9.8% of all EHCPs - greater than the England average of 6.1%.

EHCPs of SEND maintained by the Council increased by 87% from 2010 (2,280) to 2023 (4,266). Most of the increase since 2015 has been in the Key Stage 5 and Post 19 groups; this is predominantly due to young people retaining EHCPs Post-16.

The number of school-aged pupils with an EHCP is forecast to rise in East Sussex by 11.8% over the next three years, having increased by 11.6% in the last three years.



Source: ESCC Children's Social Care Department

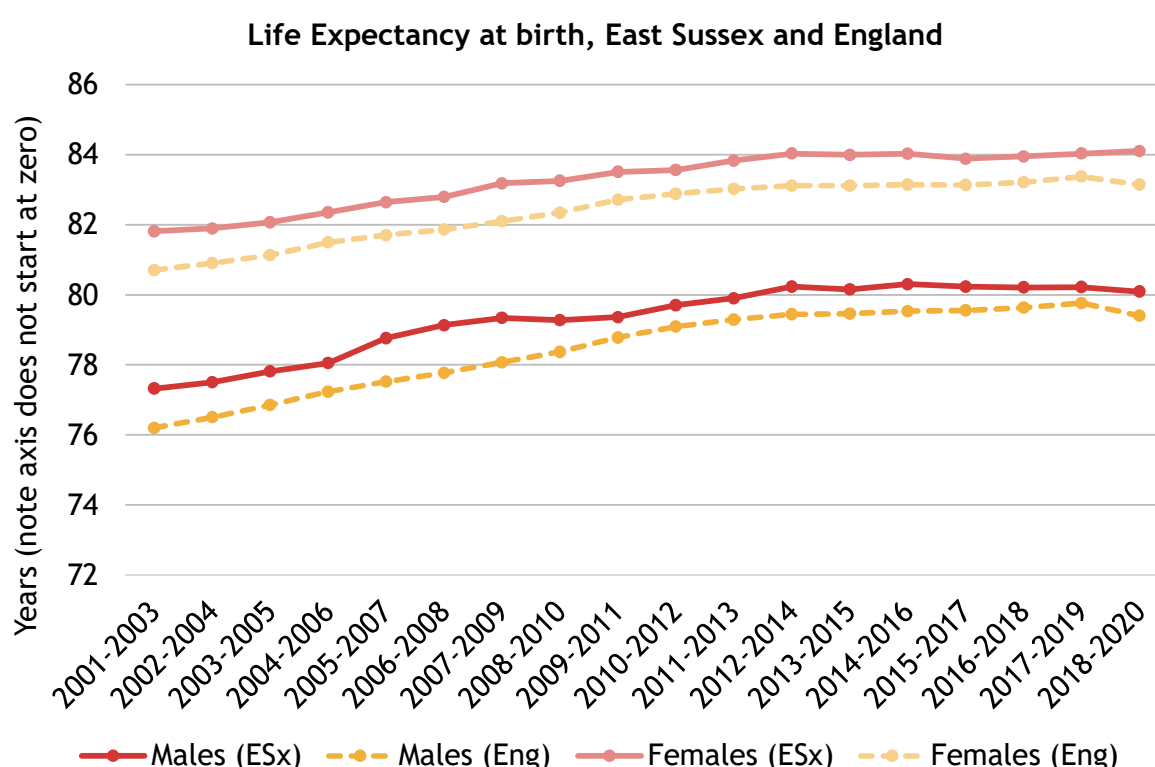
Note: Until Sep-14 a Statement of SEN could remain in place until the young person reached the age of 19. Since the SEND reforms were introduced from Sep-14 EHCPs can remain in place until the young person reaches the age of 25.

Source: ESCC Children's Services

Health

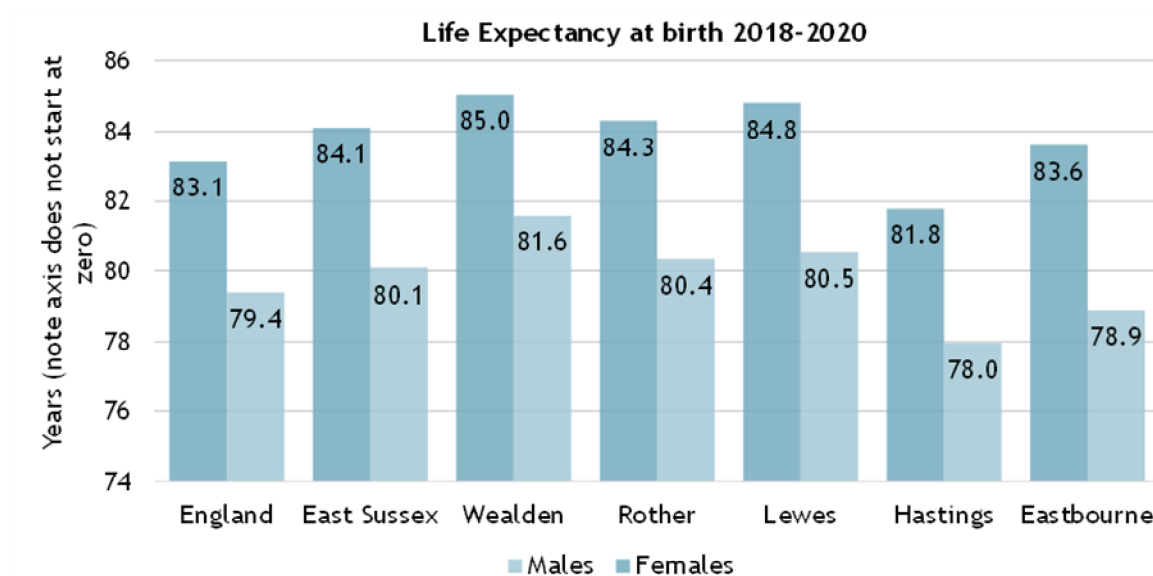
Life expectancy at birth

Life expectancy at birth is an estimate of the average number of years that a person born can expect to live. East Sussex has consistently had a higher life expectancy for both men and women than the national average. Life expectancy has generally increased gradually since the early 2000s, however this increase has plateaued, or begun to reduce, in recent years.



Source: ONS

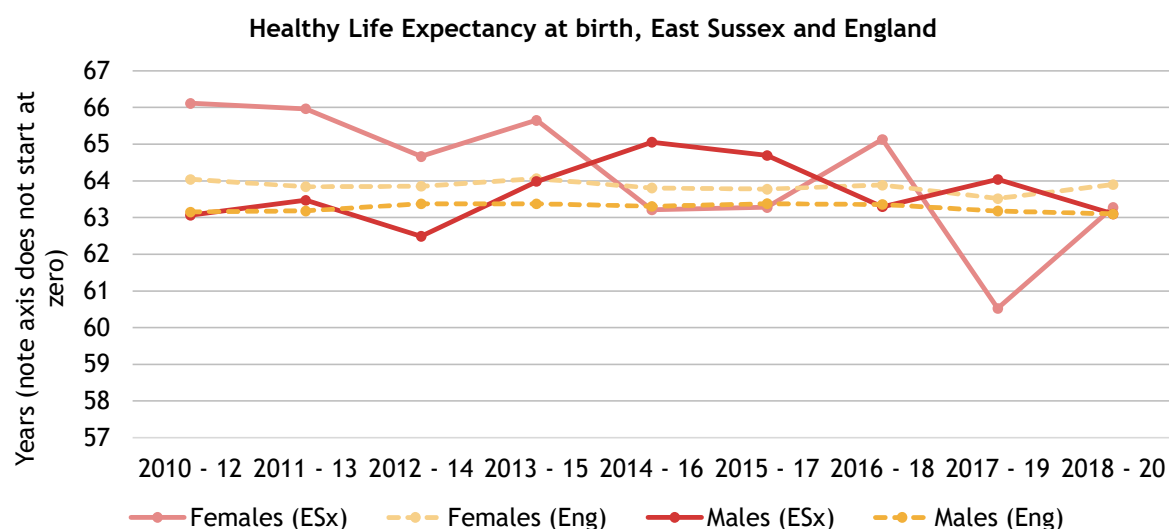
Wealden has the highest levels of life expectancy at birth for both men and women in the county. The lowest levels are in Hastings.



Source: ONS

Healthy Life Expectancy

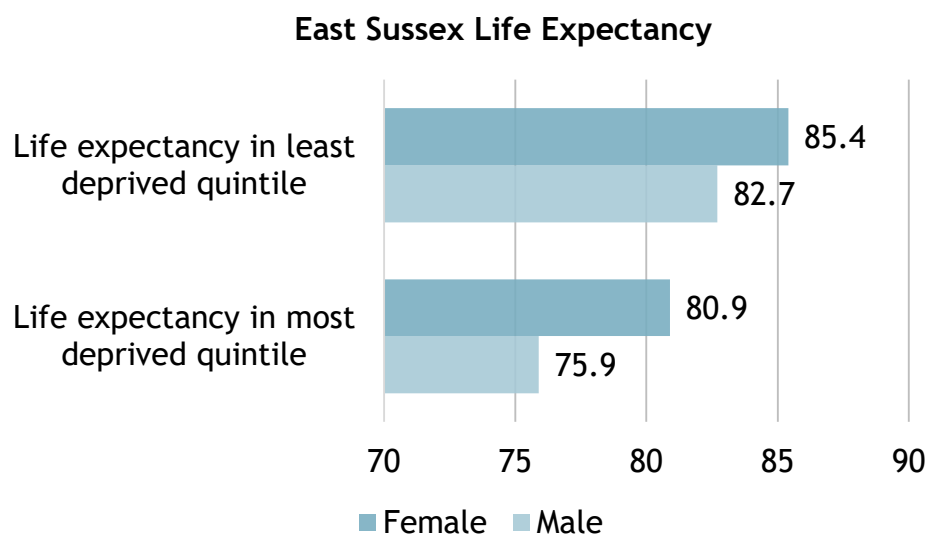
Healthy life expectancy is an estimate of the number of years lived in ‘very good’ or ‘good’ general health, based on how individuals perceive their general health. Healthy life expectancy figures in East Sussex have fluctuated significantly in recent periods. This is most likely due to the small sample size of the survey (Annual Population Survey) rather than actual changes in healthy life expectancy within the population.



Source: ONS

Deprivation and Life Expectancy

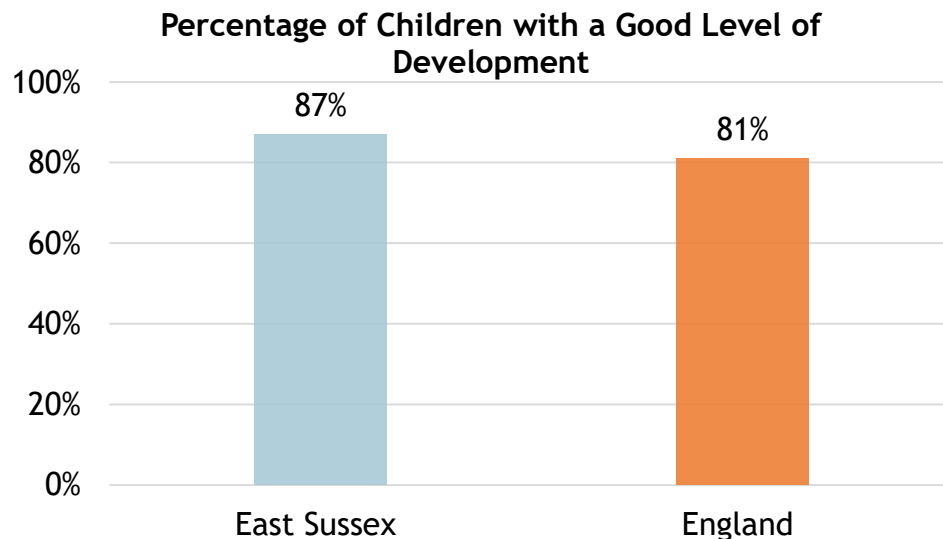
There is a gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas of East Sussex, with the biggest causes of death associated with these gaps being circulatory diseases, cancers, and respiratory diseases. Therefore, people in more deprived areas are dying from these causes, on average, at a younger age than in the least deprived areas. For females, this gap amounts to 4.5 years, while for males it is 6.8 years.



Source: Segment Tool (phe.gov.uk)

Child Development

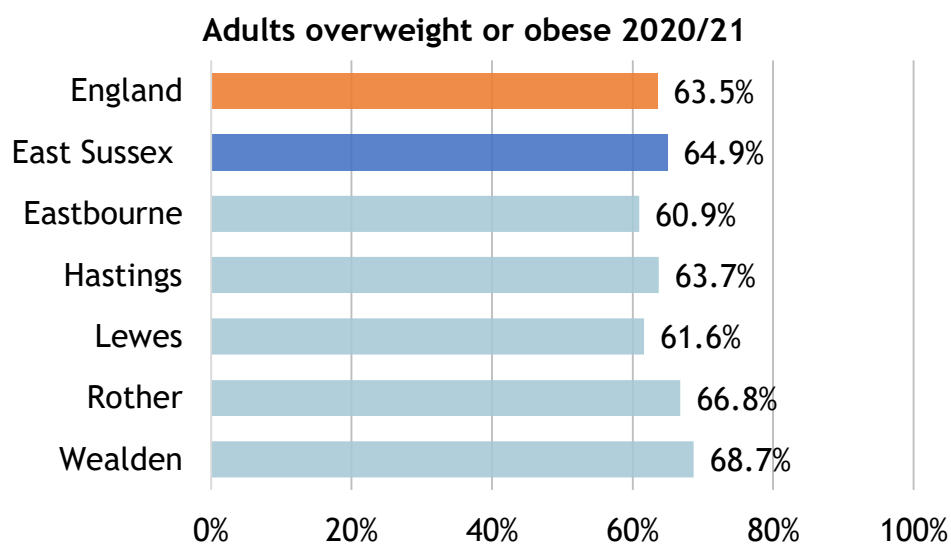
In 2021, 87% of 2-2 ½ year old children within East Sussex are achieving a good level of development, compared to the national average of 81%



Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Excess Weight

Wealden has the highest percentage of adults overweight or obese in East Sussex in 2020/21, at 69%. The lowest percentage in the county was Eastbourne, 61%

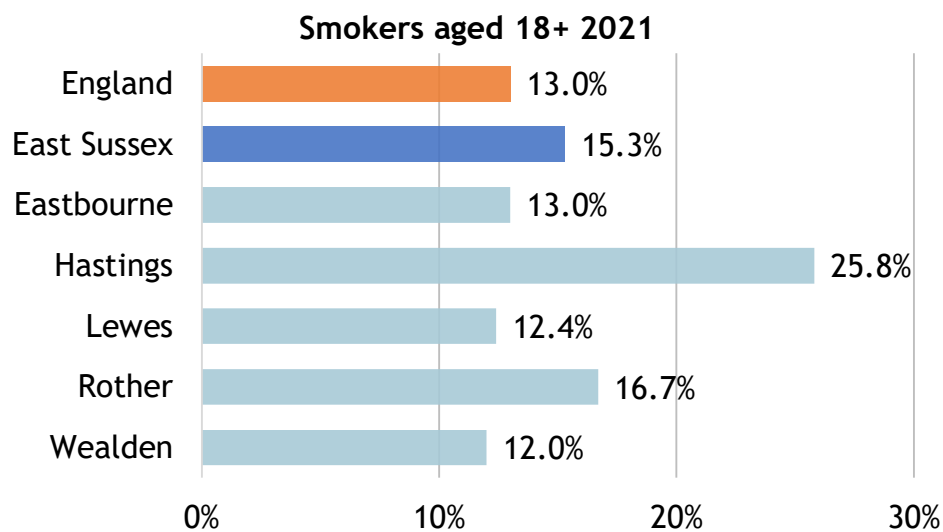


Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Prevalence of Smokers

Hastings has the highest prevalence of smoking in East Sussex in 2021 at almost

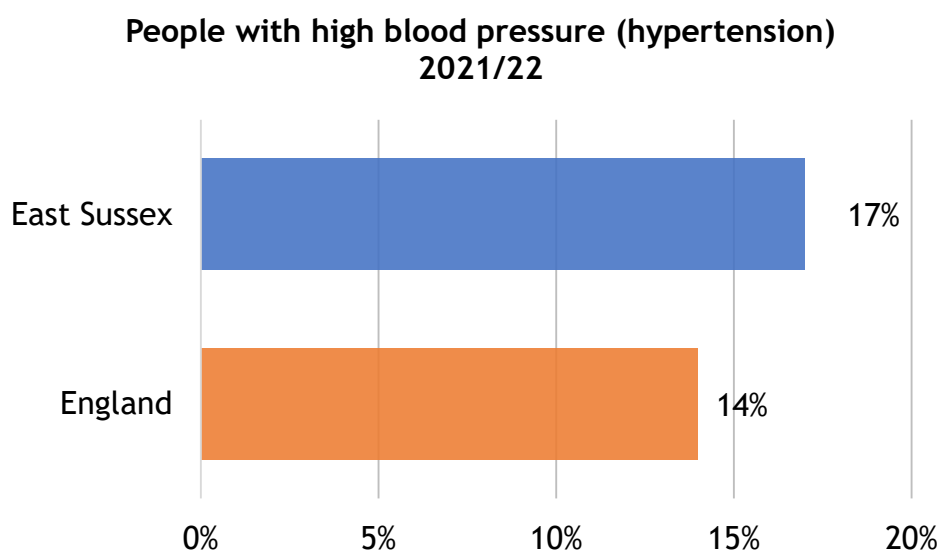
26%. The lowest prevalence is at Wealden with 12%.



Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Prevalence of Hypertension

East Sussex has a higher prevalence of diagnosed high blood pressure compared to England.



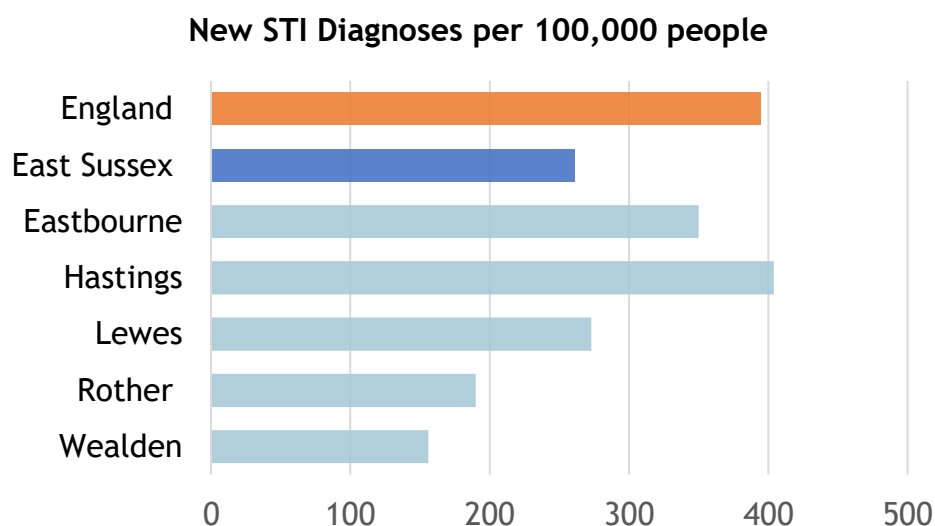
Public Health Outcomes Framework

Physical Activity

Almost 70% of people in East Sussex did 150 or more minutes of physical activity per week in 2020/21. Almost 20% did less than 30 minutes per week with the remaining 11% falling in between these categories (source: Public Health Outcomes Framework).

Sexual Health

East Sussex has fewer new Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) diagnoses per 100,000 population compared to England. Within the county rates are lower than for England except in Hastings which is similar to the national rate.



Note: This data does not include diagnoses of Chlamydia and only represents people aged 25 or younger. Source: UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)

Mental health

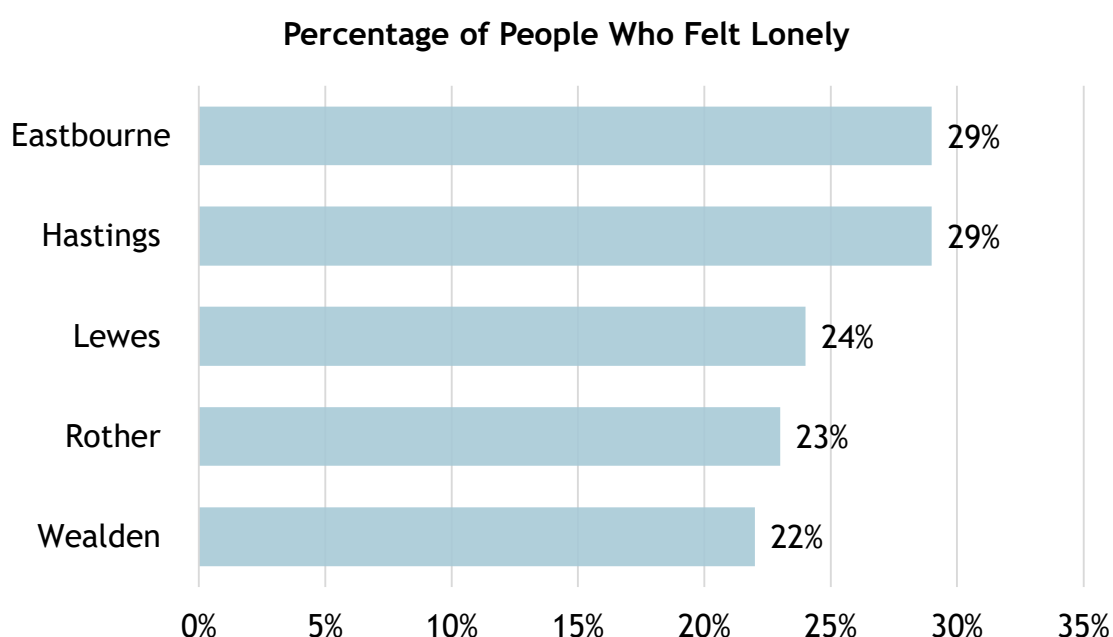
It is estimated that 1 in 6 people will have a mental health condition at any one time. Latest survey figures show a slightly higher percentage of adults in East Sussex reported high anxiety and low satisfaction with life compared to the national average.

| Indicator (persons aged 16+ years) | East Sussex | England |
|--|-------------|---------|
| Self reported low satisfaction with life | 5.4% | 4.4% |
| Self reported low worthwhile score | 3.3% | 3.4% |
| Self reported low happiness score | 7.4% | 7.7% |
| Self-reported high anxiety score | 26.0% | 22.3% |

Source: Public Health Outcomes Framework

Loneliness

For East Sussex, 25% respondents reported feeling lonely often (5%) or some of the time (20%), with feelings of loneliness not changing markedly from the 2015 (24%) and 2017 (25%) East Sussex Community Surveys.



Note: Percentages are derived by combining the number of people who answered as feeling lonely often and some of the time. Source: East Sussex Community Survey 2019

Data from the 2019 survey shows that feelings of loneliness are more prevalent among groups who are more likely to spend more time at home (e.g. due to mobility issues) workless residents (56% vs. 20% of those in work); those in poor health (55% vs. 18% of those in good health); those with a disability (44% vs. 19% of

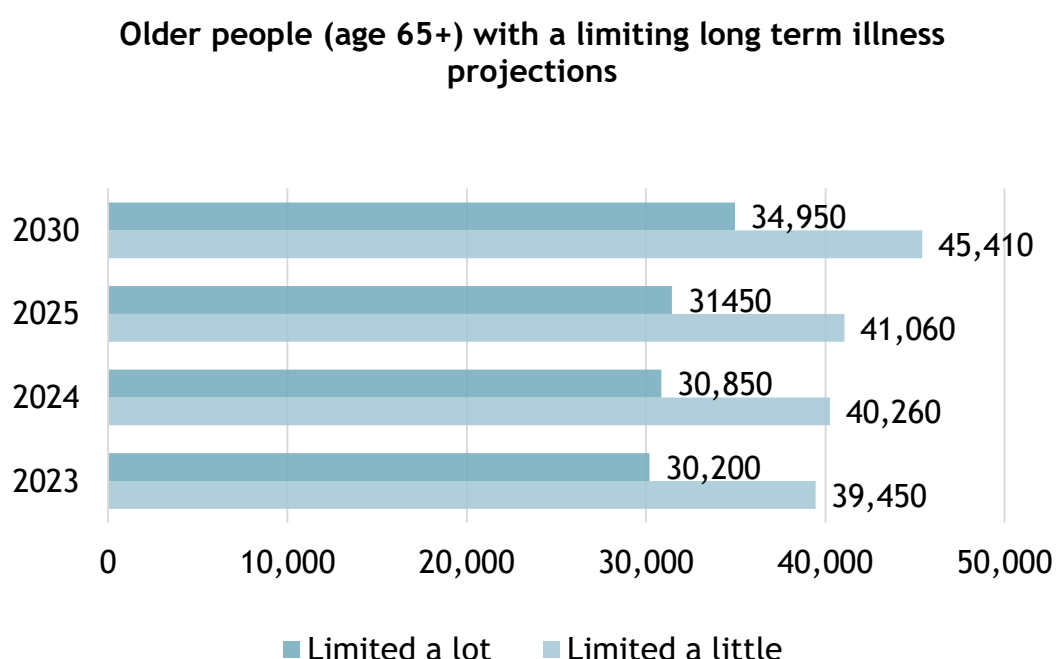
those without); single person households (38%) and single parents (47% vs. 25% overall). Other groups who are more likely to feel lonely include: social tenants (46%) and private renters (39% vs. 20% of owner occupiers); People with no qualifications (34% vs. 25% overall) and women (26% vs. 24% of men). At District level, those in Hastings and Eastbourne are more likely than average to feel lonely often or some of the time (both 29% vs. 25% overall). These Districts are more likely to be comprised of the groups listed above. Those living in Rother and Wealden are more likely to say they hardly ever/never feel this way (77% and 78% respectively).

Adults

Long Term Illness

It is estimated that in 2023 there are 69,650 older people (age 65+) in East Sussex who are living with a long-term illness which limits their day-to-day activities. 39,450 of these people are ‘limited a little’ in their day-to-day activities, while the other 30,200 are ‘limited a lot’.

These figures are projected to rise to an estimated 80,360 older people living with a long-term illness which limits their day-to-day activities in 2030, an increase of 15.4% compared to 2023. 45,410 of these people are projected to be ‘limited a little’ (up 15.1% compared to 2023), and the other 34,950 are projected to be ‘limited a lot’ (up 15.8% compared to 2023).



Source: POPPI. Note: The figures from POPPI are based on population projections produced before the latest population figures from the 2021 Census were available.

Dementia Projections

13,960 older people (age 65+) are projected to have dementia by 2030, an increase of 18.4% from 2023.

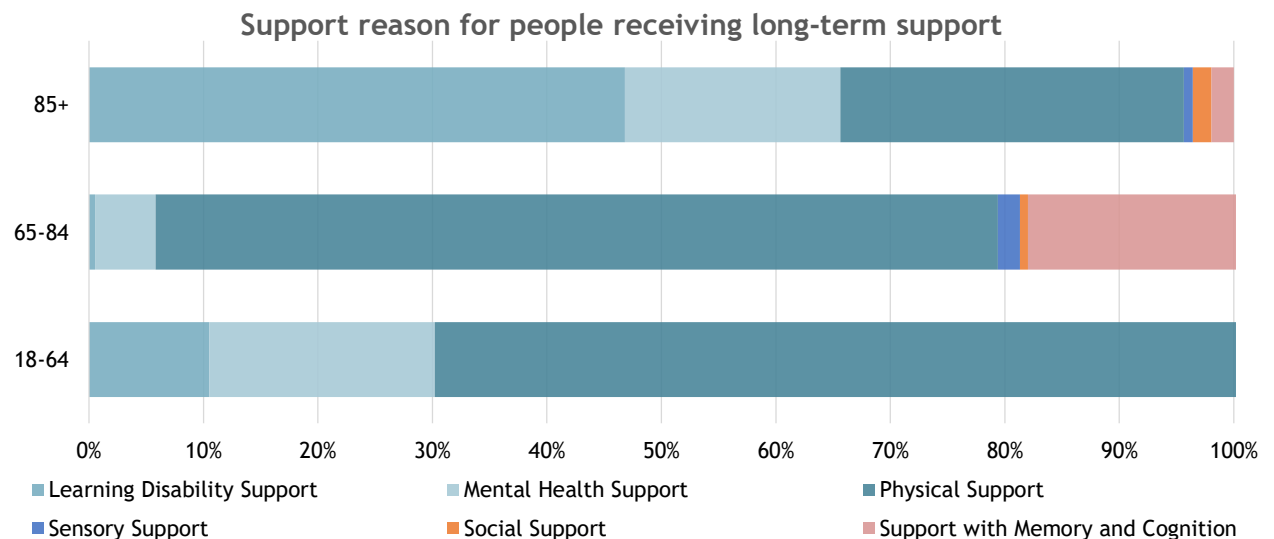


Source: POPPI. Note: The figures from POPPI are based on population projections produced before the latest population figures from the 2021 Census were available.

Reasons for Support

The percentage of people receiving long term support due to Learning Disability Support and Mental Health Support reduces as you move up the age ranges, whilst the percentage of people needing support for Physical Support, Sensory Support and Support with Memory and Cognition increases.

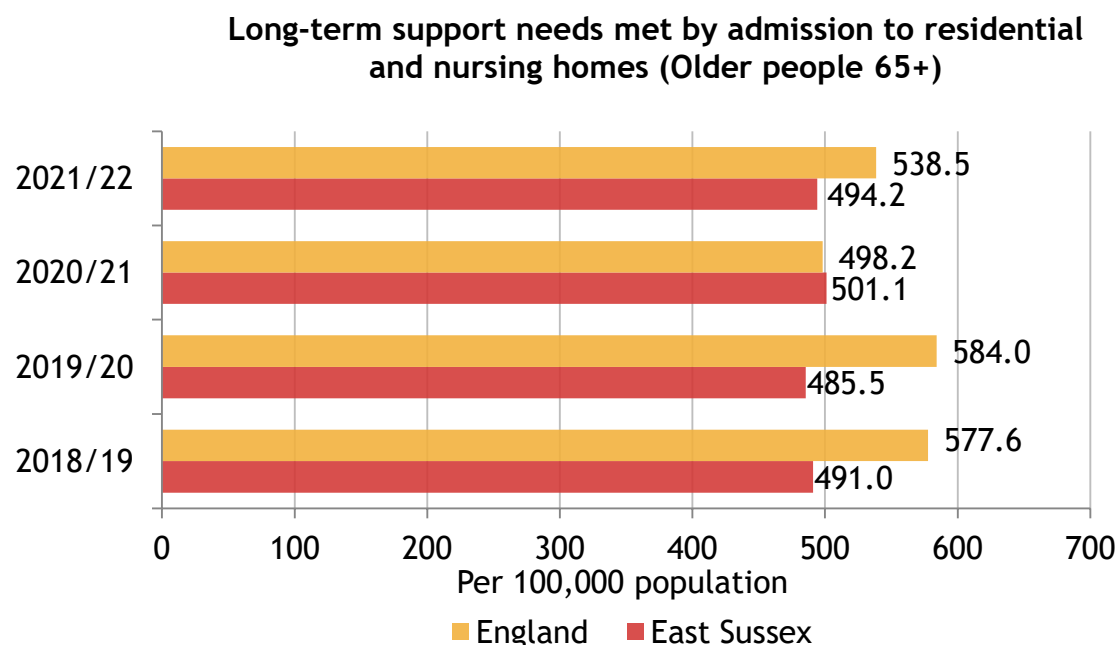
State of the County 2023: Focus on East Sussex



Source: East Sussex SALT Return

Community care and promoting independence

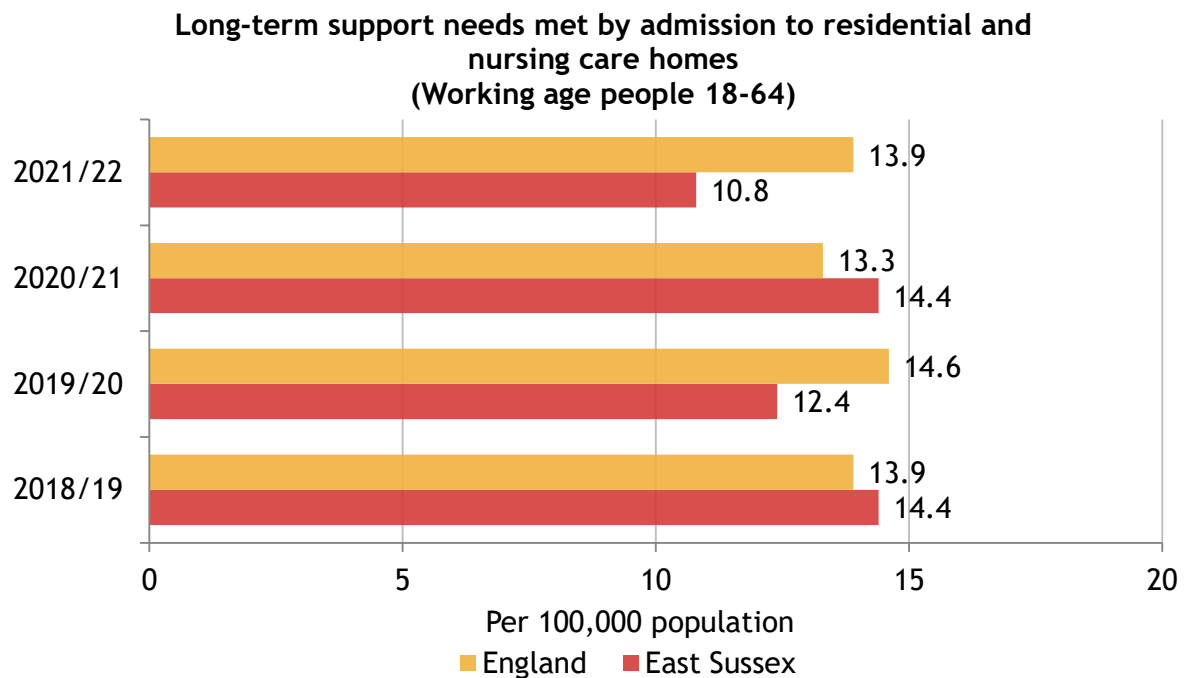
Permanent admissions of older people (age 65+) per 100,000 population slightly decreased in East Sussex in 2021/22.



Source: NHS Digital Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework data ASCOF 2A2

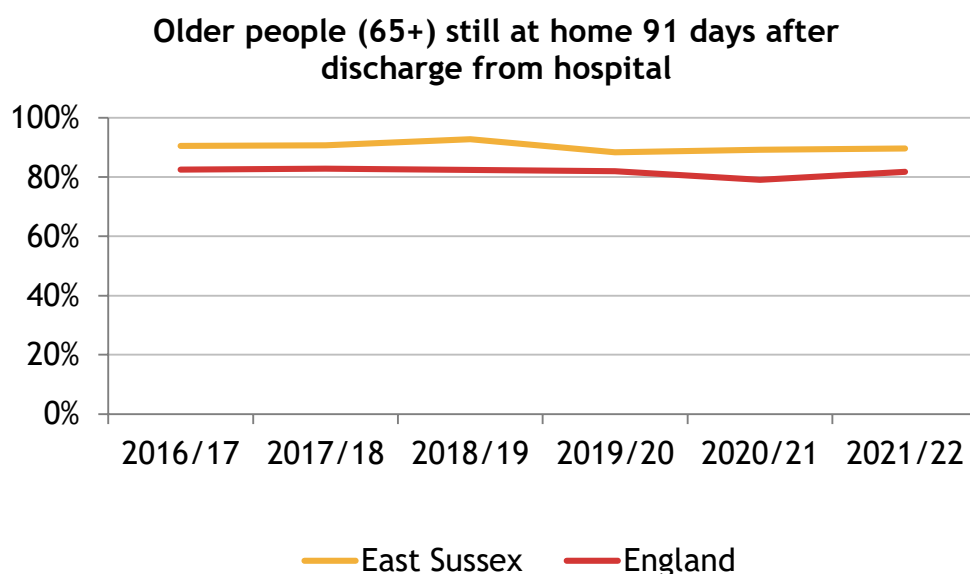
Permanent admissions of working age people (18-64) to long term residential care

decreased in East Sussex in 2021/22 were below the national rate by over 3%.



Source: NHS Digital Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework data ASCOF 2A1

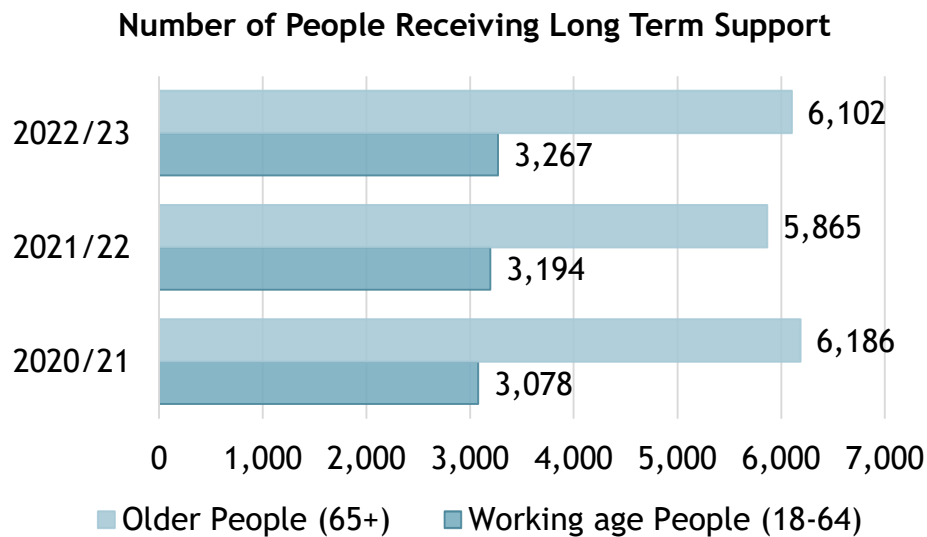
The proportion of older people (age 65+) still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital into reablement/rehabilitation services increased in 2021/22 to 89.7% and remains significantly above the national figure of 81.8%.



Source: NHS Digital Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework ASCOF 2B1

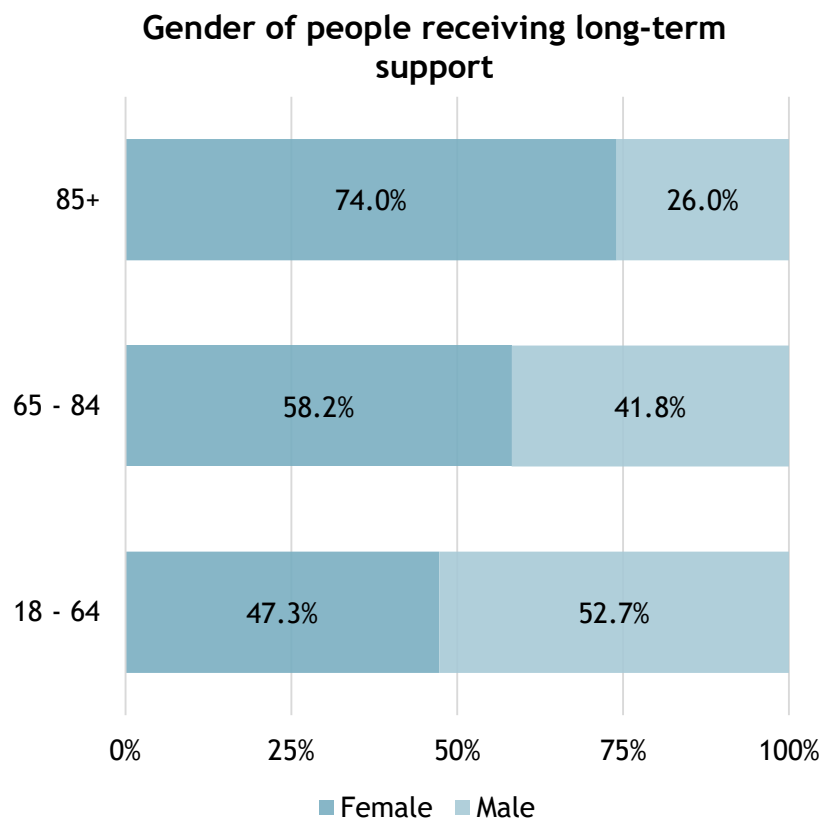
People receiving long term support

The total number of clients receiving Long Term support has increased by 3.3% in 2022/23 to 9,369.



Source: East Sussex SALT Return

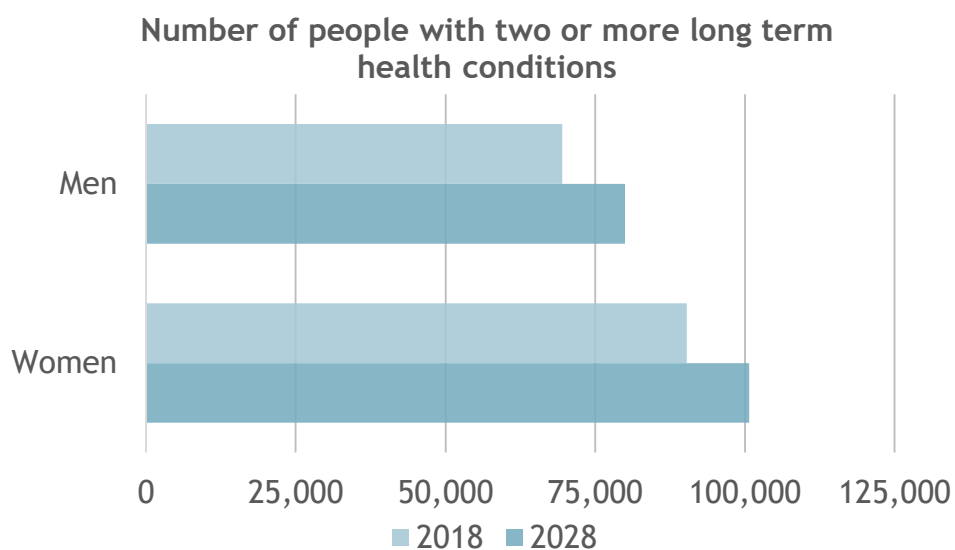
The percentage of females receiving long term support is higher than the number of males for older people, especially those above the age of 85. However, the percentage of males receiving long term support is slightly higher than females for the working age population.



Source: East Sussex SALT Returns

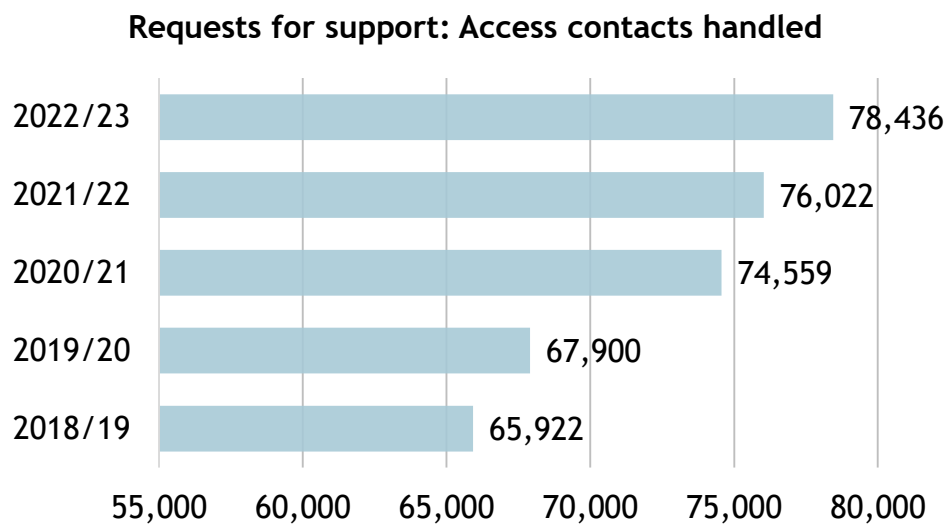
Complex needs

By 2028, around 20,000 more people in East Sussex will be living with two or more of these conditions, when compared with the needs of our population in 2018.



Access contacts

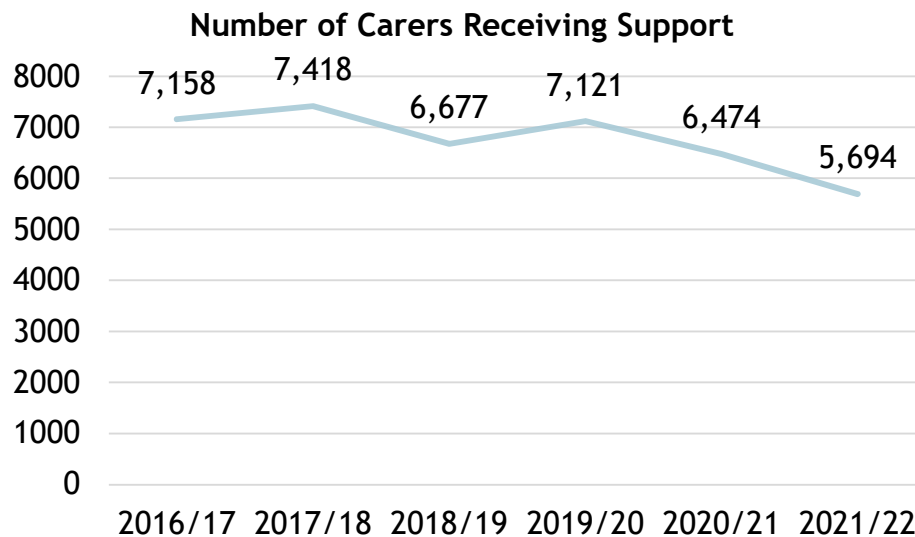
The Access team in Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) handled 78,436 contacts in 2022/23, an increase of 2,414 (3%) compared to 2021/22.



Source: East Sussex Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC)

Carers receiving support

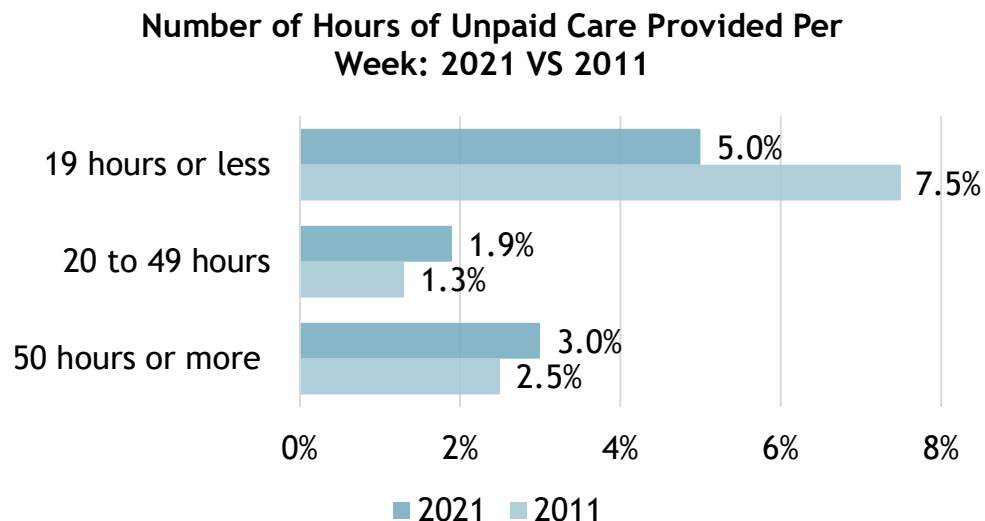
The total number of carers receiving support in East Sussex has decreased by 11.5% in 2021/22. This decrease is partially attributable to the impact of the pandemic, during which carers were less likely to contact Adult Social Care for help, and partially due to an increase in the number of carers being supported by Care for the Carers, a charity providing help, support, guidance and information to carers in East Sussex.



Source: East Sussex SALT Return

Unpaid Carers

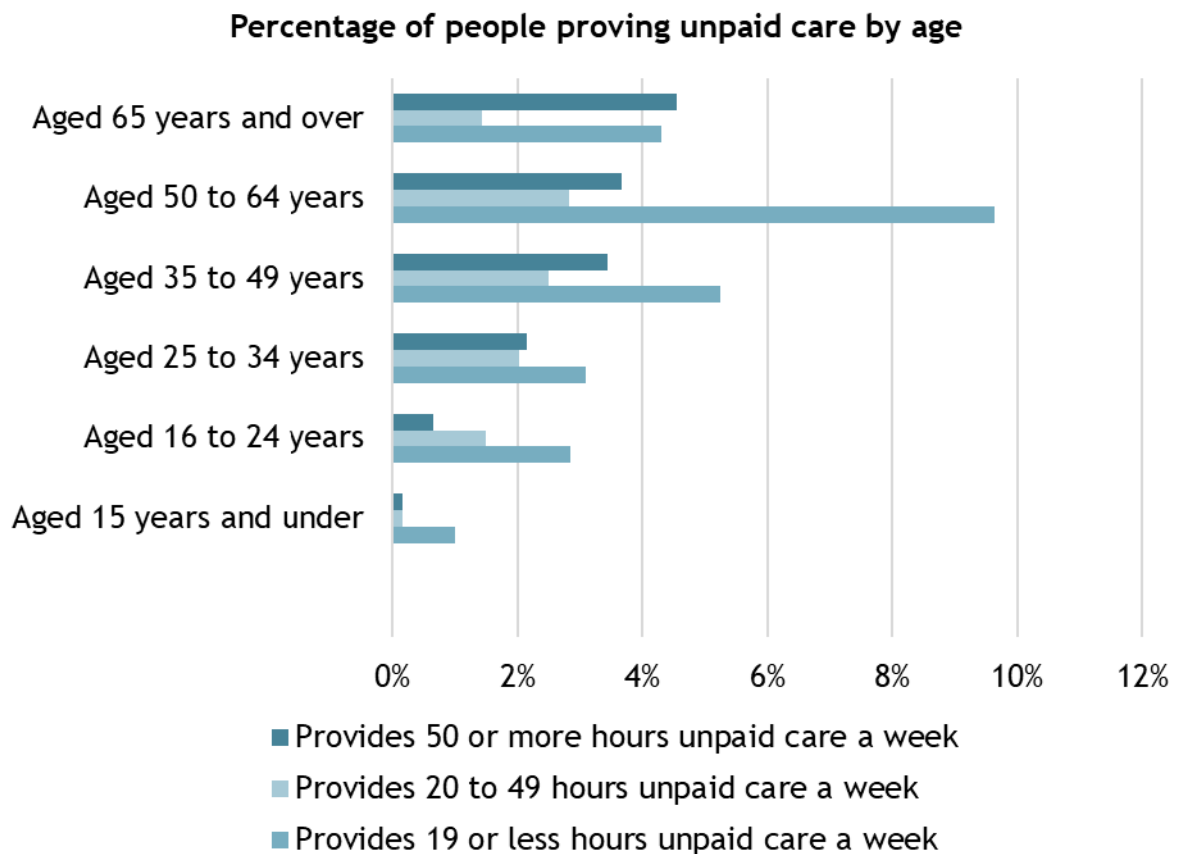
Data from the 2021 Census suggests that 9.9% of the population in East Sussex provides any form of unpaid care, compared to the national average of 8.8%. Compared to the 2011 census however, the proportion of unpaid carers has decreased by 1.8 percentage points within East Sussex. Furthermore, the proportion of people providing 19 hours or less of unpaid care a week decreased from 7.5% in 2011 to 5.0% in 2021, those providing 20 to 49 hours of unpaid care increased from 1.3% to 1.9% and those providing 50 or more hours of unpaid care increased from 2.5% to 3.0%.



Note: Percentages are representative of the population aged 5 years or above.

Source: ONS

The percentage of people providing unpaid care varies by age. 16.1% of those aged 50 to 64 provided some unpaid care a week, with the majority providing 19 or less hours unpaid care a week. Although the percentage of those aged 65 and over providing unpaid care is lower, people in this age group were more likely to be providing 50 or more hours unpaid care a week.

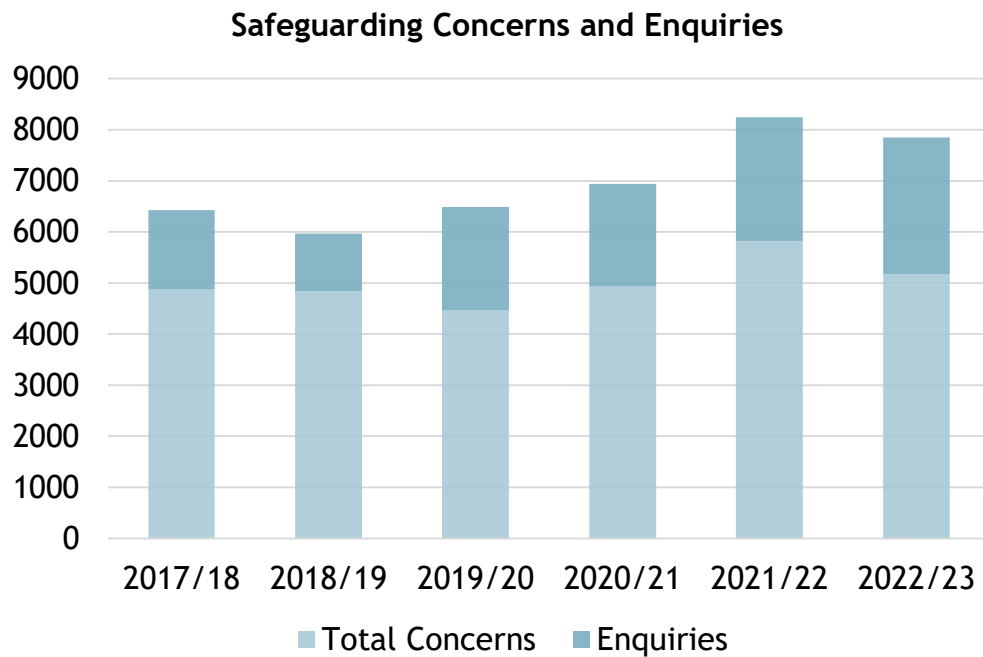


Note: Percentages are representative of the population aged 5 years or above.

Source: ONS

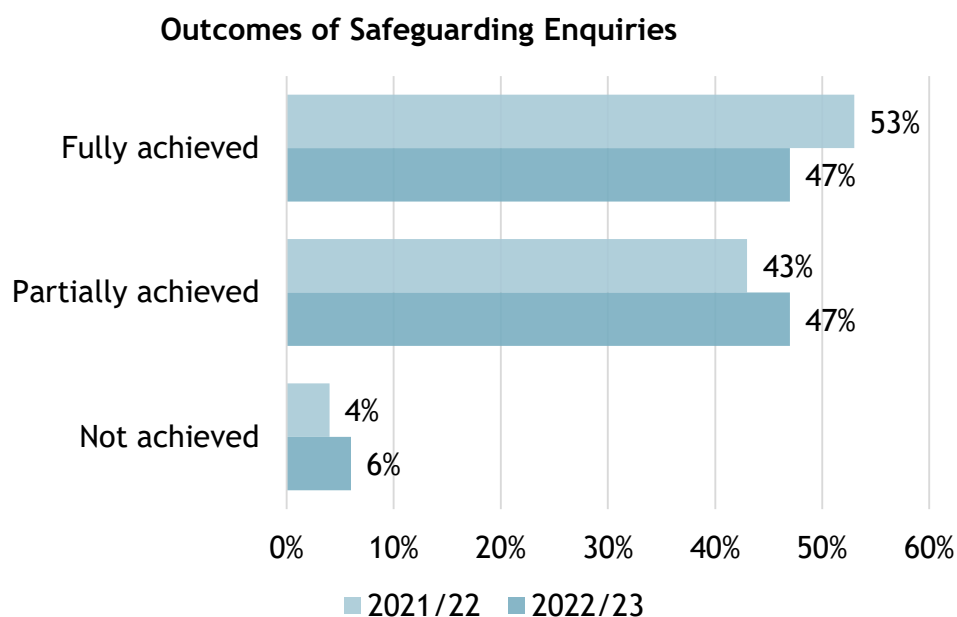
Safeguarding

The total number of safeguarding enquiries that commenced in 2022/23 was 2,680, an increase of 10.4% compared to 2,428 enquiries in 2021/22. The total number of safeguarding concerns received in 2022/23 was 5,171, a decrease of 11.1% compared to 5,819 in 2021/22.



Source: East Sussex Adult Social Care and Health

In 2022/23, there was a decrease of six percentage points in the number of safeguarding enquiries fully achieved compared to the previous year. Furthermore, an increase of four percentage points was noted for enquiries which were partially achieved.



Source: East Sussex Adult Social Care and Health

Data

We use a wide range of data to help us understand the context for our plans and the impact we are having through our work and in partnership. A selection of this data is listed below. Years are financial (April-March) or academic (September-August) unless otherwise stated.

Key: CY - calendar year (January-December), NA - data not available.

| Measure | 2020/21 Outturn | 2021/22 Outturn | 2021/22 England |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Annual gross full-time earnings, median average (residence based) | £30,949 | £31,145 | £33,208 |
| Percentage of working age population (16-64 year olds) in employment | 75.0% | 77.1% | 75.4% |
| People claiming unemployment benefits (JSA and Universal Credit) percentage of population 16-64 year olds at March | 4.1% | 3.6% (2023) | 3.8% (2023) |
| New business registration rate per 10,000 people over 16 (CY) | 55.9 (2020) | 51.4 | 71 |
| Percentage of working age residents (16-64 year olds) with a level 4 or higher qualification (HNC, HND, degree etc.) (CY) | N/A | 33.8% | 37.1% |
| Percentage of working age residents (16-64 year olds) with no qualifications or qualified only to NVQ1 (CY) | N/A | 10.6% | 12.4% |
| Average Attainment 8 score per pupil state funded secondary schools (assessment/calculated grade) | 45.3 2018/19 | 46.5 | 48.7 |
| Average Progress 8 score for state funded secondary schools | -0.06 2018/19 | -0.11 | -0.03 |

| Measure | 2020/21 Outturn | 2021/22 Outturn | 2021/22 England |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Percentage of pupils who achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths GCSEs (assessment/calculated grade) | 49.3 | 46.3% | 46.8% |
| Average point score (APS) per entry for level A levels (age 16-18) | 39.26 | 36.19 | 38.87 |
| Attainment of A level students (age 16-18) average point score (APS) per entry, best 3 | 38.73 | 34.81 | 39.01 |
| Attainment of A level students (age 16-18) % achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitation subjects | 20.2% | 12.3% | 23.2% |
| Rate per 10,000 (aged 0-17 population) of Looked After Children | 57 | 61 | 70 |
| Rate per 10,000 (aged 0-17 population) of children with a Child Protection Plan | 49.2 | 50.1 | 42.1 |
| Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after adopted during the year ending 31 March | 16% | 8% | 10% |
| Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-14 years, rate per 10,000 resident population | 99.8 | 107.6 | 84.3 |
| Percentage of children aged 4-5 years with excess weight (overweight or obese) LA by postcode of child | 23.0% 2019/20 | 19.8% | 20.3% |
| Percentage of children aged 10-11 years with excess weight (overweight or obese) LA by postcode of child | 32.0% 2019/20 | 32.8% | 34.0% |
| Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese | 62.6% 2019/20 | 64.9% | 63.5% |
| Proportion of people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital | 89.2% | 89.7% | 81.8% |

| Measure | 2020/21 Outturn | 2021/22 Outturn | 2021/22 England |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Long-term support needs of younger adults (aged 18-64) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population per year | 14.4 | 10.8 | 13.9 |
| Long-term support needs of older adults (aged 65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population per year | 501.1 | 494.2 | 538.5 |
| Proportion of older people aged 65 and over who received reablement services following discharge from hospital | 2.0% | 1.6% | 2.8% |
| The outcome of short-term services: sequel to service: proportion of people who received short-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing support or support of a lower level | 89.0% | 93.7% | 77.6% |
| Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over per 100,000 | 2,314 | 2,523 | 2,100 |
| Suicide rate per 100,000 of population, three-year average | 12.7 (2018-20) | 12.1 (2019 - 2021) | 10.4 (2019 - 2021) |
| Number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads (CY) | 339 (2021) | 374 | N/A |
| New houses built, total completed / total affordable | 1,549/ 290 | 1,606 / 350 | N/A |

National and Local Policy Outlook 2023

1. Introduction and Contents

1.1 This appendix provides an overview of the key developments in the national and local context that will influence and inform our future service and financial planning through the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process for the 2024/25 financial year and beyond. It also provides an update on work to deliver the County Council's local priorities and summarises key strategic challenges for our services.

1.2 Recent developments in national policy and the Council's broader operating context have been significant and continue to evolve. In a speech delivered in January 2023, the Prime Minister outlined his Government's five main priorities, which were: halving inflation, growing the economy by creating better paid jobs, reducing national debt, cutting NHS waiting lists, and passing new laws to prevent small boat crossings and to remove anyone entering the country illegally. In addition to these priorities, the 'Levelling Up' agenda remains central to Government policy, aiming to address geographic disparities between places and regions in the UK. With a general election expected to be held at some point in 2024 (and no later than January 2025), there is uncertainty about the general direction of Government policy beyond this time and whether there is sufficient time for Government to implement all the reforms it intends to in the lifespan of the current Parliament. A King's Speech, expected in autumn 2023, will set out the planned legislative programme.

1.3 Within this broad policy agenda, Government is progressing a number of specific public service reforms that will affect the way we deliver Council services in future, each with associated risks and implications that we must understand, assess and respond to. These include: reforms to ensure the sustainability of Adult Social Care (ASC); the recently published national review of Integrated Care Systems (ICSs); proposed reforms to the children's social care system and market; changes to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) system; planning reforms being progressed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill; the intended integration of Local Enterprise Partnership functions into local government; and a range of reforms continuing to emerge from the Environment Act 2021. Further information on these reforms and what they mean for East Sussex County Council (ESCC) is set out below.

1.4 Locally, significant work is taking place, as an organisation and with our partners, to respond to national developments, to progress our local priorities and to prepare for future challenges. Detail on this work is set out below, particularly in sections on our work with communities, to deliver transport improvements, to protect the environment and tackle climate change, and to drive sustainable economic growth.

1.5 This appendix has been written to be easily navigable to specific sections for future reference (using the below contents list), as well as providing a comprehensive single overview of developments. It includes information on:

Section 2 – Overall Context (pages 3-7)

- The national economic outlook (pg 3)
- Levelling Up – including devolution and the Office for Local Government (pg 4)
- Updated inspection regime (pg 6)
- Local Government finance outlook (pg 6)

Section 3 – Adult Social Care and Public Health (pages 7-12)

- Health and social care integration – including the Hewitt Review of Integrated Care Systems, local developments and hospital discharge (pg 7)
- National Adult Social Care reform - next steps (pg 10)
- Adult Social Care data (pg 10)
- ESCC Adult Social Care Strategy (pg 10)
- Market Sustainability (pg 11)
- Adult Social Care workforce challenges (pg 11)
- Local Public Health priorities – including health protection, recovery and renewal, creative health and suicide prevention (pg 11)

Section 4 – Children's Services (pages 13-17)

- National reforms to children's social care (pg 13)
- Service demand (pg 14)
- Local service developments – including Early Intervention, Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme and Family Safeguarding (pg 15)
- SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan (pg 15)
- Schools policy (pg 16)
- Education recovery and supporting attainment (pg 16)
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing in schools (pg 17)
- Home to school transport (pg 17)

Section 5 – Migration (pages 17-20)

- Asylum dispersal – including full dispersal, streamlined asylum process, Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and the National Transfer Scheme (pg 18)
- Refugee resettlement schemes – including Afghan resettlement schemes, visa schemes, Ukraine refugee response (pg 19)
- Future local support (pg 20)

Section 6 – Communities (pages 20-24)

- Financial Inclusion and Household Support Fund (pg 20)
- Community networks (pg 21)
- Community safety – including Community Safety Partnerships, anti social behaviour, Serious Violence Duty, modern slavery, human trafficking and preventing violent extremism, Violence Against Women and Girls, and drug and alcohol treatment work (pg 21)
- Trading Standards (pg 23)
- Local resilience arrangements (pg 23)
- National planning reforms - including infrastructure funding arrangements (pg 23)

Section 7 – Highways and Transport (pages 24-28)

- Highways maintenance (pg 24)
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (pg 25)
- Refresh of the Local Transport Plan (pg 25)
- Transport decarbonisation (pg 25)
- Active travel (pg 26)
- National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy local e-vehicle charging (pg 26)
- Road safety (pg 26)
- Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan (pg 27)
- Exceat Bridge replacement (pg 27)
- National Highways Programmes – A27 and A21 (pg 27)
- Rail developments (pg 28)

Section 8 – Economy (pages 28-31)

- Supporting the local economy – including new economic growth strategy (pg 28)
- Local Enterprise Partnerships (pg 29)
- National economic investment programmes – including UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Multiply programme and Levelling Up Fund (pg 29)
- Local work on, and national reforms to, skills provision (pg 30)
- Culture and tourism (pg 31)

Section 9 – Environment and Climate Change (pages 31-34)

- Climate change national policy context – including the ‘Mission Zero’ Independent Review of Government Net Zero Policy (pg 31)
- Local action on climate change (pg 32)
- Environment Act impacts - including Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Biodiversity, Environmental Improvement Plan and waste (pg 33)
- Flood risk management (pg 34)

Section 10 – Supporting Services (pages 34-37)

- The Modernising Back Office Systems programme (pg 35)
- Workforce challenges (pg 35)
- Property Asset Management (pg 36)
- Procurement Bill (pg 36)
- National audit issues (pg 36)
- Digital development (pg 37)

2. Overall Context

2.1 The following section provides an overview of the overall economic, fiscal and policy context the County Council is operating and planning within, and details of new arrangements for assessing the performance of local authority services.

National economic outlook

2.2 The national economic outlook remains uncertain. In its March 2023 economic forecast, the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) set out that the near-term economic downturn was expected to be shorter and shallower, medium-term output to be higher and the budget deficit lower, than at its previous forecast in November 2023. The International Monetary Fund has upgraded its forecasts for UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP), now projecting growth of 0.4% in 2023 and 1.0% in 2024. Wholesale gas prices have more than halved over the past six months and are expected to fall further, and the OBR now predicts that Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation will fall sharply to 2.9% by the end of the year. However, despite these positive developments, the economy still faces significant challenges. Inflation remains high, with CPI at 8.7% in the 12 months leading up to April 2023, which represented the first time the rate fell below 10% since August 2022. Inflation continues to fall by less than expected as falling gas prices are offset by rises in food prices, which on average are 19.1% higher than in April 2022. Inflation levels continue to be impacted by global supply chain issues, worsened by the ongoing war in Ukraine. In response to high inflation the Bank of England raised interest rates by a further 0.25 percentage points in May to 4.5%, with further rises considered likely.

2.3 High levels of inflation are driving historic falls in real household disposable income which, in March 2023, the OBR predicted would fall by a cumulative 5.7% over the two financial years 2022/23 and 2023/24, resulting in the increased cost of living being experienced by residents and businesses. In light of these pressures, the Government has announced a number of measures to support people with the rising cost of living. This includes £1bn to facilitate the extension of the Household Support Fund (to 31 March 2024);

additional payments of £900 paid to those on means-tested benefits, £300 to pensioner households and £150 to people on disability benefits; keeping the triple lock on state pensions; increasing the National Living Wage to £10.42 for over 23s from April 2023 and raising benefits payments by 10.1% in April, in line with inflation.

2.4 Further support was announced at the Spring Budget on 15 March 2023. These measures included extending the Energy Price Guarantee for an additional three months (April to June 2023), extending the temporary 5p fuel duty cut for an additional 12 months (until March 2024) and cancelling the planned increase in line with inflation for 2023-24, £100m to support charities and community organisations helping vulnerable people, and over £60m to support public swimming pools in England with rising energy costs.

2.5 Alongside this, the Government announced measures to help grow the UK economy to support higher paid jobs, increase living standards and strengthen public finances, including:

- Introducing a Universal Support programme to match people with disabilities and long-term sickness with jobs and provide support and training to help them succeed.
- Increasing Work Coach support and work search requirements for those claiming Universal Credit and strengthening support for claimants who are carers of children.
- Abolishing the Lifetime Allowance charge on private pensions.
- Expanding childcare support to help parents return to the workforce, including plans to provide 30 hours a week of free childcare for 38 weeks a year, for eligible working parents of children aged 9 months to 3 years and funding to substantially uplift the hourly rate paid to providers to deliver the existing free hours offers in England.
- Creating 12 Investment Zones across the UK to drive business investment and Levelling Up, each backed with £80m over five years including generous tax incentives.

2.6 Data on the East Sussex economy, cost of living and labour market are set out in Appendix 1 – Focus on East Sussex. Output of the East Sussex economy remains below the national average; Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour in East Sussex (a measure of the goods or services produced in an area per hour worked in that area) was 23.2% below the England level in 2020 (£29.41 per hour, against £38.29 per hour in England). The unemployment rate for March 2023 was 3.6% for East Sussex, slightly lower than the national average of 3.8%, but above the regional average of 2.9%. The number of people claiming unemployment related benefits was down 14.2% since March 2022, but still remains 23.8% higher than in March 2020, prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In March 2023, the youth unemployment rate (those 18-24 claiming unemployment benefits) was 5.8%, which was slightly lower than in March 2022 (6.2%), but still higher than the England rate of 4.9%, and above pre-pandemic levels. Further information on the national labour market picture and recruitment and retention challenges this presents for ESCC are set out at 10.5-10.8.

Levelling Up

2.7 The Levelling Up agenda, which aims to address disparities across the UK in economic prosperity and general standards of health and quality of life, remains important to the UK Government's agenda.

2.8 To help deliver on this agenda, the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) is being progressed through Parliament and aims to make provision for the setting of national Levelling Up missions and reporting on progress in delivering them. It is currently at the committee stage in the House of Lords. The Bill contains a number of key reforms, including: a system of brownfield-first development; the introduction of Spatial Development Strategies; reduced 'top down' housing targets; streamlining the local plan process; the new Infrastructure Levy, and measures to deliver on plans for increased devolution.

2.9 To support the Levelling Up agenda, the Government has made funding available to local authorities through a number of competitive bidding streams (discussed in more detail in the economy section of this appendix). This includes the second round of the Levelling Up Fund, which has been released and included funding for Rother District Council, with a third round due to follow. An additional £211m has been announced for 16 regeneration projects across England (none in East Sussex).

2.10 Twenty areas have also been invited to form Levelling Up Partnerships with the Government, including Hastings and Rother. Areas selected were based on analysis in the Levelling Up White Paper which considered places in England against four key metrics: the percentage of adults with Level 3+ qualifications; Gross Value Added (GVA) per hour worked; median gross weekly pay; and healthy life expectancy. These partnerships are intended to deliver £400m in Government funding to drive 'bespoke, place-based regeneration' and build on previous partnerships between the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and Blackpool, Grimsby in north-east Lincolnshire, and Blyth in Northumberland.

Devolution

2.11 The Government has maintained its commitment to agreeing a devolution deal with any area of the country that wants one by 2030. To that end, so far six deals have been published outlining the details of agreements between DLUHC and areas named within the nine County Deal pilot devolution areas announced in the [Levelling Up White Paper](#). None of the deals have yet been ratified, and all are subject to a public consultation, agreement through the relevant councils' governance process, as well as parliamentary approval of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.

2.12 Deals that have been published to date are largely at Level 3 of the devolution framework set out in the Levelling Up White Paper, which involves adopting a directly elected mayor or leader. The Government continues to prioritise negotiations with areas pursuing deals of this kind. In addition to these deals, the Government has announced two 'trailblazer' deeper devolution deals with the combined authorities of Greater Manchester and the West Midlands. These are set to serve as the blueprint for deeper devolution across the rest of England and, if agreed, intend to transfer additional powers and funding to help local leaders deliver on their priorities. Each will get new funding settlements agreed at the next Spending Review, to invest in local priorities.

2.13 To support current and future devolution arrangements, DLUHC recently published the first edition of the English Devolution Accountability Framework, which will form part of the broader Local Government Accountability Framework. It sets out how those who lead or work for institutions with devolved powers will be held accountable in between public elections. The framework is structured around three key forms of accountability: local scrutiny/checks and balances; accountability to the public and accountability to the UK Government. It will also establish a new scrutiny protocol to embed a sustained culture of scrutiny into these institutions.

2.14 An announcement on the next wave of deals is awaited. ESCC will continue to monitor how these deals progress to better understand the opportunities and risks associated with them.

Office for Local Government

2.15 In June 2022, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities announced the creation of a new body: the Office for Local Government (Oflog). This followed plans outlined in the Levelling Up White Paper to introduce a new independent data body to improve transparency of local government performance. In January 2023, Lord Morse was appointed as Interim Chair of Oflog.

2.16 This new body will assemble, analyse, and publish data relating to local government performance with the aim of increasing transparency, fostering accountability and using data to improve local government performance and to help identify problems at an earlier stage. It will form a part of the broader Local Government Accountability Framework, which will continue to develop throughout 2023. The first phase of Oflog's development will focus on four policy areas: adult social care, adult skills, waste management and reserves. A policy document will be published imminently to provide further information on the development of Oflog.

Updated inspection regime

2.17 Over the last year there have been a number of changes to inspection regimes for local authority provided services. This includes new powers for the Care Quality Commission (CQC) to assess local authority Adult Social Care (ASC) services on how they are discharging their duties under the Care Act 2014. Up to 25 councils will be assessed in 2023/24 with a target of all ASC departments being assessed within two years. Each ASC department will receive a rating, with the timing of individual authorities' inspections currently unknown. In anticipation of the new inspection process, we are making preparations, using the [CQC assessment framework](#) as a useful way to identify our strengths and areas for development.

2.18 Additionally, in November 2022, Ofsted and CQC launched a new joint framework for inspecting provision for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) which took effect from January 2023. The new regime focuses on the effectiveness of a local area partnership's arrangements and whether these are delivering improved outcomes and experiences for children and young people with SEND. It will also include an evaluation of commissioning and oversight arrangements for children and young people in alternative provision, something the previous regime did not do. The new regime does not use the standard Ofsted grading system, and areas will instead receive one of three possible broader ratings.

2.19 ESCC can expect to receive inspections under these and ongoing regimes, including a local area SEND inspection and a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI) for Children's Services in 2023, and an ASC inspection within the next two years. In addition, we also expect there to be an inspection of our youth justice service in 2023.

Local government finance outlook

2.20 The outlook for local government funding remains unclear. Funding that ESCC will receive from central Government between 2024/25 – 2026/27 is yet to be confirmed and, while the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December 2022 included some indicative figures for two years of funding (notably for social care), the Local Government Financial Settlement was only a one-year settlement for 2023/24.

2.21 The 2022 Autumn Statement announced several measures to support social care and hospital discharge, including the continuation of the Services Grant and the delayed rollout of Adult Social Care charging reform from October 2023 to October 2025. Whilst this enables us to maintain a degree of financial stability for 2023/24, demand and costs will continue to grow. There will be additional expectations arising from national reforms in this and other areas, bringing new and sustained financial and service pressures which will impact on our medium term financial plan (MTFP) and ability to meet needs.

2.22 The ongoing delay to the Fair Funding Review has meant greater uncertainty about the shape of any long-term sustainable settlement for local authorities. At a local level, the potential impact the economic downturn and increased cost of living will have on the collection of business rates and council tax respectively has yet to be fully assessed. There

is a risk that the extension of Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme discounts by our district and borough councils will see reductions in the collection of Council Tax. 2022/23 has seen the level of debt rise, particularly for Adult Social Care contributions, and it is expected that this trend will continue into 2023/24.

2.23 For the Capital Programme, there remain challenges in the supply chain for materials and price pressures within existing contracts, the impact of which is exacerbated by delays to delivery. Further significant pressures may materialise as new schemes are developed or go out to tender. The current technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy has added a level of uncertainty to the value of future developer contributions, which remain an important funding stream for the programme. The Capital Programme holds a contingency of £7.5m to meet these uncertainties.

2.24 While the Council's reserves have been applied and maintained within a robust reserve policy, the level of reserves held by local government is coming under increasing levels of scrutiny. It is likely that national government will require us to review our reserves strategy, with a potential to constrain our use of our reserves in maintaining a stable financial position.

3. Adult Social Care and Public Health

3.1 Whilst major reforms to adult social care (ASC) charging (reported at State of the County 2022) have been postponed until 2025, other national reforms are being progressed and teams across the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) department are continuing to respond to a range of national and local developments which are set out in more detail in the following sections. These include working with health partners to progress local health and social care integration and implementing initiatives to facilitate hospital discharge. Work to deliver local priorities and respond to strategic challenges, including market sustainability, workforce challenges, supporting the resilience of local communities and addressing threats to health is also covered here.

Health and Social Care Integration

National Health and Social Care Integration

3.2 Nationally, new Integrated Care System (ICS) arrangements came into effect from July 2022. The [Hewitt Review](#) was commissioned by Government later in 2022 to consider how the oversight and governance of ICSs can best enable them to succeed, balancing greater autonomy and robust accountability, with a particular focus on real time data shared digitally with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and on the availability and use of data across the health and care system for transparency and improvement.

3.3 The report, published in April 2023, called for the following:

- A shift from focusing on illness to promoting health;
- Delivering on the promise of systems;
- Unlocking the potential of primary and social care and building a sustainable, skilled workforce; and
- Resetting our approach to finance to embed change.

3.4 The role of local government and social care in the changes proposed is recognised throughout the report, starting with “the need to work on the basis of subsidiarity, through strong, empowered Place Partnerships and neighbourhood teams.” Key messages with particular relevance to ASCH include:

- A reset of national/local relationships with a shift away from a culture of top-down performance management to one of learning and improvement.

- The need for social care to be better understood within the NHS.
- The need for a national conversation about what we expect from our care, and what we are willing to pay for it.
- The vital role for ICSs in supporting a more sustainable social care sector at system level, by taking an integrated approach to reducing the gap between demand for care and available supply, for example by encouraging the adoption of personalised, preventative and proactive models of care.
- Broadening ICS collaboration beyond members of Integrated Care Boards (ICBs) to encompass wider partners, including social care providers, the VCSE sector, and the independent healthcare sector to ensure they are fully engaged and their contribution better understood within the NHS.
- The Care Quality Commission (CQC) should include within its assessment of ICS maturity how different partners, including local government, assess their engagement and relationships within the ICS itself, including the extent to which both public health expertise and the social care provider sector are involved in the leadership of the system.
- Using the proposed data framework for adult social care outlined in 'Care data matters: a roadmap for better data for adult social care' setting out what data the sector needs to collect, the purpose of those collections and the standard to which it is collected.
- The necessary focus on reducing elective care waits should be matched by an equal focus on reducing waiting times for acute mental health treatment.
- There should be an acceleration and expansion of existing work on understanding both need and the fair cost of care, before the proposed cap on adult social care costs is implemented.
- Recognition that children's social care is linked to both adult social care and the wider health system and suggestion that the work to understand need and the cost of care should be expanded to capture working age adults and potentially children's social care.
- That the Public Health grant should be increased.

3.5 The Government published a joint response to the 36 Hewitt Review recommendations and a report of parliament's Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC) inquiry on ICSs on 14 June. Key points from the Government's response include:

- Agreement with the proposed reduction of the number of overarching national targets imposed on ICSs, which will empower them to focus on priorities in their local areas.
- Development of a shared outcomes toolkit that will support places to develop their own robust shared outcomes, with priorities and metrics that are directly linked to the needs of their populations.
- Recognition of the importance of prevention to reducing overall demand on services, and that over time the focus of the NHS should increasingly shift towards implementing interventions to help improve prevention and support healthier life expectancy, rather than imposing a national expectation of a shift in spending in line with the 1% (at least) over the next five years recommended by the Hewitt Review.
- Confirmation that the future assessments of the effectiveness of ICS partnership working across the ICS will be undertaken by the CQC.

The response will contribute to shaping the future direction of ICS development nationally and locally and we will work with local ICS partners to review it in more detail and assess implications for the local system.

Local Health and Social Care Integration

3.6 ESCC has a key role in the new statutory arrangements for the local NHS that commenced on 1 July 2022, with representation on the NHS Sussex ICB and the Sussex Health and Care Assembly (the Sussex Assembly). The Sussex Assembly is the statutory

joint committee between ESCC, West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and NHS Sussex.

3.7 In 2022/23 the new [joint Integrated Care Strategy 'Improving Lives Together'](#) was produced by the Sussex Assembly based on the population Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs) for the three ICS 'Places' - East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton & Hove - and building on the priorities set out in the three Health and Wellbeing Board (HWB) Strategies covering each area. This is in line with previous agreements about the role and primacy of 'Place' and Place-based health and care partnerships within the Sussex ICS, and follows national guidance and Hewitt Review recommendations concerning the principle of subsidiarity.

3.8 The Integrated Care Strategy builds on the shared priorities for our East Sussex population set out in the [East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) (2022 – 2027) covering health outcomes improvement, children and young people, mental health and integrated community health, care and wellbeing. It describes an overarching ambition for a healthier future for everyone in Sussex over the next five years, across the following priorities:

- Growing and supporting our Sussex health and care workforce
- Improving the use of digital technology and information
- Maximising the benefit of partnership working; building on the work currently underway and through developing integrated approaches to community teams and partnerships in Places and neighbourhoods.

3.9 A five-year Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) is being brought together to support the strategy, following national guidance issued by NHS England. Following consideration by each local authority, HWB and NHS Sussex, a full finalised Plan will be submitted to NHSE by 30 June 2023 covering year 1 (2023/24) and the high-level milestones for years 2-5 (2024/25 – 2027/28). This will cover existing delivery priorities and high level milestones for ongoing shared programmes of work as well as new delivery priorities in the following areas:

- Accelerating health outcomes improvement, specifically focussed on cardiovascular disease, respiratory disease, mental health and frailty/healthy ageing.
- Our model for delivering integrated health, care and wellbeing in communities.

Ongoing implementation of the strategy will be overseen at ICS level by the Sussex Assembly and at place level by each HWB.

Hospital Discharge

3.10 Successful utilisation of the additional £500m Government Social Care Discharge Fund, and other rapid improvement work over winter to help discharge patients safely from hospital and into onward care as fast as possible, led to a successful Sussex ICS bid to be one of six 'Discharge Frontrunners' nationally. This project will, in 2023/24, trial innovative long-term solutions to free up hospital beds and make sure patients get the right care at the right time, which could be rolled out across the NHS if successful. Each Discharge Frontrunner will receive specialist and tailored support, which will include evaluation, economic analysis, demand and capacity planning, leadership, and service design, as well as the ability to learn best practice from other areas.

3.11 In April 2023 the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund 2023/24 was announced. Local authorities must use this funding to build additional ASC and community-based reablement capacity to reduce hospital discharge delays through delivering sustainable improvements to services for individuals. Partners at Place level will finalise plans for use of this funding by the end of June 2023.

National Adult Social Care Reform – Next Steps

3.12 In April 2023 Government restated its committed to the 10-year vision for Adult Social care set out in the [People at the Heart of Care](#) white paper by publishing '[Next steps to put People at the Heart of Care](#)'. This plan sets out how it proposes to build on work to ensure Care (ASC) is of outstanding quality, personalised and accessible. It details how £700 million will be spent to continue transformation of the ASC system in England, including investment in:

- improved access to care and support
- recognising skills for careers in care
- driving digitisation and technology adoption
- data and local authority oversight
- support to enable people to remain independent at home
- encouraging innovation and improvement
- joining up services to support people and carers

Together, these measures aim to put people at the heart of social care and form the next step towards Government's 10-year reform vision.

Alongside the plan Government also:

- launched a call for evidence for the care workforce pathway
- published the Better Care Fund policy framework 2023 to 2025
- published guidance and conditions for the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF)
- provided £27 million to local authorities through a grant to streamline local authority adult social care assessment processes
- launched an expression of interest for year 2 funding of the Adult Social Care Technology Fund

3.13 Further detail on local work to support care market sustainability and address ASC workforce challenges is outlined below.

Adult Social Care data

3.14 '[Care data matters: a roadmap for better data for adult social care](#)', published in February 2023, sets out the Government's roadmap for improving how ASC data in England is collected, shared and analysed, building on the commitments made in the Health and Social Care data strategy, [Data Saves Lives](#) and the ASC reform White Paper, People at the Heart of Care. The roadmap is published in draft, and views are currently being sought from those involved in the delivery and commissioning of care, unpaid carers, clients, and members of the public. Based on this feedback, which ESCC will contribute to, the final version of the roadmap will be published at the end of 2023.

ESCC Strategy for Adult Social Care

3.15 Together with our residents and partners, we have developed an [Adult Social Care Strategy](#) for the county. Specific to East Sussex, and informed by wide engagement, the strategy provides a person-centred framework which gives direction for a range of stakeholders. It will help people know what to expect from ASC services and support, and identifies six priorities:

1. The right support, in the right place, at the right time
2. Information and communication about care and support
3. Cost of living and cost of care, now and in the future
4. A suitable home
5. Personal connections with others
6. Group activities, hobbies and volunteering

3.16 The strategy, to be launched in summer 2023, includes 14 'We will' statements and summarises how those working within and alongside ASC will respond to the priorities of local people. Once launched, these 'We will' statements will be converted into a detailed delivery plan which, in turn, will inform the department's core policies and practice. Alongside this, working with partners and other service providers to help residents (including those not receiving services) to share their experiences of these priorities, we will also adapt the way feedback is gathered from people receiving adult social care services so that it aligns with the six priorities.

Market Sustainability

3.17 The sustainability of the care market continues to be a significant issue both nationally and locally. Announced by Government at the Autumn Statement in November 2022, the Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund is intended to support local authorities to make tangible improvements to adult social care services, to build capacity and improve market sustainability. This reflects local authorities' duty, under section 5 of the Care Act 2014, to promote the efficient and effective operation of the market for adult care and support as a whole. Government considers that three vital target areas underpin the overarching objective of building capacity and improving market sustainability. These are:

- increasing fee rates paid to adult social care providers in local areas;
- increasing adult social care workforce capacity and retention; and
- reducing adult social care waiting times.

3.18 Locally a range of pressures are impacting on care market sustainability. National and international economic conditions have increased the cost of providing services and delays to major national reform programmes have led to uncertainty. The increase in the National Living Wage from April 2023, whilst welcome particularly in light of workforce shortages, also presents a cost pressure for many care providers. The ASC Market Support Team continues to work closely with local providers, the CQC and NHS to support and strengthen the independent care and support market, improve and sustain quality improvements, prevent business failure or service deterioration and identify and address business continuity and sustainability concerns. This supportive partnership approach has been successful in helping to ensure overall quality provision within the county.

ASC Workforce Challenges

3.19 Local and national recruitment continues to be a challenge across the ASC sector which has a significant impact on independent provider services as well as ESCC teams. To address this ESCC has established a three year ASCH workforce programme with six areas of focus: strategic workforce planning; recruitment; retention; enhancing the wellbeing of the workforce; leadership and management and building and enhancing social justice in the workforce.

Local Public Health priorities

3.20 A new Public Health Board is in place with representation from all parts of the Council and the NHS Sussex ICB. The Public Health Board will ensure that priorities to tackle health inequalities are aligned across the Sussex Health and Care Partnership (SHCP).

Health protection and addressing threats to health

3.21 Maximising our health protection expertise and impact to protect health in a wide range of settings is vital. This includes launching our new health protection strategy that sets out our broad priorities now that we have moved beyond Covid-19. The strategy outlines the roles and responsibilities of the local authority, NHS, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and other key partners involved in health protection, and how the system fits together locally. It demonstrates a joined-up, multi-agency approach to health protection, focusing on

minimising health inequalities and the impacts of the wider determinants of health. It states key indicators of success and outlines categories for health protection action into the life course approach.

Recovery and Renewal

3.22 Covid-19 has exacerbated existing health disparities for many and along with current economic conditions, results in even greater challenges in addressing the wider determinants of health. Work with communities and system partners to mitigate the impacts of Covid continues, applying lessons learned on what worked well for communities and co-producing solutions to longstanding underlying causes of health disparities.

3.23 We will continue to develop plans to address the mental and emotional health and wellbeing of all affected groups. This includes building on the Making it Happen Programme which works with residents in East Sussex who want to build on the positive things that exist in their neighbourhood. We will also progress the Connected People and Places project and the recommendation to establish a 'stewardship approach' to tackling loneliness. This encompasses a collaborative approach to the design and commissioning of a programme of work with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector and other partner agencies.

3.24 The use of research and developing evidence is core to Public Health, and this is being strengthened to address inequalities and support community recovery locally. Public Health has responded to the National Institute for Health Research's call for Health Determinants Research Collaborative funding to create innovative research collaborations between local government and the academic sector that focus on improving the wider determinants, or drivers, of health. This aims to maximise impact on established and persistent causes of health inequalities that affect coastal and rural communities in East Sussex. Should the East Sussex proposal progress to stage two of the process during the summer the outcome of the funding bid will be completed in December 2023. If unsuccessful the department will explore how elements of the proposal could be embedded.

Creative Health

3.25 The National Centre for Creative Health and the [All-Party Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health and Wellbeing](#) is currently undertaking a Creative Health Review which will highlight the potential for creative health to help tackle pressing issues in health and social care, including health inequalities and the additional challenges we face as we recover from Covid-19. Locally, within the NHS and social care, there is growing recognition of the important role that creative health can play in supporting our health and wellbeing.

3.26 A Creating Healthier Lives – Arts in Public Health workstream is being developed locally to sustain, improve and prevent ill health and promote wellbeing through arts, creativity, and culture. The plan will link in with the [East Sussex Cultural Strategy](#) and support community recovery and renewal. A position paper introducing the work will be published later in 2023, outlining our statement of intent and commitment to developing a strategic plan that works for everyone across East Sussex.

Suicide prevention

3.27 Public Health led on the creation and monitoring of the East Sussex suicide and self-harm prevention plan. This is co-ordinated through a strategy group and broader multi-agency network group. Preventative approaches to the ongoing significant challenge of reducing deaths at places of high frequency is led by the Coastal Suicide Prevention Group. A new Pan-Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy will be published early summer 2023, which will outline projects best delivered through collaboration between the three local authority areas, such as real time surveillance, communications, and the involvement of people with lived experience. Local plans in East Sussex will be developed subsequently during the summer months.

4. Children's Services

4.1 Major national policy reviews relating to Children's Services have been published in recent months, including the Government's response to national reviews of children's social care and the children's social care market. The Government has also released its Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) Improvement Plan, as well as announcing that it no longer intends to bring forward the Schools Bill in the current Parliament. This section also summarises priority focus areas for Children's Services locally, including implementation of Family Hubs, a Family Safeguarding model and our local SEND strategy. In addition, there is information on demand-led service pressures and the impact these are having, work with schools to improve post-pandemic educational recovery, attendance and mental health and emotional wellbeing, and increase in demand for home to school transport.

National reforms to Children's Social Care

4.2 In February 2023, the Department for Education (DfE) published its response to three reports: the Independent Review of Children's Social Care, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review on the deaths of Star Hobson and Arthur Labinjo-Hughes, and the Competition and Market Authority Children's Social Care Market study. The [DfE's response](#) included an initial implementation strategy and consultation on its proposals, together with a wide range of policy commitments and the announcement of £200m of additional investment over the next two years. The strategy is focused on phase one of the Government's reforms, up to the end of the Spending Review period in March 2025.

4.3 The strategy commits to resetting children's social care to ensure that love and stable relationships are at the heart of the work done by children's social care. It is focused around the following six key pillars, with each pillar having detailed proposals:

- Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families;
- A decisive multi-agency child protection system;
- Unlocking the potential of family networks;
- Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care;
- A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one;
- A system that continuously learns and improves, and makes better use of evidence and data.

4.4 It also outlines proposals for Regional Care Cooperatives (RCCs) to address the significant national sufficiency challenges in placements for cared for children. The DfE intends to work with local authorities, health, justice and the third sector to co-design and co-create RCCs in two areas, with a view to further roll out after testing and evaluation with the sector.

4.6 A 'Children's Social Care National Framework' is being developed as part of the implementation strategy. This will describe the outcomes that local authorities should aim to achieve for children, young people and families, with associated performance indicators. The strategy also includes a new five year post-qualifying 'Early Career Framework', which will be aligned to the Children's Social Care National Framework and is intended to include the skills and knowledge needed to deliver on the strategy's key priorities such as increased use of kinship care and loving relationships for children in care.

4.7 Given concerns about the impact of the use of agency social workers in terms of both cost and workforce sufficiency, the Government is consulting on whether to set national rules on agency usage. It is proposed to establish price rates for agency workers and a requirement that agency social workers have five years post qualifying experience.

4.8 The initial £200m financial commitment associated with strategy implementation includes a number of pathfinder and pilot programmes, such as £45m to deliver the Families First for Children Pathfinder, and £30m to increase the number of local authorities with family finding, befriending and mentoring programmes. Before the next Spending Review period the DfE intends to update, publish and consult on a new formula for children and young people's services funding.

4.9 ESCC agrees that reform and investment is required to ensure the right systems are in place to not only protect children, but to help them and their families to thrive. The focus on earlier help, support that builds on the strengths within a child's wider family network, and a greater ambition for our children in care, and care experienced by young people, align with the priorities and practice of ESCC Children's Services. The Council has recently responded to the three DfE consultations.

Service Demand

4.10 Over recent years Children's Services both nationally and locally have experienced a significant increase in demand. Local Government Association (LGA) analysis shows that since 2010 there has been a 53% increase in the number of children subject to child protection planning and a 28% increase in the number of children in care nationally. This has been further exacerbated by the pandemic and, more recently, the cost of living increases, with a continued projected increase in demand and complexity, specifically in the areas of child protection planning and looked after children.

4.11 Over the past two years, in line with national trends, ESCC has experienced a 37% increase in demand at the front door, an 18% increase in the number of social care assessments being undertaken with children and families, and a 32% increase in children subject to child protection planning. There has been an 6% increase in the number of looked after children since 2020 (not including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children). The demand for support has undoubtedly put pressure on the service and it will be important to continue to ensure we have sufficient capacity to meet our statutory duties. Over the last two years, as a service of last resort, we have also needed to provide some direct support to families, in terms of accommodation or other support, and this requirement is expected to continue.

4.12 In line with the national picture, ESCC also continues to experience significant challenges identifying sufficient high quality placements for children in care. Children's Services has been highly successful in supporting children to live within kinship care arrangements wherever possible. However, it is becoming increasingly challenging to identify appropriate placements and the price of placements has significantly increased. Demand for residential provision outstrips supply. Providers have become risk averse to offering placements to children with complex behavioural needs (because they present greater risk of missing episodes, challenging behaviours, and Ofsted notifiable incidents). The high demand in the system has also led to an escalation in the price that some providers are now charging.

4.13 Rigorous steps are taken to manage the market and individual contracts with providers. East Sussex is part of a commissioning framework agreement with other local authorities to improve leverage in purchasing placements and Heads of Service meet regularly with providers to address the safety and quality of placements as well as value of contracts. However, external consultancy support has been engaged to review the scope for different approaches which might help us secure more cost effective options. The interests of children will remain paramount in our approach.

Local Service Developments

Early Intervention, Family Hubs and Start for Life Programme

4.14 In March 2022 the DfE announced that East Sussex was one of 75 local authorities selected for a share of a £302m fund to establish [Family Hubs and the Start for Life programme](#). ESCC has been awarded £4.6m for this programme over 3 years, with an additional £100,000 to deliver a 'Trailblazer' programme on peri-natal mental health.

4.15 ESCC's local Family Hubs build on the current Children Centre and integrated Early Help offers and support families with babies, children and young people from birth to 19 (or 25 for young people with SEND). The Hubs, the first of which are being launched in summer 2023, will provide a one stop shop approach, delivering a range of help, including for physical and mental health, housing, debt advice, youth services, domestic abuse support, as well as links to local voluntary and community sector organisations. At the heart of ESCC Family Hubs will be the Start for Life support, helping parents build strong relationships with their babies by providing parenting classes, health visiting support, infant feeding advice and peri-natal mental health.

4.16 A multi-agency Early Intervention Board was established in 2022/23 which is overseeing this programme as well as the development of an overarching Early Intervention Strategy, incorporating a wide range of early intervention programmes across the county including local implementation of the national Supporting Families programme and the Youth Justice Service 'Turnaround' preventative programme.

Family Safeguarding

4.17 In 2023/24, following a £2.3m annual investment by ESCC, Children's Services will be launching the Family Safeguarding model of child protection as a further development to our Connected Families service for families with children aged 11-17 who are at risk of needing to become looked after. The Family Safeguarding model provides intensive support for adults in three key areas: domestic abuse, mental health, and substance misuse. These areas are the most common factors nationally and locally in assessments of the needs of children for protection, and areas where demand for support services exceeds the available supply. They are often co-morbidities and are a significant factor in family breakdown, premature deaths, and poor outcomes for people with care experience. Family Safeguarding will be an important part of the way we seek to manage demand for social care.

4.18 ESCC's approach to Family Safeguarding will draw on models implemented elsewhere in the country, as well as reflecting and enhancing our own successful and well-established East Sussex 'Connected Practice' approach, which is strength based, trauma informed and relationship-based. ESCC has an established and effective multi-disciplinary SWIFT service and 'Foundations' programme which this initiative will build upon to offer earlier intensive support and interventions to families and increase resources for reunification.

4.19 The Family Safeguarding model aligns with the DfE's children's social care reform implementation strategy outlined in more detail above. This highlights that Children's Services should draw on a multidisciplinary workforce with the time, skills, and autonomy to give children and families the support they need, pursuing improved outcomes for both adults and children. Delivery of the model in East Sussex is planned to commence in January 2024.

SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan

4.20 The [SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan](#) is the Government's response to the SEND and Alternative Provision Green Paper consultation and outlines an

ambition to improve inclusive practice in mainstream schools so that more children and young people with SEND can be supported in their local mainstream school without the need for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). However, the development of new guidance for all schools is not expected to be complete until 2025. The Government is also establishing Regional Partnerships to support development of special educational needs provision, with which ESCC will be engaging.

4.21 In line with the national picture, East Sussex continues to see significant increases in demand for statutory assessments and specialist provision for children and young people with SEND. The number of EHCPs has increased by 19% from 3,678 in April 2022 to 4,380 by the end of March 2023. We will continue to work proactively, analysing data to project future demand, and working with schools and Trusts to develop more specialist provision where this is appropriate. In 2022, alongside partners in the NHS Integrated Care Board (ICB) the Council published a new 2022-2025 SEND strategy which sets out our high-level direction, keeping children and young people and their families at the forefront of our local priorities.

4.22 We continue to work with schools to try to reduce the number of children and young people who are excluded from schools, which in East Sussex remains above the national average, and the corresponding need for alternative provision.

Schools policy

4.23 The Schools Bill, which was to implement legislation to support the [White Paper, Opportunity for All](#), is no longer being taken forward. However, the DfE remains committed to the objectives that underpinned the bill, which include the aspiration for all schools to become part of Multi Academy Trusts (MATs). The Council will continue to play a critical role in facilitating strong local partnerships between schools and working with the Joint Primary and Secondary Board to shape a strong and cohesive school landscape across all phases, including through MAT development.

4.24 The DfE has confirmed its intention to pass legislation which will see local authorities obliged to maintain a register of children of compulsory school age who are not enrolled at specified categories of schools such as state schools, registered independent schools and non-maintained special schools. The Council will respond to this new duty when it is put into place.

Education recovery and supporting attainment

4.25 East Sussex has been identified by Government as an Education Investment Area (EIA) and Hastings as a Priority Investment Area. As an EIA, MATs that are interested in expanding or setting up in East Sussex are prioritised for development funding from the DfE. As a Priority EIA, Hastings will receive funding up to August 2025 to improve educational outcomes.

4.26 The pandemic has had a significant adverse impact on school attendance, with a doubling, both nationally and locally, of the proportion of children persistently absent from school, defined as more than 10% of sessions. The Government has published new attendance guidance to clarify responsibilities for local authorities, schools, parents and carers. By September 2023, the expectation is that all councils should strengthen their oversight of attendance through regular individual dialogue with all schools, and provide whole family early help support, free of any charge, to schools and all families of children whose attendance is less than 50%.

4.27 Locally, there will be a continued focus on working with schools to improve the engagement of some families so that they ensure their children and young people are in school. Supported by additional investment of £1.5m annually to deliver the expectations set

by the Government in its new guidance, a new Level 2 Early Help Key Work service will be in place from September 2023 to work with children and young people and their families where attendance is below 50%.

4.28 East Sussex has high levels of suspension and exclusion and these are rising further in line with national trends. School leaders are experiencing increased levels and complexity of need in their school populations and the demand for support services remains high. The Council will continue to work with schools to develop effective strategies and joined-up approaches to meeting children and young people's needs, to increase engagement in learning and reduce exclusions.

Mental health and emotional wellbeing in schools

4.29 Education is a protective factor against many of the risks to good mental health and wellbeing that face children and young people across East Sussex. A key area of our school improvement strategy involves opportunities for schools and settings to develop communities which promote and foreground good mental health and wellbeing. The Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs), funded by the NHS and managed by ESCC, will continue to be integrated into the existing education and clinical landscapes to support this. Five MHSTs will continue to operate across the county, and we will work to embed them into 68 targeted schools. We will use the learning from these schools to champion a whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Home to school transport

4.30 Recent rises in fuel costs and driver shortages have led to exceptional increases to the costs of contracts providing taxis for pupils requiring home to school transport. The majority of the spend on home to school transport relates to children with SEND, and the number of pupils with EHCPs has risen by 11.6% over the last three years and is forecast to rise a further 11.8% over the next three. Increased complexity of needs post pandemic and geographical spread reducing the possibility of taxi sharing are also driving cost increases, as are current market conditions which are leading to fewer providers bidding for routes and increased contract prices.

5. Migration

5.1 Over the last year the Government has developed new policy and legislation in relation to immigration, asylum, and refugee resettlement, in efforts to reduce pressures on current systems and services. These pressures arise from factors including an increasing backlog of asylum claims, slower than expected progress in resettling Afghans, significant numbers of Ukrainians arriving in the UK and an increase in small boat crossings via the English Channel.

5.2 Government's 'New Plan for Immigration' includes:

- A 'Full Dispersal' asylum system, incorporating all local authorities in England, Scotland and Wales as asylum dispersal areas.
- The [Illegal Migration Bill](#) which aims to change the law on whether people arriving in the UK, outside of prescribed routes, can claim asylum in the UK, and to remove people more quickly.
- A [Memorandum of Understanding between the UK and Rwanda](#) which includes an 'asylum partnership arrangement' that allows the UK to send some people to Rwanda who would otherwise claim asylum in the UK.
- A '[Streamlined Asylum Processing](#)' arrangement which aims to fast-track asylum claims in certain circumstances.
- Exploration of new [large asylum accommodation sites](#) to reduce the use of contingency hotels.

- [Additional funding](#) and policy measures to support the resettlement and accommodation of Afghans and Ukrainians.

5.3 Local authorities continue to play a key role in how these policies and schemes are implemented locally, working with the Government and local partners to ensure that those arriving will have access to safe accommodation, public services and community support. Further detail on the impacts for East Sussex and the County Council are outlined below.

Asylum Dispersal

5.4 The pressures described above have led to an increase in the use of hotels by the Home Office as 'contingency' accommodation for people seeking asylum, including in East Sussex. Although hotels in the county were already being used as short-term accommodation for adults awaiting Home Office decisions on their asylum applications, increasing numbers of people arriving in small boats in recent months and overcrowding at Manston migrant processing centre in Kent led to the Home Office arranging for new hotels to be stood up across the country, often at short notice.

5.5 The Home Office is also exploring the use of large sites, such as holiday accommodation, student accommodation or ex-military accommodation, as options for reducing the use of hotels; this includes the Northeye site near Bexhill. Concerns about the suitability of specific sites, relating to the welfare of those people who may be placed there and the stretched capacity of local services, are being discussed with key partners and Home Office officials to inform planning and decision making. ESCC continues to engage with Government officials to ensure the local context in East Sussex is understood.

Full Dispersal

5.6 The Government has extended responsibilities for asylum dispersal beyond previously specified areas (such as Hastings) and is asking all areas to take a role in dispersal, a model described as 'full dispersal'. Details of full dispersal plans for each local area are still emerging and local authorities are actively highlighting the risks and pressures to local services and infrastructure of additional asylum accommodation in East Sussex and the south east. The procurement of dispersal accommodation by the Home Office should take place after consultation with the relevant housing authority and we await further details on where accommodation may be procured in East Sussex. Areas will be allocated dispersal numbers, mainly based on a ratio to local population, and local authorities will be funded per dispersal bed.

Streamlined Asylum Process

5.7 The streamlined asylum processing model concentrates on legacy claimants from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Libya, Syria, and Yemen (those claims made before 28 June 2022). The model allows greater flexibility in processing these claims to expedite those which are likely to be granted. For claims that are successful, people will become eligible for housing and other support and services which may temporarily increase pressure on those services. Further details on implementation in East Sussex are still emerging.

Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and the National Transfer Scheme

5.8 ESCC continues to accept Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) through the National Transfer Scheme (NTS), which became mandatory in November 2021. In early 2022, the number of UASC each local authority was expected to care for through the NTS increased from 0.07% of the child population to 0.1%. Through a combination of spontaneous arrivals and UASC received through the NTS, we have seen a steady increase in the numbers we are supporting, which currently stands at 74 looked after children and 110 care leavers (a 16% increase on 2021/22). UASC represented 25% of ESCC new entrants to care in 2022/23 and now make up 30% of care leavers.

5.9 There has been an increase in the number of UASC placed in hotel accommodation by the Home Office, whilst awaiting transfer through the NTS to local authorities. In East Sussex, Children's Services has worked with the Home Office and partner agencies to ensure safeguarding services are in place. Weekly multi-agency meetings take place with the Home Office, health services and Sussex Police to address any safeguarding concerns. A significant number of UASC went missing from the hotels across the South East in 2022-23, including in East Sussex. In line with our safeguarding procedures multi-agency strategy meetings were convened for each child accommodated in East Sussex, with regular review meetings taking place whilst the child is still missing.

5.10 In the autumn of 2022/23, 47 young people accommodated in adult asylum seeker hotels in East Sussex came forward disputing their initial age assessment. Children's Services is required to undertake age assessments in each case. 50% of these young people subsequently became looked after by ESCC as UASC. The proposed development of Northeye as an asylum accommodation site could add significant further pressures to Children's Services capacity and sufficiency of placements if the same proportions of age disputes are seen.

5.11 The new Illegal Migration Bill aims to deter people from crossing the channel in small boats by preventing those that do so from claiming asylum in the UK and detaining and removing them from the country. It places a new duty on the Home Secretary to remove those entering the UK by irregular means via a safe country. The only exceptions to this duty are for people at risk of "serious and irreversible harm" and unaccompanied children until they turn 18. The Bill does not place any significant new duties on local authorities in relation to accommodating and supporting UASC. There is an expectation, however, that UASC will be moved quickly into local authority care and the Home Office will be required to step in through hotel provision only 'sparingly and temporarily'. The expectation is that once they reach age 18 the young people will be recalled by the Home Office and removed from the country.

5.12 It is currently unclear exactly what implications the legislation, if passed, will have for East Sussex. It is possible that the prospect of removal at age 18 will significantly increase the numbers of young people in our care or housed in hotels in East Sussex who go missing, which will place additional requirements on Children's Services as well as the Police locally. There are also tensions between this legislation and the current law in relation to the protection and wellbeing of children (the Children Act 1989) which could create challenges for our staff on the front line in terms of how they best support children until they reach age 18.

Refugee Resettlement

Afghan Resettlement Schemes

5.13 Government established two resettlement schemes for Afghan citizens. For councils who support refugees to resettle through the above schemes, the Government has provided a standard integration funding package. Refugees waiting to be resettled are placed in 'bridging accommodation' (usually hotels) until more permanent housing is found. There are no such bridging hotels in East Sussex, and district and borough councils lead on resettling Afghans in East Sussex.

Visa schemes

5.14 The Government has created schemes which enable people from certain states, for example Hong Kong, to apply for visas and enter the UK. The terms of these visa schemes vary, but they usually enable people to access services, benefits, and the right to work whilst in the UK. Numbers of people entering East Sussex on this visa are not available, but we

engage with the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration (SESPM) and local partners to ensure people arriving in the county through this route can access the support they need.

Ukraine refugee response

5.15 In response to the refugee crisis arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Government established two main routes through which Ukrainian refugees can enter the UK - the Ukraine Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine (HfU), under which Ukrainian nationals can be sponsored to come to the UK by private individuals.

5.16 At the end of February 2023 almost 1600 Ukrainian guests had arrived in East Sussex on a HfU visa, matched with over 600 sponsors. To date upwards of 600 guests have moved on from their original hosts, with a high proportion of guests moving to positive accommodation outcomes, and around 60% of guests remaining with their original hosts. Ongoing support to hosts and guests remains vital to sustain arrangements and facilitate planned onward moves in a challenging housing market.

Future local support

5.17 In this context of new and developing policy and legislation, and the potential future impact of climate change and further international conflicts, expectations are that the numbers of refugees and asylum seekers may increase. Given the national expectation that all regions will contribute, it is anticipated that activity to support refugees and asylum seekers will be a significant and long term area of work and focus for the Council going forward. This will require development of our local resources, expertise and knowledge in these areas, a strengthening of existing and new partnerships, and a clear and joined up strategic approach across East Sussex and the wider region. This work will be led by the newly established Migrant Support Team, located in ASCH and working with teams across the organisation, including in Children's Services.

6. Communities

Financial Inclusion

6.1 In response to increases in the cost of living, and resulting impacts on households in the county, ESCC established the multi-agency Financial Inclusion Steering Group. The group brings together the VCSE, NHS, district and borough councils, DWP, and all ESCC departments to collectively work towards addressing financial inclusion.

6.2 The Steering Group has agreed a set of priorities to enable partners to better understand, develop and respond to the pressures that residents are experiencing. These include:

- strengthening data and developing a compelling evidence base;
- supporting cross-sectorial peer learning and knowledge sharing in relation to activities and services that can improve Financial Inclusion for residents;
- collaboratively developing approaches to service delivery that improve Financial Inclusion for the residents of East Sussex;
- maximising funding opportunities and the receipt of benefits and other support financial support to vulnerable residents and communities; and
- providing access to the right information.

6.3 This work is expected to be ongoing, with the priority being the identification of households in poverty or at risk of being in poverty and providing advice and support to ensure that they are in receipt of any benefits or other financial support that they may be eligible to claim.

Household Support Fund extension

6.4 The Household Support Fund (HSF) was introduced by Government in response to increases in the cost of living. Funding is aimed at anyone who is vulnerable or cannot pay for essentials and is distributed via local authorities. For 2023/24 ESCC will be receiving £7,793,567 from the HSF which will be allocated through several routes, reflecting national guidance that ESCC and partners should consider the needs of various households including families with children of all ages, pensioners, unpaid carers, care leavers and disabled people.

Community Networks

6.5 ESCC commissioned Collaborate Community Interest Company to review the learning from Covid-19 Community Hubs and recommend how our collective learning could help embed the benefits of Community Hubs in the longer term. The resulting Community Networks programme will ensure we align with the needs and priorities of partners and communities, including:

- contributing to our [Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#) in East Sussex and our Sussex Integrated Care Strategy
- managing interdependencies with our Early Help strategy for families and the development of Family Hubs
- alignment with Local Plans at district and borough level
- alignment with Public Health led initiatives and programmes
- alignment with the priorities of the VCSE Alliance and wider VCSE sector.

6.6 The delivery of Community Networks in East Sussex, alongside other priorities, will be taken forward by the newly brought together Partnerships Team within ASCH, working across the Council and with key partners from the statutory and VCSE sector.

Community Safety

Community Safety Partnerships and Anti-Social Behaviour

6.7 The overall national policy for crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) is set out in the Government's [Beating Crime Plan](#). As part of this, an in-depth review of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) has been undertaken to initially improve their transparency, accountability, and effectiveness, before assessing their position within the wider landscape of local partnerships. It is considering introducing a new duty for CSPs to report on local ASB strategy and delivery to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs), as well as legislation to set out the PCC role in the ASB Community Trigger process. The findings of this part of the review concluded that, although the importance of local partnerships such as CSPs was widely acknowledged, they were not being used as effectively as they could be.

6.8 In order to take this forward, the Government has recently published an [Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plan](#) and launched a consultation which proposes changes to: the relationship between CSPs and PCCs, the role of both in tackling ASB, and the nature and application of the ASB powers currently available to police forces, local authorities and social landlords. The East Sussex CSPs already work closely with the PCC's office and receive annual funding from the PCC to support community safety initiatives. Although ASB is managed at lower tier authority level, ESCC is working with community safety partners and the Office of the PCC to design the operating model for the proposed 'immediate justice' service that will be rolled out across Sussex.

Serious Violence Duty

6.9 The Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Act 2022 has placed new duties on schools, police, councils, and health to prevent serious violence. The [Serious Violence Duty](#)

requires specified authorities, including councils and Youth Justice Services, to work together to produce an evidence-based analysis of serious violence in their local area and then formulate and implement a strategy detailing how they will respond to those issues. The Act and the Duty is far-reaching and will impact upon many of the services delivered by ESCC and its partnership arrangements. ESCC will have an essential and leading role to play to prevent and address serious violence, beyond involvement in the production of a needs assessment and strategy.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

6.10 The Modern Slavery Act 2015 and independent review 2021 sets out the policy context for local authorities in tackling these issues. [The Modern Slavery Bill](#) is currently working its way through parliament and aims to enhance the efforts in tackling modern slavery supply chains and to further strengthen support measures for victims of human trafficking. Councils have a key role to play in tackling modern slavery, including in identifying and supporting victims and working in partnership locally. The Council will be assessing compliance within the legislative framework by using the LGA 'maturity matrix', which provides a framework for local authorities to assess their current progress and plan future activity on modern slavery.

Preventing Violent Extremism

6.11 The policy context for this work is set out in a number of Government documents, including:

- the Counter-terrorism strategy [CONTEST](#) 2018, which aims to reduce the risk to the UK and its citizens and interests overseas from terrorism;
- the [Protect Duty](#) Bill, which aims to enhance national security by introducing new security requirements for certain public locations;
- changes to the Channel management process under the Government's Prevent anti-extremism programme, giving more responsibility and autonomy to local government safeguarding panels; and
- the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019

6.12 In 2023 the Home Office published the [Independent Review of Prevent](#) which considered the UK's strategy for protecting people vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Government has accepted all 34 recommendations in full and these will inform the development of the East Sussex Prevent Plan for the current year.

National and local plans for tackling Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

6.13 The Government published the National VAWG strategy in November 2021 and the Tackling Domestic Abuse Plan in March 2022. Its strategic priorities (of prevention, supporting victims, pursuing perpetrators and a stronger system and partnership working) align with the priorities set within the Pan-Sussex Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Abuse and VAWG Strategic Framework, which was updated in March 2022 to encompass VAWG and the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021. In order to meet the statutory requirement under Part 4 of the new Act, ESCC has a legal duty to support victims of domestic abuse and their children living in refuges and other safe accommodation. ESCC has been allocated funding for 2021-2025 to meet this new requirement.

Drug and alcohol treatment work and Project ADDER

6.14 The publication of the Government's new ten year Combatting Drugs Strategy ('From Harm to Hope') in 2021 requires local partnerships to establish an effective governance mechanism, undertake a comprehensive substance misuse needs assessment, and produce a local strategy. Additional Government resources are being made available to realise these requirements. This work is overseen by the East Sussex Harm to Hope Board, a sub-group of the East Sussex Safer Communities Board.

6.15 Additional Supplementary Substance Misuse Treatment and Recovery Grant (SSMTRG), now including the funding for Project ADDER, has been made available to East Sussex from Government to meet the outcomes of the Combatting Drugs Strategy. The funding has enabled the expansion of Project ADDER from Hastings to the whole county. The Council has received funding from the SSMTRG - Housing Support Grant to support those in treatment with a housing need in East Sussex, with the aim of preventing people from losing stable accommodation, and funding from the Rough Sleeper Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant to deliver focused support to keep rough sleepers in Hastings engaged in drug and alcohol treatment.

6.16 The Council has also received additional funding from the Office of Health Improvement and Disparities to improve access to inpatient detoxification, and to improve the employability of those in structured treatment. There are also significant contributions – both financial and in kind - to this area of work from ASCH, and the Office of the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner.

Trading Standards

6.17 The Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Bill is currently being considered in Parliament. When it was first introduced the Bill was intended to revoke all pieces of EU derived legislation by 31 December 2023, unless specifically kept or replaced. However, the Government now intends to amend the Bill to replace the cut-off point with a list of 600 laws that will be replaced by the end of the year. Among the laws to be revoked or replaced are ones that may have a direct impact on Trading Standards and potentially our ability to intervene in consumer issues. We will monitor this closely, as any reforms in such a volume will potentially have an impact on Trading Standards and, depending on how they are implemented, our resources and focus.

Local resilience arrangements

6.18 In December 2022, the [UK Government Resilience Framework](#) was released. This sets out the Government's aspirations for widespread changes to the way in which resilience activity is managed within the UK and, in particular, how it can be integrated with wider policy areas. The approach in Sussex will be informed pilots which commenced in Spring 2023.

6.19 Rother District Council has joined the East Sussex Resilience and Emergencies Partnership (ESREP) which means that all local authorities in East Sussex are now members alongside East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service. This will enable us to create shared, strategic approaches across the whole of Sussex to create efficiencies and opportunities to standardise ways of working across the county.

National planning reforms

6.20 The Government introduced the [Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill](#) to Parliament in 2022, which emphasises the importance of a plan-led system (i.e. the Local Plan sets out where, when and how development will take place). This approach is broadly welcomed from by the County Council, although it will increase the need for timely and effective input into the district and borough Local Plan processes, particularly through our role as an infrastructure provider. Other changes and reforms proposed focus on matters including infrastructure funding, environmental assessment of proposals, enforcement, and providing additional protection to heritage assets. These will all impact on the Council, both within our County Planning Authority role and through our statutory consultee and infrastructure provider role. Identifying these impacts and ensuring that the Council can adapt its relevant service provision will be a critical task as the Bill progresses and more details are published.

6.21 In December 2022, the Government published further detail in a [consultation](#) that sought views on a proposed update of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which would set out how housing figures should be derived and applied so that communities can respond to local circumstances. No immediate changes to the standard method to calculating local housing need were proposed. The consultation also sought views on its proposed approach to preparing National Development Management Policies (NDMPs). These would be national policies with statutory weight – effectively ‘trumping’ local policies. The consultation provided only limited detail on NDMPs but it explained they would be set out in a separate (yet-to-be consulted upon) document.

6.22 The initial changes to the NPPF are expected to be published imminently and additional proposed changes are expected to be published for consultation later this year. Changes to national planning policy are having an impact upon the ability of local planning authorities to get an up to date Local Plans in place. In East Sussex, the majority of the county does not currently have an up to date Local Plan, meaning that the majority of development proposals that we are asked to comment upon, and plan for their infrastructure needs, are speculative in nature as they are not supported by an allocation in a Development Plan and are not part of a wider, holistic plan. Whilst this situation remains, workloads for our statutory consultee functions are expected to remain higher than normal and the ability to forward plan for infrastructure is undermined.

6.23 The Government has also published a consultation on the proposed Infrastructure Levy (IL). The IL would reform, and largely replace, the existing system of developer contributions (Section 106 planning obligations and the Community Infrastructure Levy). The new system is intended to end lengthy negotiations and deliver a mandatory, streamlined and locally determined levy that will be calculated once a project is complete, instead of at the stage the site is given planning permission. The Government recognises that the levy will be a significant change so it will be introduced through ‘test and learn’ over a 10-year period. The Government intends for the reforms to give local leaders the tools to bring forward more infrastructure that communities need. However, there are concerns that this approach could result in spending on infrastructure such as roads, schools, and doctors' surgeries being reduced as the new levy can be spent on a wider array of things such as affordable housing and local council services. To help ensure that development continues to help fund essential infrastructure delivery, the County Council Network (CCN) has argued that the Government should allocate a certain portion of infrastructure levy receipts directly to county councils. The outcome of the consultation is awaited.

7. Highways and Transport

7.1 This section sets out a range of national and local developments impacting on transport planning and infrastructure in the county, encompassing highways maintenance, road safety, the refresh of the Local Transport Plan and planned improvements to local public transport, roads and measures to support transport decarbonisation.

Highways Maintenance

7.2 The new contract for highways and infrastructure services in East Sussex went live on 1 May 2023. The contract, valued at £297m, will run for an initial seven years, with an option to extend to a maximum of 14 years – worth up to £730m. Balfour Beatty Living Places will be responsible for maintaining the county's roads, pavements, drainage, street lights, traffic lights, highway structures and bridges in line with the County Council's asset management policies and investigatory levels. They will also provide winter gritting across the county and deliver highway improvement and maintenance schemes.

7.3 Highways capital investment was increased by £3.1m annually, in addition to

a £5.8m one-off contribution, as part of the 2022/23 RPPR process to reflect the importance of our road network and its role in providing connectivity for our businesses and communities. The additional £5.8m in addition to the existing annual capital maintenance programme provided for additional highway improvement works including further patching, lines and road markings, repairs to pavements and repair or replacement of road signs. These works have a visible positive impact for all road users. Proposals for further investment in highways maintenance in 2023/24 are being considered by Cabinet, in light of the significant increase in potholes and failures on the network caused by poor weather conditions experienced across the county during the winter.

Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP)

7.4 In September 2022, the Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed that ESCC would receive its indicative allocation of £41.4m in BSIP funding. The majority of the capital funding element was specifically to deliver bus priority measures by the end of financial year 2024/25. In October 2022, the Council commenced a feasibility, design and review study across three packages of bus priority measures focussed on South Wealden to Eastbourne, Eastbourne Town, and Seahaven Towns. The progression of the above schemes will be dependent on the outcomes of the feasibility study and then consultation and further design stages. Funding will come from BSIP capital allocation of £18.5m for bus priority measures.

Refresh of the Local Transport Plan

7.5 The [East Sussex Local Transport Plan](#) (LTP) sets out our strategy and policies for how we plan to invest in improving transport and maintaining the roads in the county to meet transport needs. Our current LTP covers 2011 to 2026, but it will be updated to reflect considerable recent changes in national, regional and local policy related to the environment, health and economy. The updated plan will influence how we plan and deliver transport in East Sussex in the future and support the Council's response to the climate emergency. The Government is expected to publish guidance on updating LTPs imminently and our Plan will need to align with this. There is an expectation that local authorities will have an updated plan in place by summer 2024.

7.6 It is proposed to consult on a draft strategy during autumn 2023, including bespoke consultation activities with specific groups, for example young people and the business sector, alongside a public consultation. Formal approval of the Plan will be sought in early 2024.

Transport decarbonisation

7.7 Transport is now the greatest contributor to carbon emissions in East Sussex, and supporting this area will be a major part of carbon reduction within the county. The Government's Transport Decarbonisation Plan, 'Decarbonising Transport: a Better, Greener Britain' was published in July 2021. This sets out the pathway to net zero transport in the UK, the wider benefits of net zero transport and the principles that underpin their approach to delivering net zero transport. The Transport Decarbonisation Plan is influencing our own transport policies and plans for the county through the current update to the East Sussex LTP. To tackle transport related emissions, we will need to consider how we can use our cars less, how we move away from planning for vehicles to planning for businesses, people, and places more in the future; and ensure active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport become the preferred choice for short journeys or part of longer journeys.

7.8 To complement our LTP, our Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, emerging Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy, Bus Service Improvement Plan as well as our Enhanced Bus Partnership will support the transport decarbonisation agenda at a local level.

Active travel

7.9 Active Travel England (ATE) is a new Government executive agency established to support walking, wheeling, and cycling, sponsored by the DfT. ATE is responsible for:

- allocating and awarding active travel funding
- enforcement of new cycling design guidance
- providing scheme design and implementation advice alongside scheme inspection
- monitoring local authority performance on active travel – including annual review of a local authority self-assessed active travel grade.

7.10 In January 2023, we secured £180,443 of Capability revenue funding. This will fund the development of pipeline schemes for future capital funding bids, including three school streets schemes, an active travel neighbourhood scheme and a potential segregated cycle lane, which will involve collaborative and co-design activities with communities and learning opportunities in relation to active travel.

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy and local e-vehicle charging

7.11 The Council has made a commitment to develop a strategy to support the growing demand and needs of Electric Vehicles (EV) users within East Sussex. To understand the scope of what is required, ESCC has worked closely with external consultants, other public organisations within the county, and with district and borough councils. This work has highlighted the key areas and locations that will require EV infrastructure, as well as delivery challenges and funding gaps.

7.12 In March 2023, the sum of £4.4m was provisionally allocated to the Council under the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. This funding will help to scale up the delivery of local charge points, enabling more residents, especially those without off-street parking, to switch to EVs. The ability to charge at or close to home is a major concern to many EV users and this will feature as main priority within the strategy. Further scope within the LEVI grant now allows consideration of sites that will support, tourism, taxis, and commercial vehicles, and work continues to identify suitable locations for inclusion. ESCC has submitted the Expression of Interest to access this funding in late May, requesting funding in 2023/24 in preference to being allocated funds later in 2024/25.

Road Safety

7.13 The statutory duty placed on us, and the expectation of our residents, in terms of road safety is significant. To manage this, we have a range of measures and programmes designed to fulfil the wide-ranging pressures we face, including an annual assessment of crashes occurring on our road network to inform prioritisation of road safety schemes as part of the Local Safety Scheme or Route Study work. We also receive many requests for small scale road safety improvements to be made which do not meet the requirements to be considered through the above routes. To address these concerns, £750,000 has been allocated from the Community Match underspend to deliver community focused road safety interventions. Selected schemes will address identified road safety concerns, and will be identified by considering a range of issues and specific site characteristics, weighted to define their relative priority. Current funding will enable a three-year programme of works to be delivered. Approval has also been given for any future underspends from the Community Match allocation to be allocated to support further community focused schemes.

7.14 £500,000 has also been approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment to undertake a Speed Management Programme. The funding will be split over the next three years with additional ongoing funding identified within future Capital Programmes. As part of the Speed Management Programme, a review will identify lengths of the main road network that would benefit from a reduced speed limit. It will also check that existing speed limits are effective and producing the desired reductions in vehicle speeds

using available speed data and vehicle telematics. The review will also identify sites of greatest need and local concern where proven traffic management measures would have a positive effect and enhance the effectiveness of the speed limit. Over the next three years, the project will see more than 25 stretches of road benefit from speed limit reductions or measures that will increase the effectiveness of existing speed limits.

7.15 Using initial one-off funding from East Sussex Public Health, and working with the Behavioural Insights Team and partners from Sussex Safer Roads Partnership, we launched an innovative programme to understand the causes of serious collisions and trial interventions to help reduce the number of people being killed or seriously injured on East Sussex roads. Further funding has now been secured from Public Health to enable these trials to continue. We are currently working up potential interventions, aimed at our identified priority groups, that can be implemented through a randomised control trial. The outcome of these trials will be fully evaluated to improve our understanding of how to use behavioural science techniques to target those most at risk.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) Strategic Investment Plan

7.16 [TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan](#) (SIP) provides a framework for delivering their 2020 Transport Strategy by outlining the structure for investment in strategic transport infrastructure, services, and regulatory interventions up to 2050. Underpinned by a robust evidence base, the SIP as a regional plan is intended to provide advice to the Secretary of State for Transport on the investment priorities across the TfSE geography.

7.17 The SIP outlines two types of investment packages:

- global policy interventions of national regulatory and policy activities such as adoption of zero emission technologies to decarbonise transport; road user charging; and promotion of mobility methods of travel, which would be delivered across the South East; and
- place-based packages of multi modal (highways, rail, mass transit/bus, active travel) interventions within three area packages which cover parts of East Sussex:
 - Solent and Sussex Coast: A27/A259 and Coastway rail corridors
 - London - Sussex Coast: M23/A23, A22, A26 and A272, and Brighton Mainline, Uckfield rail corridors
 - Kent, Medway and East Sussex: A21, A259 east of Hastings and Marshlink rail corridors

7.18 Following agreement from the Partnership Board, the £45bn SIP has been submitted to the DfT with a request that it be considered as future investment decisions are made.

Exceat Bridge replacement

7.19 In October 2021, ESCC was awarded £7.9m funding from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to replace the Exceat Bridge. The scheme will be sensitively designed to reflect the outstanding natural landscape and to protect the unique nature of the area and ensure that the work we do not only benefits those using the road, but also protects and enhances this ecologically sensitive location. In December 2022, planning permission was granted from the South Downs National Park Authority with conditions in place to protect the natural landscape. Final detailed designs for the bridge are being completed along with negotiations for the required areas of land. Construction is expected to start at the beginning of 2024 and is expected to take between one and two years.

National Highways Programmes – A27 and A21

7.20 In 2020, Government published its second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2), covering the period 2020 – 2025. RIS2 identifies that further work will be undertaken on developing proposals for the A27 between Lewes and Polegate as a potential pipeline scheme for construction between 2025 and 2030. This further work, managed by National Highways (NH - formerly Highways England), has commenced but is at an early stage.

7.21 RIS2 also included the development of a package of road safety improvements for the A21 corridor north of Hastings. NH continues work on the development of the proposed safety package study for the A21 which will be rolled out over the life of RIS2. While not included in the current RIS, we will continue to lobby and make the case to Government, including through TfSE, for improvements to the Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst, Flimwell and Hurst Green sections of the A21 in a future RIS.

Rail developments

7.22 Government has confirmed its intention to create a new public body, Great British Railways (GBR), which will run and plan the network, own the rail infrastructure, procure passenger services, and set and collect most fares and timetables. GBR is currently in shadow format, due to come into effect by autumn 2024, subject to legislation being progressed. The transfer of the current powers held by the Secretary of State for Transport to GBR will enable private partners to be contracted to operate trains, with franchising being replaced by Passenger Service Contracts. Fares and tickets will be simplified, including standardising mobile and online ticketing and flexible season tickets, and there will be better integration of rail with buses and cycling, as well as other forms of transport. It is important that we continue to be involved in future processes associated with the delivery of the Plan for Rail and engage with GBR to ensure that these changes benefit our residents, those visiting East Sussex, and businesses operating in and out of the county.

7.23 Following the Kent and East Sussex Rail Connectivity study, in May 2021 a Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) which set out the strategic case for four options (two in East Sussex) to potentially improve rail connectivity to the Kent and East Sussex coast was submitted to Government. A formal response has yet to be received, however the scheme has been included in the Kent, Medway and East Sussex package of interventions in the TfSE Strategic Investment Plan. In the meantime, local MPs and the local authorities in East Sussex and Kent are working collaboratively to explore opportunities to lever in private sector finance or investment to fund the delivery of the rail schemes identified.

8. Economy

8.1 The following sections outline recent developments in Government policy and investment programmes that will affect the support we provide, with partners, to drive sustainable local economic growth in future. There will be challenges and limitations in the scope and scale of the delivery of some of this support in future, arising from reduced availability of growth funding for the county, as detailed in the sections below.

Supporting the local economy

8.2 The economic climate facing businesses across the UK, and locally in East Sussex, is one of unprecedented challenges. Following nearly 3 years of disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the changes to the UK's trading relationship with the EU, businesses must also now contend with the sharpest increase in costs for 40 years, high inflation, energy price instability, and record staff turnover. We will continue to monitor the situation and build a "pipeline" of interventions that can be put in place to support businesses with available resources.

8.3 The Team East Sussex (TES) Economy Recovery Plan (ERP), which was put in place to help businesses, people and communities recover from Covid, has reached its natural conclusion. We are currently working with partners to produce an Economic Insight Analysis which will set out the evidence base for a range of interventions that will have most impact on the economy, particularly in relation to productivity, innovation and pre-scale up businesses. This will inform a new Growth Strategy for the county to support longer term recovery and growth.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs)

8.4 Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) were introduced across England in 2011 as partnerships between councils, businesses and other stakeholders, focussed on driving productivity and job creation. East Sussex is part of the South East LEP (SELEP), which also includes Essex, Kent, Medway, Southend and Thurrock. In early 2022, the Government set out the “pathway to devolution”, where LEP functions were to be integrated into local democratic institutions across the country in a phased way by 2030. In the 2023 Spring budget the Government announced that it is now minded to end core funding for LEPs from April 2024 and integrate LEP functions into local government.

8.5 Following this announcement, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) launched an eight-week information gathering exercise to gain a fuller understanding of the impacts of their proposal if it is taken forward. DLUHC is expected to notify LEPs and all local and combined authorities of the outcome by summer 2023. Whatever the outcome, it is clear that the SELEP Delivery Plan for this year (2023/24) will need to include some immediate actions to support local areas in their moves toward devolution of these roles, functions and responsibilities. We know that many of SELEP’s existing economic development functions will need to be worked into devolved frameworks, but the actual activities to be devolved, and precisely where they should be devolved to, are all yet to be determined, and so must form the basis of the discussions. We have established a local authority group to consider the implications of both the outcome of the consultation and emerging devolution proposals in Essex.

National economic investment programmes

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

8.6 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) is the Government's domestic replacement for the European Structural and Investment Fund Programme (ESIF) in which the UK will continue to participate until the end of 2023. The Government launched the prospectus for the new UKSPF programme in 2022 with a focus on three main investment themes: Communities and Place, Supporting Local Business, and People and Skills. Each district and borough council in East Sussex has been allocated £1m, with the exception of Wealden District Council which has been allocated £1.2m, with each allocation covering a three year period from April 2022 – March 2025, giving a total allocation of £5.2m to East Sussex. For the limited UKSPF funding available, priorities have been determined by each borough and district authority against the three investment themes.

8.7 ESCC has been working with district and borough partners to develop and manage pan-East Sussex business support programmes and skills interventions. The business support programme has two strands: ‘Start’ will support new early-stage businesses in East Sussex that have registered within two years of receiving support, and ‘Specialise’ will allow businesses to access specialist advice and support from a pool of qualified and experienced consultants who are experts in their field. In terms of people and skills investment, Rother, Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden Councils are all contributing funding towards the delivery of a coordinated ‘Moving on Up’ programme, helping individuals in supported and temporary housing, and those furthest from the workplace, to access training, employability support and support into and in work.

Multiply programme

8.8 In April 2022, the Government also released details of the new UK-wide Multiply Programme (part of the UKSPF) worth £559m. The aim of the programme is to reach adults over 19 years old to improve their functional numeracy skills to a qualification at Level 2.

8.9 ESCC is responsible for managing the programme in East Sussex which has been allocated £2.5m over the three year period from April 2022 to March 2025. The programme has been launched with partners from Further Education, independent training providers, and our local voluntary and community sector who are commissioned to deliver a wide range of numeracy provision. Over a thousand residents will be supported in 2023/24 and in 2024/25.

Levelling Up Fund

8.10 Government announced its £4.8bn Levelling Up Fund (LUF) in 2021. This provides funding to invest in local infrastructure that has a visible impact on people and their communities. The LUF addresses the three investment themes of transport, regeneration and town centre, and culture.

8.11 Each upper tier local authority has the right to submit one bid on transport investment throughout the lifetime of the LUF programme. ESCC's first round bid was successful, receiving just under £8m in June 2021 to deliver the replacement of the Exceat Bridge, as outlined above, linking two of our growth areas, Eastbourne and Newhaven, which are also within the highest priority areas for the LUF.

8.12 Additionally, the Government announced in October 2021 that both the Eastbourne Borough Council and Lewes District Council LUF first round bids were successful with £19.8m and £12.7m respectively awarded. The Eastbourne LUF bid included £4.8m towards the pedestrianisation of the Seaside Road to Grand Parade section of Terminus Road (Victoria Place) which forms part of the wider public realm and pedestrian improvements that have been delivered in the town centre in recent years. The Lewes bid focussed on Newhaven, with investment in Newhaven fisheries.

8.13 In January 2023, Rother District Council secured £19.2m from the second round of the LUF for the redevelopment of the De La Warr Pavilion, including investment in satellite infrastructure to involve communities in Bexhill who are not close to the seafront. The Government has indicated that a third round of LUF will be made available in 2023/24 and Hastings Borough Council is intending to work up a proposal for submission. Hastings and Rother will benefit from a share of the £400m LUF fund delivered through Levelling Up Partnerships (LUPs) which are expected to provide bespoke place-based regeneration throughout 2023/24 and 2024/25. ESCC will continue working with colleagues in Hastings and Rother as plans are developed to define the interventions and support the bidding process and successful implementation.

Skills

8.14 The Skills East Sussex (SES) board has agreed the following priorities for 2021-2030 and sector-based task groups are working to action plans to address these:

- ensuring national policy and funding supports the delivery of learning and skills in East Sussex;
- enabling our Further Education (FE) and Higher Education (HE) establishments to recruit excellent educators with specialist technical knowledge;
- improving our digital skills and digital inclusion;
- upskilling our workforce to increase regional productivity;
- supporting the unemployed and unqualified; and
- developing skills and provision for a Net Zero future.

8.15 The impact of advances in technology and the move towards Net Zero are important considerations for skills in East Sussex. Skills East Sussex has commissioned 'Future Skills' research, in partnership with the Institute for Employment Studies, to bring together feedback from over 300 local employers, alongside desk based research. The research will

help us better understand the impact of Net Zero, Artificial Intelligence, Digital/Technology, Brexit and the current economic challenges on the East Sussex economy and employment landscape. The findings will help our providers to plan future learning, and our employers to better understand the upskilling needs of their current workforce to support their businesses and the East Sussex economy.

8.16 The 2021 Skills for Jobs White Paper heralded the development of Local Skills Improvement Plans (LSIPs), with Sussex Chamber of Commerce successfully applying to be one of eight national trailblazers. The LSIP is a collaboration with employers, education providers, local authorities and partners across Sussex, and builds on the successful model developed by SES and sector-based task groups. In 2023 the LSIP trailblazer is submitting a proposal to the DfE for a forward plan to support its future offers and development. This plan will shape the use of forthcoming Local Strategic Initiative Funding.

Culture and tourism

8.17 Several initiatives are progressing to help harness the potential of the visitor economy in the county. A south east consortium, led by Kent County Council and reaching from Essex to West Sussex, has secured one of six awards nationally to deliver the 'Create Growth Programme', a business support programme targeting pre-growth, intellectually property rich creative businesses with an appetite for growth through investor finance. The programme award of £1.275m sits alongside a £7m investment fund which is being delivered nationally and which south east creative businesses will be eligible to apply for.

8.18 The Turner Prize will be hosted in Eastbourne in 2023/24, and ESCC has worked with local partners to secure an additional £500,000 of funding from Arts Council England to deliver a £1m programme of activity to maximise the benefit of the prize for local young people, hospitality businesses and other tourist attractions.

8.19 The Sussex Visitor Economy Industry Group of leading business representatives has been established to advise the Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative (ESCC, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council) on pan-Sussex tourism development. With UK Community Renewal Fund investment, the Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative has supported the production of a prospectus for wine tourism which will be launched this year.

9. Environment and Climate Change

9.1 The following paragraphs detail the range of recent national commitments, strategies and legislation that impact the Council's work to deliver climate change mitigation and adaptation, and also to protect the local natural environment. It is also important to note that net zero is increasingly integrated into wider policy, for example in areas such as housing, transport and public procurement. Whilst the policy context below outlines the main recent developments, it is not an exhaustive list of every new policy that touches on climate change. Much national guidance or detail on plans for delivery is still awaited, including clear expectations on how central and local government will interact in delivery of net zero, and how several commitments made in the Environment Act are to be delivered. The level of funding allocated to delivering new national commitments may also be insufficient. We await further information on funding new burdens for ESCC arising from the Environment Act.

Climate change - national policy context

9.2 In 2021, the UK Government published its [Net Zero Strategy 'Build Back Greener'](#). This did not include any statutory responsibility for local authorities to reduce carbon emissions, but did set out commitments to:

- set clearer expectations for local places, clarify how the partnership with local government should work, and consider how action at national, regional, local, and community levels fit together;

- provide resources for local places to deliver stronger contributions to national net zero targets; and
- build local capacity and capability.

9.3 As the Net Zero Strategy indicates, local authorities are widely considered to have a key role in decarbonising services such as local transport, waste disposal, and public buildings. More broadly, local authorities are seen to have a key role to play in creating change amongst residents and businesses, via their investment and procurement decisions, planning and placemaking responsibilities, and by direct engagement with residents. In 2021, the National Audit Office reported that 91% of local authorities have adopted a commitment to decarbonise either their own activities, their local area, or both.

9.4 The 2022 US Inflation Reduction Act and the EU Green Industrial Plan have significantly changed the global landscape for net zero investment, ushering in significant state subsidies for net zero industries. The UK is expected to respond to these developments, most likely through the 2023 Autumn Statement.

'Mission Zero' Independent Review of Government Net Zero Policy

9.5 In 2022, the Government commissioned Chris Skidmore MP, a former Energy Minister, to undertake an independent review of the UK's net zero policies. The report, ['Mission Zero'](#), was published in January 2023 and contained 129 separate recommendations. A Government response was published in March 2023. Amongst other local actions, the review suggested a statutory duty for local authorities to take account of the UK's net zero targets, a recommendation rejected in the Government response. Commitments in the Government response with relevance to county councils are:

- Establishing a set of principles for devolving net zero funds as part of wider devolution deals
- Exploring simplification of local net zero funding
- Supporting local capacity and capability building through the Local Net Zero Hubs
- Supporting skills and economic development through a Net Zero and Nature Workforce Action Plan (due in 2024) and a Net Zero Power and Networks Workforce Action Plan (timescale to be confirmed)

Local action on climate change

9.6 ESCC declared a climate emergency in 2019. The Council set a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050. This is in line with the updated target for the whole UK agreed by Parliament in 2019. Further to this, in 2020, ESCC committed to cutting its corporate carbon emissions by an average of 13% per year. In 2021, ESCC committed an additional £9.6m to help meet this reduction target up to March 2025. A new [Climate Emergency Plan](#) was approved earlier this year, covering the period 2023-25.

9.7 ESCC commissioned modelling work to identify the most cost effective options to reach net zero. Whilst this work identified potential 'quick wins', it also demonstrated the scale of the challenge. The cost for ESCC to get to net zero for building and transport emissions (scope 1 and 2) could be approximately £200m between now and 2050, largely due to the investment needed for decarbonising heat in buildings, including schools. A key area for ESCC is bidding for external funding to maximise the impact and reach of its resources.

9.8 Even if global warming can be limited to 1.5C above pre-industrial levels, significant additional investment is likely to be needed in measures to adapt to the effects of climate change that are already locked in. Climate change adaptation refers to the adjustments we need to make in response to actual and expected climate change, to ensure that the Council can continue to operate effectively as the climate changes.

ESCC's Climate Emergency Plan commits us to:

- Assessing the Council's vulnerability to climate change
- Producing a climate risk register
- Developing a climate adaptation/ resilience strategy and programme
- Embedding climate adaptation into business-as-usual decision-making and risk management

9.9 In 2021, the Council worked with its partners on the East Sussex Environment Board to produce a [Climate Emergency Road Map](#) for the whole county, which was adopted by Team East Sussex in January 2022. The road map summarises many areas of work that the Council leads, or collaborates with partners on, to mitigate and adapt to climate change. These include programmes to support more walking, cycling and local bus services, address fuel poverty, support businesses in becoming more energy efficient, support residents to invest in renewable energy and to manage flood risk to homes and businesses. Progress on the county-wide Roadmap will continue to be driven by the Environment Board. A range of existing thematic partnerships will also continue to address climate change in East Sussex, including partnerships covering housing, waste, skills and local planning. ESCC has also recently completed a review with Community Energy South (CES) on ways to align the climate change objectives of the County Council and the network of community energy groups established in East Sussex. We also fund CES to deliver carbon literacy training in the community and recently submitted a bid with CES and UK Power Networks for funding from UK Innovate's Fast Followers programme to develop community energy plans.

Environment Act

9.10 The [Environment Act](#) received Royal Assent in November 2021 and the Government is now in the process of introducing secondary legislation, policy and guidance to implement elements of the Act. Many aspects of the Act will have implications for ESCC, but in some areas, the extent of these will not be fully understood until that secondary legislation, guidance and/or policy emerges.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

9.11 Under the Act ESCC will be a Responsible Authority for preparing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). In broad terms, the LNRS will set a spatial strategy for how and where measures to achieve nature recovery will be achieved. It has been provisionally agreed that ESCC will work in partnership with West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and the Local Nature Partnership to prepare the evidence base and undertake the necessary stakeholder engagement for the preparation of LNRSs. This should ensure a degree of consistency between the two strategies that will eventually exist – one for West Sussex and one for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Biodiversity

9.12 Related to the production of the LNRS is the mandating, through the Environment Act, of a requirement for new developments to deliver a minimum of a 10% gain in biodiversity, known as Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). Following consultations in November 2021 and September 2022, DEFRA published an updated metric and associated guidance in March 2023. Whilst this indicates how Government expects BNG to be implemented, secondary legislation and guidance, along with a national site register for off-site BNG, is still awaited. A phased approach to the implementation of BNG is due to commence in autumn 2023. Whilst the preference will be for the gain to be delivered on development sites (in line with the mitigation hierarchy), there will be occasions where off-site gain is necessary, and the LNRS will be used to guide this to some extent. Given delays to the commencement of the LNRS process, they are unlikely to be in place before BNG becomes mandatory for major developments in November 2023 (and for minors in April

2024). DEFRA has acknowledged that assessing and monitoring the implementation of BNG will create additional resourcing pressures on planning authorities. Clarity over additional burdens funding should be available by autumn 2023. In the meantime, some seed funding has been made available to all local planning authorities to prepare for mandatory BNG.

9.13 The Environment Act also strengthens the existing Biodiversity Duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, requiring all public authorities to consider what action they can take to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and to report on progress against that duty. The strengthened duty came into force in January 2023, and the first Biodiversity Report must be published no later than three years after that date, with subsequent reports published every five years. Whilst some indications of mandatory content have been provided, further guidance is awaited from DEFRA. Additional funding for this duty should be provided to planning authorities by autumn 2023.

Environmental Improvement Plan

9.14 The Environment Act contained a commitment to refresh the 25 year Environment Plan every five years. The first refresh took place in early 2023, via the release of a new Environmental Improvement Plan. Most of the actions outlined in the plan are part of existing plans and strategies, however, the plan made new commitments to:

- set legally binding targets for air pollutants;
- publish an air quality strategy with clear guidance to local authorities on embedding action into their wider functions; and
- launch a Local Investment in Natural Capital (LINC) programme, initially by funding several pioneering authorities.

Waste provisions

9.15 The Environment Act also has significant consequences for ESCC in its role as Waste Disposal Authority. Changes to waste management in the county will include the provision of weekly food waste collections, the introduction of a Deposit Return Scheme and the introduction of extended producer responsibility for packaging. These changes will impact ESCC's waste contracts. They are likely to include the need to modify transfer stations and introduce changes to the volumes and type of recycling materials. There are still significant unknowns in respect of these changes, including how certain elements will be funded, with a Government announcement expected imminently.

Flood risk management

9.16 The Government has stated that it wishes to implement this legislation over the next 12-18 months. It would see Lead Local Flood Authorities (such as ESCC) take on responsibility for the approval, adoption and maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) constructed as part of new developments. This will have significant implications for the Council's Flood Risk Management team, as currently our role is restricted to commenting on proposed drainage schemes at the design stage. Consultation on secondary legislation, new burdens assessments, and matters such as transitional arrangements is expected later this year. Although there will clearly be resource and budget implications for the Council these are unclear until further detail emerges.

10. Supporting Services

10.1 The below section provides updates on key local and national developments for ESCC's supporting services. Local priorities are to deliver the implementation phase of the Modernising Back Office Systems programme; deliver measures in response to workforce challenges; continue delivery of the Council's Property Asset Management Plan including

carbon reductions; and further develop digital approaches to support organisational resilience. Key national developments include public procurement and audit reforms.

Modernising Back Office Systems Programme

10.2 The Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS) Programme was established to replace the Council's core finance and Human Resources (HR) systems. The current system, SAP, will no longer be supported by the supplier beyond 2027. Replacing a system originally implemented over 15 years ago provides opportunities to take advantage of new technology which is better able to support an agile and flexible workforce, and provide easily accessible data and insight to support management decision making.

10.3 Following an extensive and robust procurement process, Oracle Fusion was selected as the new software platform, and Infosys as the implementation partner. The replacement system will deliver clear benefits, including a better user experience, undertaking transactional activity (freeing staff up to focus on more complex and value-added advice), and better availability of data and management reporting.

10.4 The programme has now moved to its implementation phase, with governance and resourcing having been refreshed to ensure that it is fit for purpose for a complex implementation, involving the replacement of the organisation's critical finance, HR, recruitment, and procurement systems.

Workforce Challenges

10.5 In common with many employers, we are experiencing significant recruitment and retention challenges as a result of the current national labour market conditions and cost of living pressures. The national labour market is the tightest it has been for 50 years with an increase in the 'participation gap', with more people of working age either retiring or moving into education. Locally, there are particular challenges in front line social care roles (qualified and unqualified) and some of our technical and professional roles such as legal services and engineering. The position is exacerbated in our more rural locations with recruitment in these areas being especially difficult. There is evidence to show that this tight labour market is putting pressure on pay levels.

10.6 The Council has put in place a number of strategies to respond to these pressures. A new employer recruitment brand – We Choose East Sussex – has been developed and launched, aimed at promoting the Council as a high quality employer of choice. Alongside this new brand, targeted recruitment and retention strategies have been put in place including a new 'Refer a Friend' scheme, an updated relocation policy, employee loans policy, salary sacrifice schemes and financial wellbeing resources.

10.7 As well as seeking to attract experienced individuals, we are also utilising approaches such as apprenticeships, traineeships and intern arrangements as a way of bringing new talent into the Council. Our experiences to date have identified the need to support some groups to become 'work ready', and additional one-off funding provided by Cabinet has funded a new Pre-Employment Co-ordinator post which has a specific responsibility for establishing clear pathways for job seekers to access opportunities within the Council. Being a diverse and inclusive place to work further supports our recruitment and retention aims.

10.8 Retention of or existing workforce is also a key aim. We are committed to supporting our staff with continuous professional development and creating an environment where staff are encouraged to learn and grow. In line with this, two new leadership development initiatives were launched during 2022/23: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and Heads of Service masterclass programme. Both initiatives were well received and evaluations are now taking place in order to further enhance and develop these programmes for the future.

We continue to develop our extensive wellbeing offer to support our staff to remain healthy and well, both in and out of work.

Property Asset Management

10.9 The Council's Asset Management Plan 2020-2025 contains an action plan to ensure operational assets are used efficiently, and a programmed approach to asset disposal has been established. There is increasing focus on ensuring the Council's assets are optimally utilised and continue to reduce their carbon and physical footprint. This includes reviewing the use of our corporate estate, including County Hall, and rationalising use where possible.

10.10 Capital investment has been targeted to improve environmental sustainability as part of the Council's net zero commitment, as well as ensuring that property assets support all Council objectives and services. Property policies are being updated to increase support for communities including common asset transfer and joint use leisure assets.

Procurement Bill

10.11 The Procurement Bill currently working its way through Parliament is expected to receive Royal Assent in July 2023. The Bill is the foundation for the Government's Transforming Public Procurement regime, which will see the biggest change to the Procurement Regulations in nearly 30 years. The Government has committed to providing a six month implementation period, which will commence once secondary legislation has been agreed. Current timescales predict that procurement will be required to be fully compliant with the regulations from July 2024, although this is dependent on the Bill passing prior to Parliament's summer recess.

10.12 The impact on procurement teams will be significant over the next two years. In preparation for the new regulations, work is required to understand existing processes, systems, people, and planned procurement activity that will be impacted. By starting planning now, we can ensure we are in the best position when the new regulations come into force. An extensive Learning and Development package will be rolled out by the Cabinet Office which will require all procurement practitioners to complete a minimum of 10 hours of training and an advanced course which will consist of three days for expert practitioners. The resource implications of the planning, training, and implementation will have a significant impact on the available resources of the procurement team.

10.13 The Cabinet Office has also confirmed that a revised National Procurement Policy Statement will be released that will align with the new regulations and continue to support our approach to Social Value and Sustainable Procurement. The onus will be on procurement professionals to take advantage of the flexibility and apply their commercial skills, whilst also aligning with local and national priorities as set out in the National Procurement Policy Statement. During the implementation period there are likely to be additional costs to develop new policies and implement the changes, with pressures around resourcing and training to ensure that Orbis Procurement is confident and compliant in delivering under the new regulations.

National Audit Issues

10.14 The challenges with the delivery of local authority audits continue, with the National Audit Office reporting that auditors were only able to give opinions on 12% of local government bodies' 2021/22 financial statements by the statutory publication deadline of 30 November 2022. This compares to 9% of opinions for the 2020/21 statements when the deadline was earlier, on 30 September 2021. This remains a significant reduction on the 97% achieved for 2015/16. Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd (PSAA) reports that 632 audits remain outstanding. This is the case for ESCC, where the audits of 2020/21 and 2021/22 accounts remain unclosed. The accounts for 2022/23 have been published

([Statement of Accounts | East Sussex County Council](#)) and are open for public inspection. It is expected that Grant Thornton will start their audit of the accounts in July 2023.

10.15 The challenge of finding sufficient staff within audit teams and heightened regulatory expectations, particularly with regard to Property, Plant and Equipment and pension valuations, is adding to these pressures. The PSAA procurement of local authority external auditors for five years, from 2023/24, focused on encouraging new audit firms into the market and a more sustainable supply. This resulted in audit fees increasing by an average of 150%. The Government has promised £45m over the three years from 2022/23 to support additional audit and financial reporting costs. The Audit, Reporting and Governance Authority (ARGA), which is being set up to replace the Financial Reporting Council, will become the new system leader for external audit in 2024, at the earliest.

10.16 The CIPFA 2022 Position Statement for Audit Committees set out principles that it expects all local government bodies to strive to adopt, including the inclusion of at least two independent members of the committee, as well as undertaking a self-assessment of committee effectiveness.

Digital development

10.17 Developments in process automation, chatbot technology and artificial intelligence (AI) present a variety of opportunities to ESCC to support organisational capacity and resilience. The rapid progression of AI-enabled solutions means that expectations of ESCC service recipients are likely to evolve as well as the variety of technical solutions that may become available.

10.18 Whilst there would be a requirement for investment in establishing the prerequisite data architecture and technology infrastructure, and skilled resources in this area, it does present an opportunity to innovate in service provision to provide a more efficient and better service to users or to increase organisational resilience.

Current and Proposed Priority and Delivery Outcomes

a) Current priority and delivery outcomes

Driving sustainable economic growth - delivery outcomes

1. East Sussex businesses are supported to succeed and grow sustainably
2. The county is an attractive place to live, work and do business
3. Individuals, communities and businesses thrive in East Sussex with the environmental and social infrastructure to meet their needs
4. The workforce has and maintains the skills needed for good quality employment to meet the needs of the current and future East Sussex economy
5. The value of our role as both a significant employer and a buyer of local goods and services is maximised
6. All children progress well from early years through school and into post-16 education, training and employment

Keeping vulnerable people safe - delivery outcomes

7. All vulnerable people in East Sussex are known to relevant local agencies and services are delivered together to meet their needs
8. People feel safe at home and well supported by their networks
9. Children grow up supported by enduring, loving relationships
10. People feel safe with services
11. We work with the wider health and care system to support people to achieve the best outcomes possible

Helping people help themselves - delivery outcomes

12. Commissioners and providers from all sectors put people first when providing services and information to help them meet their needs
13. The most vulnerable get the support they need to maintain their independence and this is provided at or as close to home as possible
14. Through working well with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, individuals, families and communities are supported to be independent and to thrive

Making best use of resources now and for the future - delivery outcomes

15. To help tackle Climate Change East Sussex County Council activities are carbon neutral as soon as possible and in any event by 2050
16. We work as One Council
17. We work in strong and sustained partnership with the public, voluntary community, social enterprise and private sectors to ensure that our collective resources and influence are used to deliver maximum benefits
18. Ensuring we achieve value for money in the services we commission and provide
19. Maximising the funding available through bidding for funding and lobbying for the best deal for East Sussex
20. We are an employer of choice and support our staff to achieve and develop

b) **Proposed** priority and delivery outcomes

Driving sustainable economic growth - delivery outcomes

1. East Sussex businesses are supported to succeed and grow sustainably
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4. The workforce has and maintains the skills needed for good quality employment to meet the needs of the current and future East Sussex economy
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18. Ensuring we achieve value for money in the services we commission and provide
19. Maximising the funding available through bidding for funding and lobbying for the best deal for East Sussex
20. We are an employer of choice and our staff are supported to achieve and develop, ensuring we have the workforce we need to deliver services both now and in the future

Appendix 4 – State of the County 2023 Capital Programme Update

Capital Programme Update

1 Background

- 1.1 Through the Reconciling Policy Performance and Resources (RPPR) process the Capital Strategy and programme are reviewed annually to ensure that they support the Council's responsibilities and departmental service strategies. To manage investment to a sustainable level, the Capital Strategy focuses on the delivery of targeted basic need for the council to continue to deliver services as efficiently as possible, rather than rationing through prioritisation. Basic need for the purpose of strategic capital planning is provided below: -
- Place: ensuring we can deliver services by planning for future need.
 - Asset Condition: maintaining our assets to an agreed level.
 - ICT Strategy: ensure that our ICT is fit for purpose for delivering modern council services in a digital era and protecting data.
 - Climate Change: supporting the Council's aim of reaching carbon neutrality from our activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050 in an appropriate and cost-efficient way.
- 1.2 At Full Council in February 2023 the target led basic need capital strategy of 20 years, supported by a 10-year planned capital programme was approved. The strategy provides for the programme being updated annually to maintain this 10-year planning horizon.
- 1.3 The capital programme 2022/23 to 2032/33 reported as part of the Budget in February 2023 had a total programme expenditure of £724.9m and a borrowing requirement of £332.9m. Table 1 below provides details of the approved capital programme and funding.

| Table 1 – Capital Programme (Budget 2023) (£m) | 2022/23 | MTFP Period | | | 2026/27 to 2032/33 | Total |
|---|---------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| | | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | | |
| Gross Expenditure | 82.207 | 96.744 | 102.376 | 61.050 | 382.528 | 724.905 |
| Specific Funding | (10.293) | (18.680) | (26.973) | (3.417) | (1.386) | (60.749) |
| Net Expenditure | 71.914 | 78.064 | 75.403 | 57.633 | 381.142 | 664.156 |
| Formula Grants | (33.418) | (25.243) | (17.937) | (17.960) | (135.738) | (230.296) |
| New Homes Bonus Grant | (0.816) | - | - | - | - | (0.816) |
| Capital Receipts | (9.591) | (5.149) | (3.149) | (3.360) | - | (21.249) |
| Reserves and Revenue Set Aside | (20.435) | (12.768) | (5.540) | (6.100) | (15.106) | (59.949) |
| Developer Contributions Target | - | - | - | - | (18.970) | (18.970) |
| Programme Borrowing | 7.654 | 34.904 | 48.777 | 30.213 | 211.328 | 332.876 |

- 1.4 In addition to the basic need programme the Capital Strategy allows for the Council to consider business cases where a clear payback or funding stream can be demonstrated. Any payback reduces the borrowing in the year it is received and therefore contributes to the ongoing sustainability of the programme. As such these projects are not included in the capital programme until their overall impact, including funding implications, have been assessed and approved.

2 Capital Programme Updates

- 2.1 Table 2 below summarises the gross movements to the approved capital programme since budget setting in February 2023, noting that the first 3 years of the programme to 2025/26 are

approved, whilst the remaining years to 2032/33 are indicative to represent longer term planning against priority outcomes for capital investment. The movements reflect the 2022/23 outturn position and other updates in accordance with the approved governance and variation process. A detailed programme has been included at **Annex 1**.

| Table 2 - Capital Programme (gross) movements (£m) | 2022/23 | MTFP Programme | | | 2026/27 to 2032/33 | Total |
|--|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|----------------|
| | | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | | |
| Approved programme at February 2023 | 82.207 | 96.744 | 102.376 | 61.050 | 382.528 | 724.905 |
| Approved Variations (see 2.2) | 1.891 | 0.200 | 0.000 | - | - | 2.091 |
| Other Programme Updates (2.3) | - | 0.689 | - | - | - | 0.689 |
| Capital Programme Reprofiles (2.4) | - | (17.007) | (10.399) | 19.227 | 8.179 | 0.000 |
| *2022/23 Net Outturn Slippage (2.4) | (7.988) | 8.226 | (0.200) | (0.038) | - | 0.000 |
| *2022/23 Net Outturn Over/Underspend (2.4) | (0.702) | - | - | - | - | (0.702) |
| *2022/23 Expenditure (2.4) | (75.408) | - | - | - | - | (75.408) |
| Total Programme | 0.000 | 88.852 | 91.777 | 80.239 | 390.707 | 651.575 |

2.2 Net nil approved variations to the programme since Budget in February 2023 total a gross £2.1m, as summarised in Table 3 below:

| Table 3 – Approved Variations since February 2023 | Gross Variation (£m) |
|--|----------------------|
| Getting Building Fund: Observer Building (Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Specific Grant) | 0.315 |
| Getting Building Fund: Seven Sisters (Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Specific Grant) | 0.084 |
| Passenger Transport Software Replacement (revenue set aside) | 0.037 |
| Hastings/Bexhill Movement and Access Programme (Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Specific Grant) | 0.174 |
| Lewes Bus Station Replacement (revenue set aside) | 0.100 |
| Community Match Fund (Parish Council Contributions) | 0.021 |
| Youth Investment Fund (specific funding and revenue set aside) | 0.193 |
| Solar Panels on Primary Schools (specific grant) | 0.151 |
| Schools Delegated Capital (specific grant and schools contributions) | 0.712 |
| Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2b (specific grant) | 0.304 |
| Total Net Nil Approved Variations | 2.091 |

- 2.3 The capital programme has also been updated for cash limited programmes that represent grants received. Following government announcements of 2023/24 grant allocations, the Other Integrated Transport Schemes (£0.022m) and Schools Capital Building Improvements (£0.667m) programmes have been updated to reflect anticipated grant as detailed in section 3.
- 2.4 Total 2022/23 capital expenditure was £75.4m against an approved budget of £84.1m, resulting in a variation to budget of £8.7m. This variation comprises of net slippage of £8.0m which has been reprofiled into future years following a review by services and Capital and Strategic Asset Board, and a net underspend of £0.7m on the planned programme. Details of this are presented in the Q4 monitoring report. The revised programme also reflects reprofiles across years following a review from services to reflect current best knowledge.

3 Funding Update

- 3.1 At budget setting in February 2023 several announcements regarding future formula grant allocations were still outstanding. Assumptions previously made for planning purposes relating to these were therefore not changed, as levels were considered reasonably prudent. Given that these non-specific grants are used to fund the approved targeted Basic Need capital programme, not to inform the level of investment. The level of investment being a strategic decision by the Council. Therefore, the Capital Strategy asserts that any additionality is used to reduce the Councils need to borrow.
- 3.2 Considering the above, Table 4 provides the capital funding position, updated to reflect the 2022/23 outturn position, approved variations and Government funding announcements.

| Table 4 - Capital Programme Funding movements (£m) | As at February 2023 | Approved Variations (see 2.2) | 2022/23 (Under) / Over Spend* (2.3) | 2022/23 Funding * (2.3) | Other Funding Changes | Updated Funding |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Developer Contributions - identified (see 3.7) | 9.860 | 0.004 | 0.000 | (0.558) | 0.332 | 9.638 |
| Development Contributions - Target (3.7) | 18.970 | - | - | - | (0.332) | 18.638 |
| Other Specific Funding | 50.889 | 1.924 | (0.856) | (7.472) | 0.114 | 44.599 |
| Capital Receipts (see 3.8) | 21.249 | - | - | (9.591) | 3.162 | 14.820 |
| Formula Grants (see 3.3 to 3.6) | 230.296 | - | - | (33.857) | 8.584 | 205.023 |
| New Homes Bonus Grant | 0.816 | - | - | (0.816) | - | 0.000 |
| Reserves and Revenue set aside | 59.949 | 0.163 | 0.115 | (17.302) | (0.034) | 42.891 |
| Borrowing | 332.876 | - | 0.039 | (5.812) | (11.137) | 315.966 |
| Total Programme Funding | 724.905 | 2.091 | (0.702) | (75.408) | 0.689 | 651.575 |

Formula Grants

- 3.3 **Highways Maintenance Capital Funding:** As part of the Budget on 15 March 2023, the government announced an additional one-off £200million for highways maintenance for the financial year 2023/24, of which the East Sussex County Council allocation is £2.360m. In addition, the DfT also confirmed that Highways Maintenance allocations for 2022/23 of £13.275m per year will be rolled forward to 2023/24 and 2024/25, being an increase of £2.939m per year compared to the prudent planning assumption. It should be noted that these announcements are subject to wider incentivisation measures to be consulted on with local highways authorities.

The level of grant funding continues to be lower than the approved highways maintenance investment, and therefore in line with the principles outlined in the Capital Strategy, it is proposed that the total additional funding of £8.238m between 2023/24 to 2024/25 will reduce the required borrowing associated to highways investment.

The Integrated Transport capital programme is funded by the Integrated Transport Block at grant level, supported by external funding (such as developer contributions) approved via variations. The allocations for 2023/24 and 2024/25 of £2.941m per annum have been announced alongside the Highways Maintenance block funding. Consistent with current funding

principles, the increase in Integrated Transport Block funding of £0.022m per year compared to the planning assumption will therefore result in an increase to the programme budget.

- 3.4 **Schools Basic Need Allocation:** On 28 March 2023 the Department for Education (DfE) announced the schools' capital funding to local authorities for the 2025/26 financial year to support the creation of places needed for September 2026. With regards to Schools Basic Need capital allocation, the announcement based principally on data collected from local authorities in the 2022 School Capacity Survey (SCA), represents a total decrease in funding of £0.344m compared to estimated grant funding. ESCC allocates this grant to fund the Schools Basic Need capital programme to meet the statutory duty of providing sufficient school places. The required level of investment is historically greater than the level of basic need grant received, with a borrowing requirement of £6.2m over the period 2022/23 to 2025/26.
- 3.5 **High Need Provision Capital Allocation (HNPCA):** The DfE announcement in March 2022 provided allocations for the HNPCA for East Sussex County Council for 2022/23 (£3.775m) and 2023/24 (£5.124m). ESCC allocates this grant to fund the programme of required SEND places. From 2023 there will be a requirement to report on SEND places in the annual School Capacity (SCAP) return to the DfE in the same way for mainstream school places. As a result, capital funding for SEND places is likely to come through the council's annual school basic need funding allocation in future years.
- 3.6 **Schools Condition Allocation:** The Schools Capital Building Improvements programme is currently planned on the basis of priority one (health and safety) works; identified via condition reports, and essential safeguarding risk mitigation. This is a cash limited budget representing estimated grant received, thereby having a net nil impact on the programme. The confirmed funding allocations for 2023/24 of £4.649m represents an increase of £0.667m compared to planning assumptions and will therefore result in an increase to the programme budget.

Developer Contributions (Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy)

- 3.7 S106 and CIL funding contributions provide an important source of funding towards basic need requirements and unfunded infrastructure schemes, and can often facilitate leverage of additional external funding. Ongoing work through the cross departmental CIL and S106 working group has identified a further £0.332m of developer contributions that can be used to fund basic need programme to reduce the S106/CIL funding target in the capital programme.

In May 2022, the Government introduced the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill into Parliament. Within this Bill are likely to be changes to the mechanism currently used for securing new and expanded infrastructure with the introduction of a single Infrastructure Levy which continues to increase the uncertainty with regard to this funding stream.

There continues to be a risk that the current target for Developer Infrastructure Contributions to support the programme is too high, and opportunities will be sought through the RPPR process to reduce the funding target while not increasing the need to borrow.

Capital Receipts

- 3.8 Review and refinement of Property Services schedule of capital receipts is undertaken on a regular basis with estimates based on Property Officers' professional judgement on a site by site basis. This is supported by the work undertaken recently and successfully getting a number of surplus properties to the point of sale. Following a recent review, it is suggested that anticipated capital receipts can be increased by £3.162m for capital planning purposes.

4 Programme Update and RPPR Next Steps

- 4.1 Work will now be progressed as part of the RPPR process to extend the programme by a further year to maintain a 10-year planning horizon and ensure continued links into, and support

of, the Council's other strategies, as well as adequacy of the risk provision and climate emergency work allocation.

- 4.2 The Capital Strategy will also be reviewed to ensure it continues to drive investment ambition in line with the Council's priorities and to continue to include equality impact assessments (EQIAs) as part of the capital RPPR process, whilst also providing for appropriate capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management within the context of sustainable, long-term delivery of services.
- 4.3 As part of RPPR Service Departments will also, as normal, be asked to conduct a general review of their specific investment and any ongoing business case development outside basic need. Specific issues arising are set out below: -

School Place Planning - School Basic Need and Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) School Places

- 4.4 There remains some uncertainty over precisely how many school places will be required in the future. This is dependent on local planning authorities developing their local plans for housing and the impact this will have on the number of school places required to serve those developments. The 10-year school basic need capital strategy will be updated taking into account potential impacts of local plan reviews to inform future requirement.
- 4.5 The number of children and young people in East Sussex with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP) continues to rise steeply. In the next four years, it is forecast that overall numbers of children and young people aged 4-19 with EHCPs will grow by around 15%. The current capital budget allocation for SEND place provision is £21.9m over the MTFP period to 2025/26. This includes £18.9m for nursery, secondary and post-16 provision at Grove Park, which is proposed to be taken forward at the current primary school site subject to consultation and feasibility. An update of the schools basic need strategy over the summer will assess need and gaps in provision for specialist facilities and inform requirements for the wider 10-year programme as part of the RPPR process.

Highways Maintenance Investment

- 4.6 The Highways Maintenance capital programme was uplifted as part of the 2022/23 RPPR process to stem the rate of road deterioration and ensure the basic need target maintained current road conditions. A review of the latest highway maintenance prices from the recent highway contract procurement and the condition information from recent surveys in is being undertaken to inform potential additional one-off and ongoing investment requirements to maintain the Council's road condition targets of 4%, 4% and 14%, and is to be considered as part of a separate report and as part of the RPPR process.

Carbon Neutral Commitment

- 4.7 To achieve the Council's aim of reaching carbon net zero by 2050 at the latest in an appropriate and cost-efficient way, extensive works to decarbonise ESCC's estates operations will be necessary. It is anticipated that there will be increasing pressures on the current programme due to the climate change agenda meaning additional requirements will need to be incorporated into the current programme, such as emerging environmental planning requirements and low carbon replacements of current assets.

Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS)

- 4.8 The Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS) programme was established to deliver the replacement of the Council's financial, resource management and procurement systems. The total approved capital budget allocation for the MBOS delivery is £13.1m, of which £3.3m is remaining in 2023/24. Additional resources are earmarked in reserves to support delivery, to be

included in the capital programme as an approved variation at a later date as the programme progresses.

5 Programme Risks and Pressures

- 5.1 A £7.5m ongoing risk provision was approved in February 2023 to mitigate against capital programme risks, representing more than 2% of the programme over the MTFP period. This risk provision is a permission to borrow for emerging risks and is managed through ensuring Treasury Management capacity rather than representing funds that are within the Council's accounts. There are several risks and uncertainties regarding the programme to 2025/26 and beyond which have necessitated holding a risk provision, these risks as reported at Budget 2023 include:
- Excess inflationary pressures on construction costs
 - Uncertainty about delivery of projects in the programme, e.g. highways and infrastructure requirements
 - Any as yet unquantifiable impact of supply issues and cost increases
 - Any as yet unknown requirements,
 - Residual project provision (previously removed) if required; and
 - Uncertainty regarding the level of government grants and the ability to meet CIL and S106 targets.
- 5.2 There are currently increased uncertainties that exist within the construction industry in terms of supply chain issues and high-cost inflation. 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) such as Highways of 3% annually, with any increases above this level to be covered by the risk provision.
- 5.3 In addition, it is anticipated that there will be increasing pressures on the current programme due to the climate change agenda meaning additional requirements will need to be incorporated into the current programme, such as emerging environmental planning requirements and low carbon replacements of current assets. The risk provision and potential provision for the area will be reviewed as these requirements become clearer.

6 Conclusion

- 6.1 This report provides an update on current approved capital programme as part of the annual RPPR cycle. Work will now be progressed as part of the RPPR process to extend the programme by a further year to maintain the 10-year planning horizon and link into and support the Council's other strategies. The Capital Strategy and programme will be reviewed, considering other Council strategies as defined in the Capital Strategy, any requirements outside basic need will need to be supported by a business case.

Annex 1 – Detailed Capital Programme

| Capital Programme (gross) (£m) | MTFP Period | | | 2026/27 to 2032/33 | Total |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| | 2023/24 | 2024/25 | 2025/26 | | |
| Adult Social Care: | | | | | |
| House Adaptations | 0.050 | 0.050 | 0.050 | - | 0.150 |
| Learning Disability Support Living Scheme | 2.177 | 2.914 | 0.854 | 0.104 | 6.049 |
| Greenacres | 0.140 | - | - | - | 0.140 |
| Adult Social Care Gross | 2.367 | 2.964 | 0.904 | 0.104 | 6.339 |
| Business Services: | | | | | |
| Salix Contract | 0.350 | 0.350 | - | - | 0.700 |
| Lansdowne Secure Unit – Phase 2 | 0.065 | - | - | - | 0.065 |
| Schools Basic Need | 1.931 | 0.837 | 11.833 | 49.177 | 63.778 |
| Special Educational Needs | 1.692 | 1.347 | - | - | 3.039 |
| Special Educational Needs – Additional Places | 5.422 | 8.000 | 5.000 | 0.429 | 18.851 |
| Disability Children's Homes | 0.716 | 0.024 | - | - | 0.740 |
| Westfield Lane | 0.053 | - | - | - | 0.053 |
| Capital Building Improvements (Schools) | 5.594 | 4.199 | 4.182 | 28.074 | 42.049 |
| Capital Building Improvements (Corporate) | 3.509 | 4.640 | 4.640 | 31.960 | 44.749 |
| IT & Digital Strategy Implementation | 4.742 | 5.319 | 7.187 | 55.708 | 72.956 |
| IT & Digital Strategy Implementation - MBOS | 3.332 | - | - | - | 3.332 |
| IT & Digital Strategy Implementation - Utilising Automation | 0.024 | - | - | - | 0.024 |
| Business Services Gross | 27.430 | 24.716 | 32.842 | 165.348 | 250.336 |
| Children's Services: | | | | | |
| House Adaptations | 0.050 | 0.050 | 0.050 | - | 0.150 |
| School Delegated Capital | 1.150 | 1.150 | 1.150 | - | 3.450 |
| Conquest Centre Redevelopment | 0.015 | - | - | - | 0.015 |
| Children's Services Gross | 1.215 | 1.200 | 1.200 | - | 3.615 |
| Communities, Economy & Transport: | | | | | |
| Broadband | 0.160 | 0.100 | 5.257 | - | 5.517 |
| Climate Emergency Works | 3.095 | 5.459 | - | - | 8.554 |
| Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme | 0.943 | 0.930 | 0.989 | 0.683 | 3.545 |
| Bexhill and Hastings Link Road – Complementary Measures | 0.189 | - | - | - | 0.189 |
| Economic Intervention Fund – Grants | 0.175 | 0.300 | 0.300 | 1.083 | 1.858 |
| Economic Intervention Fund – Loans | 0.300 | 0.300 | 0.300 | 0.850 | 1.750 |
| Stalled Sites | 0.050 | 0.050 | 0.050 | 0.120 | 0.270 |
| Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties | - | 0.007 | - | - | 0.007 |
| Community Match Fund | 0.140 | 0.325 | - | - | 0.465 |
| Community Road Safety Interventions | 0.485 | 0.237 | - | - | 0.722 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| Newhaven Port Access Road | 0.086 | 0.708 | - | - | 0.794 |
| Real Time Passenger Information | 0.070 | 0.094 | 0.061 | | 0.225 |
| Passenger Services Software | 0.026 | - | - | - | 0.026 |
| Bus Services Improvement Plan | 3.245 | 18.680 | - | - | 21.925 |
| Lewes Bus Station Replacement | 0.004 | - | - | - | 0.004 |
| Queensway Depot Development | 0.504 | - | - | - | 0.504 |
| The Keep | 0.228 | 0.026 | - | 0.823 | 1.077 |
| Other Integrated Transport Schemes | 3.740 | 3.308 | 7.324 | 20.762 | 35.134 |
| Integrated Transport Schemes – A22 Corridor | 0.100 | - | - | - | 0.100 |
| Exceat Bridge Replacement | 2.320 | 3.612 | 0.920 | - | 6.852 |
| Libraries Basic Need | 0.508 | 0.799 | 0.449 | 1.796 | 3.552 |
| Peacehaven Library Refurbishment and Conversion | - | 0.027 | - | - | 0.027 |
| Highways Structural Maintenance | 20.193 | 21.688 | 22.246 | 172.805 | 236.932 |
| Bridge/Structures Assessment Strengthening | 4.740 | 1.775 | 3.025 | 14.616 | 24.156 |
| Street Lighting and Traffic Signals | 4.686 | 3.839 | 3.888 | 8.012 | 20.425 |
| Street Lighting and Traffic Signals – Salix Scheme | 0.219 | - | - | - | 0.219 |
| Visibly Better Roads | 1.293 | - | - | - | 1.293 |
| Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridges | 0.552 | 0.514 | 0.484 | 3.705 | 5.255 |
| Communities, Economy & Transport (LEP Funded Schemes): | | | | | |
| Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2 | 3.296 | - | - | - | 3.296 |
| Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package | 2.064 | - | - | - | 2.064 |
| Hailsham/Polegate/Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor | 0.275 | 0.119 | - | - | 0.394 |
| Hastings & Bexhill Movement & Access Package | 4.154 | - | - | - | 4.154 |
| Communities, Economy & Transport Gross | 57.840 | 62.897 | 45.293 | 225.255 | 391.285 |
| Total Programme Gross | 88.852 | 91.777 | 80.239 | 390.707 | 651.575 |

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| Report to: | Place Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting: | 14 July 2023 |
| By: | Director of Communities, Economy and Transport |
| Title: | Rights of Way & Countryside Team - update report |
| Purpose: | To gain an understanding of the Rights of Way & Countryside Team's current work, challenges and future priorities. |

RECOMMENDATIONS: Scrutiny is recommended to note the activities undertaken by Rights of Way & Countryside and be aware of current work, challenges, and future priorities.

1 Background Information

1.1 East Sussex has around 2,000 miles (3,218km) of Public Rights of Way (PRoWs.) Public Rights of Way are legally recorded public highways which almost always run over privately owned land.

The PRoW network, which is an equivalent length to the main highway network, is comprised of:

- Public Footpath: 79% of the network over which the public have access on foot only.
- Public Bridleway: 18% of the network, which can be used by walkers, equestrians, and cyclists.
- Restricted Byway: 1% of the network available for walkers, equestrians, cyclists and 'non-motorised vehicles' – for example, horse and carriages.
- Byway Open to All Traffic: 2% of the network that can be used by all, including motorised vehicles.

1.2 The County Council has a statutory duty to maintain signposts, path surfaces, steps, surface vegetation and bridges that cross natural watercourses. Landowners are responsible for maintaining stiles, gates, hedges, and trees on their land. They must ensure paths on their land are free of obstruction. The County Council also has enforcement powers if landowners obstruct paths. There are around 3,700 bridges, 13,500 signs and 12,100 stiles and gates on the path network.

1.3 Maintenance and enforcement work is prioritised according to a 'priority statement' policy. Issues which immediately affect public safety are the highest priority for attention. Paths that are well-used or which provide important links are also considered to be a higher priority for attention. This statement is essential to enable the Team to prioritise the approximately 4,000 public reports and enquiries received each year.

1.4 All recognised PRoWs are recorded on the Definitive Map and Statement (DM&S), which is a legal document. The County Council has a statutory duty to maintain the DM&S, which can only be changed by legal order, usually involving public and landowner consultation. Some legal orders also require the holding of a formal Public Inquiry to resolve.

1.5 Changes to the DM&S can range from adding new paths 'claimed' by users – either due to use over 20 years or based on historic evidence, diverting paths following an application by the landowner, or adding new routes as a result of development. The Team also maintains the Common Land and Town and Village Green Registers for East Sussex.

1.6 Countryside sites: The Team manages nine countryside sites covering around 450 Hectares (1111 Acres). These are:

- Camber Sand Dunes/Johnson's Field (Site of Special Scientific Interest - ESCC Freehold)
- Chailey Common Local Nature Reserve (Site of Special Scientific Interest - Managed by ESCC in partnership with Lewes District Council, the Chailey Commons Society, several private landowners, and Chailey Parish Council)
- Cuckoo Trail (around 1/3 of the Trail owned by ESCC and managed in partnership with Wealden District Council who own the remaining 2/3 of the route.)
- Ditchling Common Country Park (Site of Special Scientific Interest and ESCC Freehold)
- Forest Way Country Park (ESCC Freehold)
- Ouse Estuary Local Nature Reserve (ESCC Freehold)
- Riverside Park (ESCC Freehold)
- Shinewater Park (ESCC Freehold)
- Weir Wood Local Nature Reserve (Southern Water freehold, managed by ESCC in partnership with Friends of Weir Wood.)

The Team carries out ecological and public access works across these sites.

2 Staffing and budget overview

2.1 The Rights of Way & Countryside Team (RoWC Team) is formed of 30 staff (27.8FTE.) The team deals with maintenance and enforcement, customer and landowner liaison, planning application responses, DM&S and legal order map work, network surveys, asset management and prioritisation, volunteer management, countryside site management and the England Coast Path National Trail.

2.2 Staffing includes an in-house team of 11 maintenance rangers based at Heathfield Depot. These rangers carry out prioritised practical work across the PRow network and the nine countryside sites. Around 150 volunteers are also supported by ESCC to carry out practical maintenance and ecological work across the PRow network and our countryside sites.

2.3 The team has a gross revenue budget of £1.07m, including £295k of income. (Net revenue budget, excluding income is £779k.) The team also has a capital budget of £552k, funding bridge work and path re-surfacing. This capital funding currently has an uplift of £135k p/a, which is due to end in 24/25. At that time the core capital budget will reduce to £417k.

3 Current work and recent key achievements

3.1 Portfolio Plan target: The RoWC Team's Portfolio Plan target is to complete 80% of 'high priority' maintenance work within two weeks of initial reporting. In 22/23, the Team achieved an outturn of 91%, with an outturn of 88% in 21/22. Examples of some of these works can be seen in Appendix 1.

3.2 Capital bridge works 22/23: The overall condition of our PRow bridge stock has improved since 2019, with 98.5% of structures in a 'fair or good' condition. (Compared to 92% in 2018/19.) The RoWC Team replaced 126 bridges in 22/23 and repaired 60.

3.3 King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail (ECP): The ECP, due to fully open this year, is a new 2,800-mile National Trail around the coast of England. In partnership with Natural England (NE), the RoWC Team opened the first ECP section in East Sussex (from Shoreham to Eastbourne) in Spring 2022. The remaining section, between Eastbourne and Camber, is due to open this year. Once complete, the South-East ECP will be a new National Trail running from London to Brighton via the coast. As part of the management arrangements for the ECP, ESCC is now hosting a National Trail Officer (NTO) and has recently set up a formal multi-authority Trail Partnership. The NTO is funded by Natural England and will work with the Trail Partnership to maintain, manage, and promote the South-East section of ECP.

3.4 High Weald AONB – gates for stiles project: Between 2023-2025, the RoWC Team will be working with landowners to improve access in the High Weald AONB area by replacing 120 stiles with gates. This is a joint project between the RoWC Team and the High Weald AONB Unit, enabled by around £25k from DEFRA's 'Access In Protected Landscapes' fund. The project will replace around 10% of stiles currently installed in the AONB area with more accessible gates.

3.5 Forest Way Country Park - surface improvements: Around £227k of central Government 'Active Travel Funding' enabled major surface improvements to the Forest Way Country Park in 22/23. These improvements will particularly benefit the cyclists who use this popular shared route.

3.6 Introduction of online fault reporting: During 22/23, the RoWC Team launched an improved online map, which, for the first time, allows the public to report faults directly into the Team's asset management database. That same database now also allows staff working in the field to update team records remotely – reducing administration and paperwork.

4 Challenges and future priorities

4.1 Inflation: Over the last three to four years, the cost of raw materials has increased significantly due to persistently high inflation rates. Notably, the cost of cement has increased by an average of 27% annually since 2020/21; timber has increased by around 17% year-on-year since 2019/20. As current RoWC Team budgets do not allow for this inflationary increase, there is a negative impact on the amount of maintenance work which can be funded.

4.2 Deregulation Act 2015 legislative changes – DM&S and path diversions:

a. *Definitive Map 'closure'*: Legislation is currently being finalised to 'close' the DM&S to new PRow applications based on pre-1949 evidence (a date relevant to the first definitive maps being prepared.) The original deadline was 2026, but this has recently been pushed back by DEFRA to 2031 with the aim of giving path users more time to gather evidence. Prior to this legislation, there was no deadline for PRow claims based on 1949 evidence. (The closure of the DM&S to pre-1949 DMMOs does not affect contemporary claims made under the '20-years of use' rule.)

The main consequence of the 2026, and now 2031 deadline, has been a major increase in 'historic' path claim applications made to County Councils. Prior to the introduction of a deadline, ESCC was dealing with around 15 such applications (known as Definitive Map Modification Orders – DMMOs) annually. The DMMO caseload is now over 100, with each case potentially taking around 2-3 years to investigate and resolve.

Each DMMO case is unique, typically complex, and often locally divisive - potentially culminating in a public inquiry. If successful, a DMMO application can result in a landowner having a new permanent PRow formally confirmed over their land.

Due to available resources, the RoWC Team has to strictly prioritise DMMO casework, which can often lead to applicants waiting many years for their application to be considered. Likewise, landowners also suffer uncertainty about the public rights across their land until their case has been concluded. This 'DMMO backlog' is a national issue and not isolated to East Sussex.

The closure of the DM&S is a challenge and priority for the Team, especially as the legislative detail and potential guidance in relation to the 2031 deadline is not yet known. If there is a change of Government following the upcoming general election, then legislation or guidance could again change.

b. *'Right to Apply' for path diversions:* Once implemented, Deregulation Act changes will also give landowners a 'right to apply' for a path diversion. Landowners will also be able to appeal ESCC's decision to the Secretary of State if their application is turned down. (Currently no such right to apply or appeal exists.) There will also be an assumption that PRowS will be diverted where they run through private gardens or curtilages. That could potentially relate to hundreds of paths on the County's network. Like DMMOs, path diversions can also be a complex and locally divisive process, potentially requiring a formal public inquiry if objections cannot be resolved. Those changes should, however, also give ESCC the right to charge 'full cost recovery' for landowner applications. (Currently, ESCC charges around £2,800 for a diversion application, with most of that charge being made up of statutory advertising. As a consequence, officer costs incurred during the diversion process cannot be received.) This is both a challenge and opportunity as, while the number of diversion applications is likely to increase, ESCC should also have the ability to fully charge for its services and potentially fund an additional officer post to cover this caseload.

4.3 Climate change: Higher rainfall, more flash flooding and stormier weather is already contributing to faster erosion of path surfaces. Conversely, periods of very hot and dry weather can impact negatively on the ecology of the countryside sites we manage. This is both a challenge and future priority for the RoWC Team to mitigate.

4.4 Ditchling Common Country Park improvements: This site has around £500k of s106 funding available to spend on public access and ecological improvements. Detailed project plans are currently being developed and will be a future priority to deliver.

5 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 This report gives an overview of the RoWC Team's current work, recent achievements, challenges, and future priorities. The Committee are invited to note both the achievements and challenges for the RoWC Team.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

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LOCAL MEMBERS

None

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

All

Appendix 1: Examples of Rights of Way and Countryside Team work



Above: Views of the England Coast Path National Trail – Telscombe Cliffs and Hastings Country Park



Above: Landowner obstruction resolved and gate installed by RoWC Team – Icklesham Footpath 22



Above: Capital surface repairs – Chalvington with Ripe Bridleway 19

Appendix 1: Examples of Rights of Way and Countryside Team work



Above: Bridge replacements – Barcombe Footpath 24 and Forest Way Country Park



Above: New boardwalk – Uckfield Footpath 1 and typical fingerpost



Above: Grazing scheme – Ditchling Common Country Park

| | |
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| Report to: | Place Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting: | 14 July 2023 |
| By: | Director of Communities, Economy and Transport |
| Title: | Implementation of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23 – 2027/28 |
| Purpose: | An update report to outline the current service provision, progress against the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23-2027/2028, current challenges and priorities and future developments for the Service. |

RECOMMENDATIONS: Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- (1) To endorse the progress that has been made to deliver the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23 – 2027/28 as set out in the report; and**
 - (2) Note the current service priorities and challenges.**
-

1 Background Information

1.1. East Sussex County Council's Library and Information Service delivers library services as outlined in the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy. The current strategy which the Library and Information Service are implementing was approved by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment, Councillor Claire Dowling on 13 December 2021.

1.2 It was decided to bring forward the review of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2018-2023 in light of the pandemic. The earlier review and adoption of an updated edition of the Strategy from 2022-2023 was to ensure the Library and Information Service responded to the changing needs identified and supported the recovery of our residents and businesses from the pandemic.

1.3 As part of the update there was a review of the extensive evidence base contained within the Technical Appendices of the Strategy. The review of the evidence base demonstrated that libraries can, and do support a wide range of needs, directly and indirectly. The review also provided strong evidence to support the continued adoption of the Library and Information Service Vision.

1.4 Following the review of the evidence base our Vision, remains unchanged: to provide a Library and Information Service that promotes reading and knowledge as a route to leading fulfilling lives, prioritising our resources and expertise to support the needs of residents and communities in East Sussex to achieve four key outcomes:

- improving child and adult literacy and numeracy
- supporting the economy
- better health and wellbeing
- increasing digital inclusion

1.5 The Strategic Outcomes were developed on the basis that library services support a wide range of needs, directly and indirectly. They enable the team to support the Council's four overarching priority outcomes of driving sustainable economic growth, keeping vulnerable people safe, helping people help themselves, and making best use of resources in the short and long term, as well as enabling us to deliver the Libraries Connected Universal Library Offer which aims to connect communities, improve wellbeing and promote equality through learning, literacy and cultural activity.

1.6 In terms of implementation, each Strategic Outcome is delivered through a range of different offers, or services, provided according to evidence of need.

1.7 The service delivers the offers from the network of 17 library buildings, through our elibrary, our community information service ESICS, website pages, and through outreach activities in community

settings. In addition, it was agreed as part of the adoption of the updated Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy in December 2021 that in order to increase access to books further, free reservations would be implemented so that people can reserve stock from across the whole catalogue and collect it at their local library, making the entire lending stock freely available to all residents.

1.8 As part of the adoption of the updated strategy the Library and Information Service continued to adopt three underlying transformation principles which ensure that the library service works effectively. These are working together, promoting use of libraries and increasing our capacity to add value to what we do. In addition, the Library and Information Service continued to adopt the following practices in relation to the delivery of services:

- targeting spending on stock and resources to ensure they support the delivery of Strategic Outcomes and continue to provide a range of quality materials to meet residents' needs so they can enjoy the pleasure and benefits of reading, as well as the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock;
- providing access to library services through our eLibrary, continuing to expand the range of online services and materials that are offered, including the provision of reliable information and services to promote good health, and support people to manage their own health and the health of those they care for;
- continuing to provide, both in libraries and online, training and guidance for people of all abilities seeking to learn and to work, so they are able to build skills and confidence in a supportive environment;
- focusing on outreach provision, working closely with other County Council services and partners to make sure that we directly reach the communities and individuals with the greatest needs;
- continuing to provide a range of services through our Children and Young People's Literacy offer, including literacy support and outreach work for pre-school and school age children and their families; and
- enhancing the role of libraries as cultural spaces within their communities, developing our Culture Offer to support the wider cultural economy of the county.

1.9 The pandemic has had a significant impact on the services which are delivered by the Library and Information Service, hence reviewing the Strategy a year earlier than planned. Libraries were closed in March 2020 as the Country went into lockdown and as services started to begin to open libraries followed national guidance adopting a number of different service delivery models to meet customer needs. Services such as 'click and collect' were developed, where customers could order stock remotely and collect from their local library.

1.10 During 2022/23 the service has been working hard to drive up footfall and has undertaken promotional campaigns with the support of the Communication's Team. Teams have remained committed to ensuring that customers are aware of all the Library and Information Service's available offers. The overarching aim has been to enable customers to return to post-Covid habits and support the four strategic outcomes. However, it should be noted that prior to Covid libraries were seeing reduced footfall and, therefore, when comparing figures to 2019-20 it should be noted that year on year, libraries were seeing a decline in visits. However, the service, through the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy, clearly demonstrates the areas where the service can support local communities and is committed to effectively using the resources available to support community needs.

1.11 Customer footfall and online library joiners continue to be monitored. Efforts continue to build on the success of last year (2022/23), continuing to drive increased footfall to the Library and Information Service within East Sussex.

1.12 Below are some of the Library and Information Services, key performance data:

- By year end 759,005 visitors came to a library in 2022-23, this compares with just over a million visits in 2019-20, meaning that visits are approximately 75% of pre covid numbers, but importantly a 47% increase on visitor numbers in 2021-22. When considering this count, it is important to note planned closures for capital refurbishments and also flooding at Wadhurst and works at Bexhill which would have impacted overall outturn. Additionally, East Sussex County Council takes part in Libraries Connected benchmarking as part of covid recovery and the average return to pre-covid footfall currently stands at 70%, therefore, East Sussex is doing well and in the upper tier of recovery with footfall and visitor numbers nationally.

- Footfall to refurbished libraries in the month of March 2023 increased on average by 500 visits. Teams have cited changes in demographics as a result of the refurbishments, and positive comments at Rye for the change in location of the children's library, so works locally have shown early signs of impact and being well received.
- In 2022-23 487,068 downloads of eMagazines and eNewspapers were achieved, 166% above target. Targets have been updated for 2023-24 to take into account popularity of e-stock, and teams continue to benchmark and watch trends nationally with Libraries Connected.
- Physical stock is up 14% when comparing to last year, with a total of 772,300 issues, currently placing libraries at approximately 81% of pre-Covid volumes.
- In total approx. 1.9 million issues and renewals took place of Library and Information items, both online and hard copy across the 17 libraries.
- In 2022/23 25,802 individuals attended library events. We will continue to offer a range of events to promote reading for pleasure and the strategy priorities for 2023-24 and to support access to the library and wider recovery.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 In light of the new needs analysis, information and evidence, the service produced an updated edition of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy for 2022/23 to 2027/28 which addresses emerging needs and reinforces the work of the Library and Information Service to support residents who are most disadvantaged and vulnerable, whilst continuing to provide a high-quality range of universal services for everyone in East Sussex. Implementation of the Library Strategic Commissioning Strategy will take place over the lifetime of the strategy. However, significant progress has been made in the first 16 months, with a range of new library services developed and implemented during this period. In addition, the government has appointed Baroness Elizabeth Sanderson of Welton to help develop a new national strategy for libraries to make sure public libraries are providing the best possible service for their communities. It is believed that the national strategy will focus on new ideas to improve library service provision and will help to formulate innovative new policy ideas. This strategy will be published in 2023 and will shape the governments proposed future public library service delivery and will replace the national 2016 strategy.

Key Successes

2.2 The East Sussex Libraries and Information Service offer opportunities to support reading and literacy (from Bookstart programmes for the under 5s to the Step into Reading scheme for emerging adult readers), foster digital inclusion (supporting access to the internet and digital services in libraries), support economic growth (through the British Library business support offer, delivered locally), support health & wellbeing (through Reading Friends, which are groups that come together to read with the aim of tackling loneliness by bringing people together to read, chat and share stories) and are embedded in their communities (early years settings, older residents' homes). Since the adoption of the Strategy and when implementation commenced in April 2022 there have been a number of key successes, which have included:

- Refurbishment of library buildings. Work has continued to ensure that our buildings are safe, in a good state of repair and that they meet the needs of our customers, and we have continued with our extensive refurbishments programme. Work since the adoption of the latest strategy document has taken place at Rye, Newhaven and Hollington. Improvements have been made to the layout to enhance the customer experience and where possible, reduce our carbon footprint and energy costs. Children's areas and study spaces have been upgraded and new seating areas have been created so that customers can browse services in comfort. The improvements will support the library service to deliver its aims, including improving child and adult numeracy and literacy. Additionally, redecoration works have been undertaken, improving the front façade of buildings, assisting with improving the overall street scene and town centre.
- The Summer Reading Challenge continues to inspire many young readers. As part of the 2022 reading challenge children of all ages were invited to join workshop events at libraries across the County. Events included the Tree Fellas, an interactive storytelling workshop, and a Wild World Summer Reading Challenge Tour with children's poet, performer and illustrator Ed Boxall which included a fabulous mix of songs, poems and stories. Youngsters also had the chance to meet two award-winning authors, Tony De Saulles and Rob Lloyd Jones, at special author events. Currently the service is running the 2023 Summer Reading Challenge and over the coming weeks we hope to improve on the success of 2022.

- Support for the East Sussex Refugee community. The Library and Information Service has supported the refugee community through all the library services which are outlined in the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy but in addition bespoke support has been provided through an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) tutor, support through the Step into Reading Volunteers and a series of dual language Storytimes. External funding has been secured for the next two years to support this ever-growing emerging need and the Service will provide dedicated outreach activity to support the refugee community to access the library service and benefit from the services it provides.
- The service continues to support national library events. The Service follows the Libraries Connected Universal Calendar, and curates an annual plan of events and activities to drive footfall and help fulfil the Strategy aims. In 2022, teams supported national Libraries Week and held a series of events across the county to celebrate. Libraries Week allows the service to benefit from the national campaign, but also highlight what is on offer locally and showcase how libraries can be inspiring and support learning for all.
- Refresh of the Council's People's Network. The Library and Information Service is committed to providing free computer and internet access, as well as access to free WIFI to our customers. The service is also committed to increasing digital inclusion. During 2022 our network of devices were completely refreshed and upgraded. As a Council we have invested significantly over the last year to ensure that our computer provision in our libraries can meet the identified needs. All monitors and desktops were upgraded to an improved specification, operating systems were upgraded to windows 10, software upgraded to more recent versions and new software introduced to the offer. Each customer computer has access to the internet and a large array of new software and digital resources including, but not limited, to the following: internet access, Microsoft Office package, Image editing software, Sound recording/editing software, Video editing software, Web cams, Accessibility options including screen reading and magnifying options, Free in-Library access to paid subscription resources such as Ancestry, Find My Past and other research tools. By improving the range of digital resources available, the libraries team are committed to showcasing this to customers to help promote the free access to these tools to support job applications and completion of homework, amongst other things.
- The service has attracted a number of authors. One of Britain's bestselling children's authors visited Seaford library in April 2023. Jacqueline Wilson, who is best known for creating the cherished characters of Tracy Beaker and Hetty Feather, talked about her books, how she writes and how to become a writer. Jacqueline also read from her new book 'The Other Edie Trimmer', a heart-warming time slip adventure story about family and friendship and answered questions from the audience.
- The Poet Laureate, Simon Armitage, chose to visit Eastbourne library in March as part of his decade long tour of UK libraries. The E to G Libraries Tour, ran from March 17 to March 23 and was the latest leg of Simon's ten-year adventure celebrating UK libraries. Using the alphabet as a compass, his journey celebrates the library as one of the great and necessary institutions.
- The service continues to work hard holding a number of events to attract more people back into libraries. A special programme of Christmas events ran throughout December. Adults and children were invited to get into the Christmas spirit and visit their local library to celebrate the festive season. Free events included Christmas craft sessions for adults and children, festive author led storytelling events, seasonal Rhymetime and Storytelling sessions, and a lively orchestral production of 'A Christmas Carol'. East Sussex Libraries also ran a series of events across the county during May half term to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Free events included Jubilee themed Rhymetime and Storytime sessions, crown making craft workshops and author led storytelling events. Going forward, school holiday activities will be available at all libraries, to further promote the service, supporting children and families to create a habitual routine of library visits.

Strategic Outcomes

2.3 A summary of the progress in implementing the strategy against the four Strategic Outcomes is provided below.

Improving child and adult literacy and numeracy

2.4 Central to this offer has been our continued support to children helping them to recover lost education, build their confidence and increase their social interaction by providing homework clubs with

enrichment activities to support their physical and mental health. Homework clubs have been a popular additional community support service in some areas of the County. We have delivered homework clubs aimed at 5–11-year-olds in selected libraries. These have been targeted to those in need and designed to be accessible. The homework clubs have been supported by a member of staff or volunteer led and provide a dedicated space and time for children to do their homework. In addition, they have provided an opportunity to be heard reading and an opportunity to catch up on their learning, with supervision and support. Children can, of course, use the library at any time for study or reading for pleasure and we have continued to offer enrichment activities to support wellbeing, such as creative writing.

2.5 The Summer Reading Challenge supported 5,714 children in East Sussex to maintain their reading skills during the 2022 school summer holidays by reading six books, and librarians actively supported 74 schools across the county, including in areas of highest need with visits to encourage participation in the challenge. 41% of participants surveyed highlighted the assemblies led by a librarian as the means by which they heard about the challenge in 2022.

2.6 The Library and Information Service provides rhymetimes/storytimes sessions in all libraries subject to the availability of volunteers. Supported by 32 volunteers, 24 rhymetimes and storytime sessions take place weekly across the county. This supports preschool learning and development of speech and language, as well as supporting social skills. Teams always ensure staff and volunteers are trained appropriately to maximise the benefits of the sessions for families.

2.7 In 2022 the Children's book award returned yielding positive results. 1,560 children benefitted from author visits and activities within a school. The service supported schools by selecting a range of titles for them and providing inspiration and ideas for book clubs and related activities which were showcased in the final event. In addition, we have continued with the chargeable service of providing advice on the management of school libraries. The book award again took place in 2023. This year we had 50 schools taking part in the whole award, with approximately 170 attendees attending the celebration event. 5 authors visited 12 schools in March and April. We received 320 competition entries which were marked by the librarian team and prizes awarded. The winner of the East Sussex Children's book award 2023 was Michael Mann with Ghostcloud.

2.8 We continue to provide literacy and numeracy support for adults with low literacy and numeracy skills. We have very successfully developed our Step into Reading programme across the county to help people to improve their reading. Step into Reading matches volunteers with people who would like to improve their reading at their own pace, perhaps to improve their job chances or to be able to support their children's learning.

2.9 We provide fiction and non-fiction reading materials for all ages and needs. We continue to provide a wider range of quality materials and tailored support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading and the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people. We have continued to ensure that our spending on stock is closely aligned to the Strategic Outcomes for this Strategy. We have and will continue to maintain the proportion of our stock spending on children's fiction and non-fiction, to support child literacy and ensure we provide resources to support adults who experience difficulties with reading. We have also spent proportionally more of our stock fund on resources and information to enable people to take greater ownership of their own health and wellbeing, to be more resilient, increasingly independent, self-sufficient and resourceful.

Supporting the economy

2.10 We have increased our services which support people into employment, targeting support for 16–24-year-olds who are experiencing high levels of unemployment. We have provided access to training, skills and qualifications, as well as interview support. We continue to work with East Sussex County Council colleagues and external partners to help job seekers and provide training so they can access websites and information to help with their job search and improve their skills. Library teams have also supported work experience and volunteer placements (supporting initiatives such as Duke of Edinburgh award) for young people, with a total of 45 placements in 2022-23 to give young people experience and workplace skills to support further education and employment opportunities.

2.11 The Library and Information Service offers volunteer led IT for You sessions at most libraries and these support people with developing their IT skills. During 2022/23 over 2,000 adults have been supported through these sessions with IT skills that can help them into work or study. This is supplemented by free online training resources at all libraries to help people look for and secure jobs as

well as improving their ICT skills. Resources include access to job sites, video guides on how to write a CV, as well as support to use different IT packages.

2.12 We have provided Code Clubs in a number of libraries. Our Code Clubs are part of a nationwide network of coding clubs for children aged 8-12 years old. Using specially created Code Club materials, the sessions are designed to build confidence and encourage creativity in 3 different coding languages, helping children learn computing skills that could unlock a wide range of future career opportunities. We also offer other STEM activities to help children learn new skills and build their confidence.

2.13 We continue to offer online accredited courses for individuals to improve their skills and gain qualifications in English, Maths and ICT. We have improved our offer by giving the option of accessing tutor support remotely so that learners have the flexibility to study at a centre or at home.

Better health and wellbeing

2.14 We have worked hard to develop initiatives to encourage people, including our volunteers, to return to library buildings, building social interaction and helping to combat isolation. We continue to support many groups and individuals disproportionately affected by the pandemic and/or other issues including, but not restricted to, people with dementia and people with learning difficulties, people in temporary accommodation, refugees and asylum seekers by working with partners to deliver appropriate services and activities. One popular initiative, Reading Friends (led by the Reading Agency) has been successful in 2022/23, both in terms of volunteers taking part in leading sessions but also for participants. These groups have been well received by customers in five libraries and seen over 55 sessions delivered in 12 months. Additionally, libraries have responded to local need. Uckfield and Crowborough libraries have trialed new initiatives to support wellbeing. Knit and natter and Ukrainian support group sessions have been developed as a result of local needs and engagement with ESCC operational teams.

2.15 As part of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy's revised offer for better health and wellbeing, a comprehensive range of self-help materials are now provided both in libraries and online. The Library and Information Service has developed Wellbeing Boxes to help people to take ownership of their health. These boxes contain interactive resources, local service information and literature about different areas of wellbeing, using the NHS '5 steps to mental wellbeing' the Library and Information Service also has introduced Teen Wellbeing Bags at Seaford Library. Reading Well stock (delivered by the Reading Agency) also supports this area of the strategy, with a 143% increase of Reading Well stock to 2187 issues in 2022-23. Libraries also have Reminiscence Resources to loan. By partnering with local organisations staff and volunteers have received training on running successful reminiscence sessions for 2023-24. Participants have learnt how Reminiscence can give people with dementia a sense of competence and confidence through using a skill they still have.

2.16 We have worked hard to rebuild the Home Library Service, following the pandemic where we saw our numbers of visits in 2021/2022 fall to around 554. The free Home Library Service continues to seek to improve engagement with vulnerable people who are lonely or isolated. The service is supported by volunteers who deliver books and other resources from the local library to people who cannot easily use a library due to disability or frailty or who are caring for someone who cannot be left. It provides invaluable social contact as well as supporting reading for wellbeing and pleasure. 748 Home Library Service visits took place from volunteers in 2022-23. These volunteers deliver books and other resources from the local library, and visits last year increased by 26% on the previous year. This helps these customers maintain the pleasure and wellbeing benefits that come from reading, as well as the important social contact from a regular visit by a volunteer.

Increasing digital inclusion

2.17 We continue to work to ensure vulnerable people have access to online services, including health services, through our well-equipped and updated People's network computers and Wi-Fi. We continue to provide connectivity to the internet and training for those who need to improve their digital skills.

2.18 The Library and Information Service provides an extensive number of activities, which has grown significantly in the last year, to increase digital inclusion, including the support provided by IT for You sessions which are run by volunteers. In addition, the service provides, a basic course to help people to get online (Learn My Way), and Library and Information Service Tutors support people to gain qualifications in ICT, English and Maths when they undertake online courses.

2.19 We continue to provide free access to the People's network computers and Wi-Fi in all libraries and promote this offer more effectively.

2.20 Volunteers continue to provide personal support in libraries and community settings, prioritised according to local need. This has been expanded to offer support to people to use the eLibrary confidently to support increased access to digital resources.

Capital Investment

2.21 East Sussex County Council has committed to a capital programme of expenditure for libraries until 2030. Each year we will work on projects to refurbish our libraries to ensure they are safe, in a good state of repair and that they meet the needs of our customers.

2.22 In terms of our buildings, our refurbishment programme is providing the vital investment required to maintain the library buildings and ensure they are designed to best meet the needs of customers in the future. When undertaking refurbishments, we will review how the library is used by customers and the needs of the local community. Any work to refurbish library buildings will be in line with the Council's target of achieving carbon neutrality.

2.23 Through the delivery of the current strategy it is estimated that for the 17 library buildings, we will invest around £2.5 million through the refurbishment programme over the life of the strategy or approximately £513,000 per year. This is in addition to the annual maintenance costs of around £241,000. The Library and Information Service continues to assess space within our libraries to ensure they are used to their full potential. Since the implementation of the Strategy in 2018, the way customers use the library space continues to change. The Library and Information Service continue to identify whether library services could be delivered in the same locality in a more cost-effective way. Operational bases and customer facing services for parking enforcement staff have been provided in Hastings, Eastbourne and Lewes libraries since July 2018, with these services expanded to Rye and Bexhill in 2020. This joint venture enables parking services to be delivered at a lower cost due to the sharing of overheads and other operational costs, as well as generating income for the Library and Information Service. We also let space in our buildings to a range of partners including Citizens Advice and the NHS in Uckfield Library as well as additional leases with the NHS in both Heathfield and Seaford Libraries. The Service will continue to seek new partnerships where appropriate to share accommodation with other organisations, in order to reduce costs or to deliver a better service in conjunction with partners, or both.

Outreach

2.24 Outreach sessions continue to be delivered to engage those who are hard to reach. We work closely with other County Council services and partners to make sure that we reach communities and individuals with the greatest needs. We continue to promote and deliver our offer, working closely with other services in different settings including children's centres, schools, youth centres and community venues.

2.25 The Library and Information Service outreach provision has included a dedicated support librarian in Hailsham which was paid for from Section 106 money. The dedicated resource has been able to support regular story and rhyme times in preschool and early years settings. In addition, they have been able to support children's centres in the development and delivery of mixed activities to support literacy in the local community.

2.26 We continue to explore opportunities where outreach will provide the best way to engage with local communities to achieve the strategic objectives set out in the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

Stock and eLibrary

2.27 We continue to provide a wider range of quality materials and tailored support for people's different needs, so they can enjoy the pleasure of reading and the better life chances that literacy and numeracy unlock for people. We ensure that our spending on stock is closely aligned to the Strategic Outcomes for this Strategy. We maintain the proportion of our stock spending on children's fiction and non-fiction, to support child literacy and ensure we provide resources to support adults who experience difficulties with reading. We also spend proportionally more of our stock fund on resources and information to enable people to take greater ownership of their own health and wellbeing, to be more resilient, increasingly independent, self-sufficient and resourceful. We provide free reservations so that people can reserve stock from across the whole catalogue and collect it at their local library, making the entire lending stock freely available to all residents. The choice of titles and websites available to download from the eLibrary, the online library service, have been increased and prioritised according to countywide needs.

2.28 The County Council continues to invest significantly (£464,400 for 2023-24) in the stock fund annually and has continued to promote the eLibrary in a range of ways. As loans of eBooks and eAudiobooks from the eLibrary increase, expenditure has also changed to meet emerging needs. Expenditure on materials in electronic formats increased by 30% in 2022/23. New services have been added to online reference resources including Kompass (business directory) and Aptem (employment). In a recent survey, customers rated both the choice of books and the condition of the stock as higher this year compared to 2018, when the last user survey was undertaken (see Appendix 1).

Customer feedback

2.29 The national and independent Public Library User Survey (PLUS) took place in October 2021. This is carried out every three years to give a broad understanding of how customers (over 16) rate Library Services. The results for 2021 demonstrate the effectiveness of the previous new Strategy in maintaining high quality services as planned. 95% rated their overall levels of satisfaction with libraries as very good/good compared to 91% previously, and 97% of customers rated customer care as very good/good, compared to 94% previously. A summary of the findings of the October 2021 can be found at Appendix 1.

Budget and staffing

2.30 The report describes in detail the progress being made to deliver the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy in the context of a reduced budget. The gross budget for the Library and Information Service for 2023/24 is £4,740,600, with a net budget of £3,894,100. This follows on from savings of £240k in 2021/22 and £1.9m delivered through the Libraries Transformation Programme between 2014/15 and 2018/19. Staffing levels have decreased from 168.3 FTE in 2010 to 150 FTE in January 2015 to the current staffing level of 96.5 FTE posts. In addition, we have the support of over 300 volunteers. Library user survey data provides evidence that the County Council continues to provide a high-quality library service, with overall customer satisfaction levels for libraries at 95%.

Future Service Developments

2.31 As well as the continued delivery of the Strategic Libraries Commissioning Strategy, outlined above, there are four areas which are highlighted below which we would like to draw the Committee's attention.

2.32 We continue to seek opportunities to work with partners to reduce our building costs. We continuously review our buildings, space and partnership opportunities to generate rental income to reinvest in services. Income from partners helps to offset the running costs of libraries, whilst helping them to reduce their expenditure on premises by co-locating. We will continue to assess and seek out opportunities to utilise these in the best way possible. Most libraries have movable shelving and furniture which enable the layout to be changed to accommodate a wide range of different potential uses. As a result of continued efforts to maximise the opportunity for leases and medium-term rentals with local partners and other East Sussex County Council teams, the Library and Information Service generates approximately £300,000 per year. The Library and Information Service will continue to identify whether library services could be delivered in the same locality in a more cost-effective way. The Service will also continue to seek out new partnerships to share accommodation with other organisations, in order to reduce costs or to deliver a better service in conjunction with other services, or both.

2.33 The Library and Information Service will continue to support tackling social disadvantage through the free access of services and a wide range of reading material to everyone. The services offered will continue to support reading and literacy and seek to increase skills in disadvantaged communities, addressing the impact of the pandemic on literacy. Through their day-to-day work, the libraries team will continue to support early-years development, giving children a fun and welcoming introduction to language skills. They complement the critical literacy work done in the classroom by providing children with free, universal access to the rich world of opportunity that can be unlocked by reading for pleasure. From comics to classics and reference books to bestsellers, East Sussex libraries will continue to empower independent reading and learning, unconstrained by cost. In addition, the service will continue to support parental literacy, through Step into Reading.

2.34 Another key area of work for the team is promoting the digital offers which are available in East Sussex libraries. The Service offer opportunities to reduce the number of digitally excluded residents in the County and increase the level of digital skills. People without digital skills are at an increased level of disadvantage through unemployment, low wage employment, social isolation, and poverty. Libraries

play an important role in supporting individuals and communities most in need. Key to successful delivery of this is ensuring that people are aware of the services available in their local library.

2.35 Finally, the team will continue to work with Adult Social Care's Partnership Team to support the refugee communities. As mentioned earlier in this report, the service has secured additional funding to ensure that this important area of work is developed in the coming years to ensure that the service is able to support the wider community. The Library and Information Service will provide a programme of targeted initiatives, in libraries and through outreach in community settings, over 24 months, to support the refugee communities to improve their literacy, advance learning to improve their employment chances, improve their ability to access online services for information, to combat isolation and support integration into East Sussex communities.

Challenges moving forward

2.36 Moving forward the service has four key challenges which it will seek to address as part of the work needed to deliver the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy.

2.37 The Library and Information Service has continued to see a reduction in visitor numbers when compared to 2019-20. Although visitor numbers are improving, they are still underperforming when compared to 2019-20. By April 2023, Libraries had approximately 75% of visitors compared to the same period in 2019. Key to increasing footfall will be continuing to work with Communication colleagues to ensure that the work of the Library and Information Service is highlighted throughout the County to raise awareness of services offered and to ensure that the services resources are maximised for the benefit of the whole community.

2.38 A further challenge for the service moving forward will be maintaining our library buildings because of the increased costs of services and building materials. In terms of our buildings, our refurbishment programme has been providing the vital investment required to maintain the library buildings and ensure they are designed to best meet the needs of customers into the future. Increasing building costs will provide a challenging environment in which to work to ensure that our facilities continue to be places people want to visit.

2.39 Another key challenge for the service will be the recruitment staff to the Library and Information Service. Although vacancies attract applications there are still difficulties in recruiting suitably qualified individuals who can support users. Given the ever-developing service offers which are provided by the Library and Information Service, individuals that work in the service need to be community focused and flexible. Recruiting the right people to roles in the Library and Information Service continues to be challenging.

2.40 Finally anti-social behaviour is an increasing problem in libraries. Increasing numbers of incidents are being reported that impact on other customers and our staff. Incidents include throwing of books, drinking alcohol in the library, running around, and refusing to leave premises at the end of the day are just some of the reported incidents. Teams have processes in place for managing incidents and work with the police and local schools, where appropriate, to tackle issues, however, on-going incidents and the impact that they have on wider users should not be underestimated.

3 Conclusion

3.1 This report provides an update of how the changes to the Library and Information Service agreed by Lead Member as part of the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy have been introduced and their positive impact on our customers. The offers outlined in the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy 2022/23 to 2027/28 have been developed following a comprehensive review of the data. The Strategic Outcomes allow for some flexibility in developing offers which continue to meet the challenges that the community face going forward.

3.2 It is recommended that the Committee note the services delivered by the Library and Information Service, the service priorities and the challenges foreseen moving forward and endorse the progress that has been made to deliver the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy as set out in this report and its appendix.

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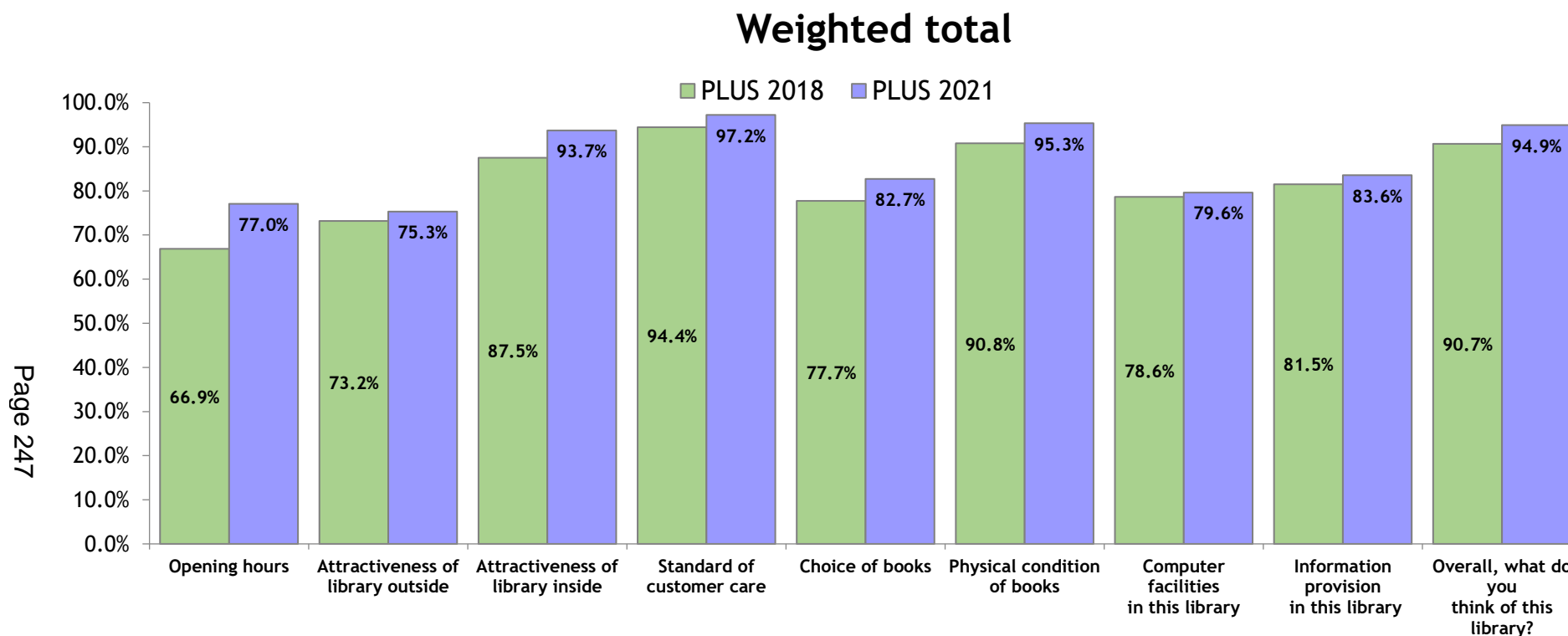
LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Comparison of Public Library User Survey Results



In the Public Library Users' Survey 2021, the percentage of responses rating aspects of the library service as good and very good increased on every aspect. An area of particular note was the increase of customers rating library opening hours as good or very good, which climbed from 66.6% in 2018, the first survey which took place following the amended opening hours, to 77% in 2021.

Particularly highly rated aspects were the 'Standard of Customer Care', increasing from 94.4% in 2018 to 97.2% in 2021, and 'Overall, what do you think of this library', increasing from 90.75 in 2018 to 94.6% in 2021. The 'Attractiveness of the library inside' and 'Physical condition of books' also scored highly: 93.7% and 95.3% respectively. These increasingly positive results reflect the care and consideration that teams have invested in maintaining clean and welcoming spaces with well-kept and updated stock. The PLUS Survey 2021 took place during the pandemic, when libraries were regularly updating layouts to enable safe and effective use of services. Standards of hygiene were extremely high, which staff rigorously worked to maintain. This high rating indicates that customers felt both satisfied with the offer and safe during that time, easily accessing the service that they needed to.

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|-------------------------|---|
| Report to: | Place Scrutiny Committee |
| Date of meeting: | 14 July 2023 |
| By: | Assistant Chief Executive |
| Title: | Place Scrutiny Committee future work programme |
| Purpose: | To review and agree items for the Place Scrutiny Committee's future work programme and receive updates on previous work. |

RECOMMENDATIONS: The Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to:

- 1) Review and agree agenda items for the future Committee meetings, including items listed in the updated work programme in appendix 1;**
 - 2) Review and agree topics for Scrutiny Reviews to be included in the Committee's future work programme; and**
 - 3) Review upcoming items on East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) Forward Plan in appendix 2 to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny.**
 - 4) Note the Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group will be reconvened (paragraph 2.3); and**
 - 5) Confirm the membership of the Economic Growth Strategy Reference Group as outlined in paragraph 2.4 of the report.**
-

1. Background

1.1 The work programme is an important tool in ensuring the correct focus and best use of the Committee's time in scrutinising topics that are of importance to the residents of East Sussex, and the efficient and effective working of the Council. It also provides clarity for those who may be requested to give evidence to the Committee on the issues under review, and the questions the Committee requires answers to.

1.2 Discussion of the work programme provides the Committee with the opportunity to examine topics that it may be of value to scrutinise, and to decide whether further scoping work is required. This provides a basis for deciding the best way of scrutinising a topic, the timescale, and who from the Committee will be involved in carrying out the review work. If there are a number of topics for review, the Committee can determine the priority of the work within the resources available to the Committee.

2. Work programme and future scrutiny reviews

2.1 The Committee is asked to review the items in the current work programme and discuss the future agenda items and other scrutiny work of the Committee for inclusion in the Committee's future work programme. A copy of the work programme is contained in appendix 1 of the report for agreement by the Committee.

2.2 The Committee is also asked to consider whether there are any potential topics for future scrutiny reviews, or agenda items for future meetings, that should be included in the work programme. This can include any topics or issues identified through the Committee's work on the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process.

Climate Emergency Action Plan – Working Group

2.3 The Committee has been approached to provide input into the development of a carbon offsetting policy for the Council and an update of the corporate Environmental Policy. Given the previous involvement of the Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group in this topic, it would be appropriate to reconvene the Working Group to undertake this piece of work on behalf of the Committee. The Committee is therefore asked to note that the Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group will reconvene to consider and provide scrutiny input into the development of a carbon offsetting policy for the Council and an update of the corporate Environmental Policy. The members of the Working Group are councillors Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Eleanor Kirby-Green and Paul Redstone (Chair).

East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy - Reference Group

2.4 At the March Place Scrutiny Committee meeting it was agreed to establish a Reference Group to provide scrutiny input into the development of an Economic Growth Strategy for East Sussex. The following committee members have indicated that they wish to take part in this work and the Committee is asked to confirm the membership of the Reference Group as being: Cllr Chris Collier, Cllr Julia Hilton, Cllr Ian Hollidge, Cllr Paul Redstone and Cllr David Tutt.

3. Forward Plan

3.1 A copy of the Council's Forward Plan of executive decisions for the period 1 July 2023 to 31 October 2023 is included in appendix 2. The Committee is requested to review the forthcoming items on the Forward Plan to identify any issues that may require scrutiny work. The Forward Plan is revised and published on a monthly basis, and Committee members should regularly review the Forward Plan.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

4.1 The Place Scrutiny Committee is recommended to agree the work programme contained in appendix 1 and agree any further agenda items or topics for scrutiny reviews to be included in the future work programme. The Committee is also recommended to review the Council's Forward Plan of decisions to identify any issues that may require more detailed scrutiny and confirm the membership of the Economic Growth Strategy Reference Group.

PHILIP BAKER

Assistant Chief Executive

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

Place Scrutiny Committee – Work Programme

| Current Scrutiny Reviews | | |
|--|--|--------------------------|
| Title of Review | Detail | Proposed Completion Date |
| Scrutiny Review of Pothole Management | <p>A scrutiny review of Pothole Management which will focus on the Council's approach to repairing potholes and other highway defects which may affect vulnerable road users. The aim of the review is to examine what more can be done to tackle the issue of potholes in roads, which has been a focus of concerns expressed by residents.</p> <p>The Review Board will be comprised of Councillors Matthew Beaver, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge (Chair), Eleanor Kirby-Green and Philip Lunn.</p> | November 2023 |
| Initial Scoping Reviews | | |
| Subject area for initial scoping | Detail | Proposed Dates |
| To be agreed. | | |
| List of Suggested Potential Future Scrutiny Review or Reference Group Topics | | |
| Suggested Topic | Detail | |
| Climate Change | The Committee has agreed to consider a scoping a review to examine the Council's countywide work on climate change, which could look at countywide actions and how the Council works with other organisations (e.g. District and Borough councils) on this issue. | |

| Scrutiny Reference and Working Groups | | |
|---|---|---|
| Reference Group Title | Subject Area | Meetings Dates |
| Local Transport Plan (LTP4) – Reference Group | The Committee has formed a Reference Group to work alongside officers on the development of the revised Local Transport Plan (LTP 4) focussing on sustainable transport issues. It is taking part in a series of workshops on the development of the LTP4. | 19 July and 7 September 2023. Further dates to be agreed as required. |
| East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy | The Committee has agreed to form a reference group to provide scrutiny input into the development of the Strategy in response to the Committee's request to have scrutiny involvement in the development process for economic development projects, which will be guided by the Strategy. The membership of the reference group and terms of reference is to be agreed. | Initially July/August 2023 and then during 2023 and early 2024. |
| Climate Change Working Group | The Climate Emergency Action Plan Working Group will reconvene to consider and provide scrutiny input into the development of a carbon offsetting policy for the Council and an update of the corporate Environmental Policy. | July – August 2023 |
| Reports for Information | | |
| Subject | Detail | Proposed Date |
| Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points. | The Committee agreed to request a briefing on plans to develop and implement EV charging infrastructure in East Sussex. | To be agreed |
| Training and Development | | |
| Title of Training/Briefing | Detail | Proposed Date |
| To be agreed. | | |

| Future Committee Agenda Items | | Author/Witnesses |
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| 14 July 2023 | | |
| Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) | To commence the Committee's involvement with the RPPR process for 2024/25 by reviewing the information in the Quarter 4, end of financial year (2022/23) Council Monitoring report and the State of the County report. | Chief Executive / Senior Scrutiny Adviser |
| Library & Information Service | An update report to outline the current service provision, progress against the Strategy, current challenges and priorities and any future developments for the Service. | Assistant Director Communities/ Head of Customer, Library and Registration Services |
| Rights of Way (RoW) Team | A presentation and report of the work of the RoW Team. This is to provide the Committee with an update on the current work, challenges, and future priorities of the Team. | Assistant Director Operations/Head of Transport and Operational Services/ Team Manager, RoW |
| Work Programme | To consider items for inclusion in the Committee's work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports for future meetings • Scrutiny reviews and potential scrutiny reviews • Items from the Forward Plan | Senior Scrutiny Adviser |
| 26 September 2023 | | |
| Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) | To continue the Committee's work on the RPPR process for 2024/25, by reviewing Portfolio Plans and service based information. | Chief Executive / Senior Scrutiny Adviser |
| Environment Act, Food Waste | To receive an update report on the implications of the Environment Act for ESCC of the requirement to put in place a food waste collection service. | Assistant Director Operations/Waste Team Manager |
| Work Programme | To consider items for inclusion in the Committee's work programme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports for future meetings • Scrutiny reviews and potential scrutiny reviews • Items from the Forward Plan | Senior Scrutiny Adviser |
| 23 November 2023 | | |
| Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) | The Committee will examine any additional information requested at the September meeting and consider any updated RPPR information for 2024/25. | Chief Executive / Senior Scrutiny Adviser |

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| Southern Water, combined sewer discharges and spills | <p>An update report on Southern Water's work to reduce the use of storm water discharges and spills, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an update on the timescales for any East Sussex trials; • an update on the progress of investment to tackle the use of storm overflows and improve infrastructure with details of location, costs and timescales, including the Local Area Regional Plan; and • details of any improvements Southern Water have made in communications with the public on the issues involved, as the Committee agreed that this was not currently good enough. | Representatives from Southern Water, the Environment Agency and Ofwat |
| Scrutiny Review of Road Markings | To receive an update report on the implementation of the recommendations from the Scrutiny Review of Road Markings, including details of the work undertaken with additional expenditure in this area of work. | Assistant Director, Operations |
| SPACES Programme and Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy | To receive an update report on the work of the SPACES programme, including its successes and future focus, and a report back on the updated Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy. | Assistant Director Property / Chief Operating Officer |
| Work Programme | <p>To consider items for inclusion in the Committee's work programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports for future meetings • Scrutiny reviews and potential scrutiny reviews • Items from the Forward Plan | Senior Scrutiny Adviser |
| Future Items – to be scheduled | | Witnesses |
| Electricity Grid Capacity | A report on the capacity and constraints of the electricity grid in East Sussex to accommodate Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure and other developments such as solar farms and new housing developments. Timescale to be agreed, dependent on agreement with potential witnesses UK Power Networks/electricity distributors. | UK Power Networks |
| Queensway Gateway Project | A report on the Queensway Gateway project, covering the current position regarding delivery of this project. | Director of Communities Economy and Transport / Assistant Director Economy / Head of Economic Development, Skills and Infrastructure |

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN

The Leader of the County Council is required to publish a forward plan setting out matters which the Leader believes will be the subject of a key decision by the Cabinet, individual Cabinet member or officer in the period covered by the Plan (the subsequent four months). The Council's Constitution states that a key decision is one that involves

- (a) expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the expenditure of the County Council's budget, namely above £500,000 per annum; or
- (b) is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral divisions.

As a matter of good practice, the Council's Forward Plan includes other items in addition to key decisions that are to be considered by the Cabinet/individual members. This additional information is provided to inform local residents of all matters to be considered, with the exception of issues which are dealt with under the urgency provisions. Only key decisions to be taken by officers are included.

For each decision included on the Plan the following information is provided:

- Page 255 -
- the name of the individual or body that is to make the decision and the date of the meeting or relevant time period for an officer decision
 - the title of the report and decision to be considered
 - groups that will be consulted prior to the decision being taken
 - a list of documents that will be considered when making the decision
 - the name and telephone number of the contact officer for each item.

The Plan is updated and published every month on the Council's website two weeks before the start of the period to be covered.

Meetings of the Cabinet/individual members are open to the public (with the exception of discussion regarding reports which contain exempt/confidential information). Copies of agenda and reports for meetings are available on the website in advance of meetings. Key decisions taken by officers will not be taken at a meeting – documents listed can be made available on request to the contact officer, with the exception of those which contain exempt/confidential information.

For further details on the time of meetings and general information about the Plan please contact Stuart McKeown at County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE, or telephone 01273 481583 or send an e-mail to stuart.mckeown@eastsussex.gov.uk. For further detailed information regarding specific issues to be considered by the Cabinet, individual Member or officer please contact the named contact officer for the item concerned.

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL
County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

For copies of reports or other documents please contact the officer listed on the Plan or phone 01273 335274.

FORWARD PLAN – EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (including Key Decisions) –1 July 2023 TO 31 October 2023

Additional notices in relation to Key Decisions and/or private decisions are available on the [Council's website](#).

Cabinet membership:

Councillor Keith Glazier - Lead Member for Strategic Management and Economic Development
Councillor Nick Bennett – Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change
Vacancy – Lead Member for Economy
Councillor Claire Dowling – Lead Member for Transport and Environment
Councillor Carl Maynard – Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health
Councillor Bob Bowdler – Lead Member for Children and Families
Councillor Bob Standley – Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability

| Date for Decision | Decision Taker | Decision/Key Issue | Decision to be taken wholly or partly in private (P) or Key Decision (KD) | Consultation | List of Documents to be submitted to decision maker | Contact Officer |
|-------------------|--|---|---|--------------|---|-------------------------------|
| 11 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change | Former Hindsland Playing Fields, Eastbourne Road, Polegate - Disposal of Freehold The land known as Former Hindsland Playing Fields was declared surplus in 1989. At the end of an appropriate marketing period, Officer recommendations for the preferred purchaser will be presented in a Lead Member report to formally declare the site to be surplus, approve the sale and to ask the Chief Operating Officer be granted authority to agree detailed terms with the preferred | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Rebecca Lewis 07955 312371 |

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| | | purchaser and if they don't complete the purchase, to move the next prospective purchaser(s) if appropriate. | | | | |
| 11 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change | Uckfield Leisure Centre Public Consultation Outcome To note the outcome of the Uckfield Leisure Centre public consultation which concludes on 27 May 2023. To agree next steps for the future operation of Uckfield Leisure Centre. The County Council own the freehold of this asset. | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Nigel Brown, Pauline Young 07394 410630, 01273 481180 |
| 11 Jul 2023 Page 257 | Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change | Corporate Office Estate New lease - revised lease terms following negotiation New Lease for St Marks House, Eastbourne. | P | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Rebecca Lewis 07955 312371 |
| 17 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Transport and Environment | Joint Waste Agreement (JWA) between East Sussex County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council The JWA is the agreement between the two councils on the administration and sharing of costs of the Integrated Waste Management Services Contract (IW MSC) with Veolia. It expires in 2033 when the IW MSC ends. The changes to the JWA reflect amendments to the IW MSC that have been negotiated with Veolia and were approved by Cabinet in 2019. Some other minor updates have also been made to the JWA. | P | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Justin Foster 01273 335805 |

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| 17 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Transport and Environment | <p>Petition to increase the safety of the B2095 Lower Street, Ninfield and A259 Marsh Road</p> <p>To decide on the response to the petition calling on the County Council to increase the safety of the B2095, Lower Street, Ninfield to A259 Marsh Road, to take steps to reduce the speed and weight of vehicles and address the growing problem of dangerous and inconsiderate driving.</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Michael Higgs 01273 482106 |
| 18 Jul 2023 | Cabinet | <p>External Audit Plan 2022/2023</p> <p>This report sets out in detail the work to be carried out by the Council's External Auditors on the Council's accounts for financial year 2021/22.</p> | | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Ian Gutsell 01273 481399 |
| 18 Jul 2023 | Cabinet | <p>Ashdown Forest Trust Fund 2022/23</p> <p>To inform Cabinet of the movements on the Trust Fund during 2022/23 and the closing position as at 31 March 2023.</p> | | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Andy Fowler 01273 481774 |
| 18 Jul 2023 | Cabinet | <p>Exceat Bridge Compulsory Purchase Order, Bridge Order and Side Roads Order</p> <p>The Exceat Bridge project involves the realignment and replacement of the existing single lane bridge at the A259 over the river Cuckmere with a new two-lane bridge with a footway. The Project will deliver a major improvement in the highway connection between Eastbourne and Seaford. The Council needs to secure additional land for the Project. Whilst the Council is seeking to</p> | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Chris Marks 01273 335350 |

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| | | negotiate acquisition of the land by voluntary agreement, it is proposed to make a Compulsory Order in case any negotiations prove unsuccessful. As the works will cross a river and involve diversion of footpaths, it is also proposed to make a Bridge Order under the Highways Act 1980 and Side Roads Order in order to deliver the Project. | | | | |
| 18 Jul 2023 | Cabinet | Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2022/23 To consider the Internal Audit Annual Report and Opinion 2022/23 including quarter 4. | | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Nigel Chilcott 01273 481992 |
| 19 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health | Homes for Ukraine - Extension of Support into Work Programme The Lead Member is asked to approve a 12 month extension to the Support into Work programme which is being delivered as part of the Homes for Ukraine Programme. Support into Work provides skills and employability training and language courses and supports access to local employment for Ukrainian guests and other migrant, refugee and asylum seeker groups living in East Sussex. | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Miranda Shawcross 01273 335338 |
| 24 Jul 2023 | Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability | Proposed reorganisation of Grove Park School To consider the outcome of a consultation to reorganise Grove Park School, and, if appropriate, to seek approval to publish a | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Gary Langford 01273 481758 |

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| | | statutory proposal. | | | | |
| July 2023 | Director of Communities, Economy and Transport | Transport for the South East technical call off contract The Director will approve the contract award for the Transport for the South East technical call off contract, that will allow for the delivery of our technical programme. | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Jasmin Barnicoat 01273 481892 |
| July 2023 Page 260 | Director of Communities, Economy and Transport | Hastings Public Realm and Green Connections Consultation and Preliminary Design To consider direct award of the Consultation, Preliminary Design and relevant surveys for the Hastings Public Realm and Green Connections project to Arup. Arup worked on previous design work for this project, led and managed by Hastings Borough Council. This project has £9.834m of funding from Hastings Town Deal and £400k from the Local Growth Fund. This commission is valued at £700k. | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Ellie McDaniel 01273 335464 |
| July 2023 | Chief Operating Officer | Award of contract for IT device supply and associated services To approve the award of contract to the recommended supplier for the supply of end-user IT devices (laptops, & desktops) and associated services. The contract will be used to refresh the existing corporate estate, and for any other business as usual or project device needs. | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Matt Scott 07552 286752 |

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| July 2023 | Chief Operating Officer | <p>Award of Contract for Sorrel Drive Capital Project</p> <p>A decision is required to enter into a building contract with an ESCC Framework Contractor. The capital project seeks to extend the Sorrel Drive Children's Resource Centre and carry out further internal alterations in support of children's day and residential respite care facilities.</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Nigel Brown 07394 410630 |
| July 2023 | Chief Operating Officer | <p>Award of Pre-Contract Services Agreement (PSCA) for the ESCC youth centres for The Joff, Peacehaven and Heathfield Youth Centre, Heathfield to appoint a contractor</p> <p>This is for pre contract services to enable a tender package to be prepared for works to The Joff Youth Centre, Peacehaven and Heathfield Youth Centre. The works will increase the number of regular positive activities and clubs available to young people aged 11 to 19 (up to 25 for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) in the areas.</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Nigel Brown 07394 410630 |
| 31 Aug 2023 | Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health | <p>Commissioning East Sussex Community Network (ESCN)</p> <p>To agree the East Sussex Joint Community Mental Health Commissioning of core services known as the East Sussex Community Network (ESCN).</p> <p>This project is to recommission all community provision in scope (£4,500,000), aligning support with emerging mental health transformation, and Emotional</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Kenny Mackay 01323 463946 |

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| | | <p>Wellbeing Services (EWS) in Primary Care, ensuring compatibility and interoperability through co-design and development.</p> <p>This is driven by local place-based priorities, including service users and their carers, NHS Sussex, East Sussex Local Authority, Primary Care Networks (PCN) and EWS workstreams. It will ensure that future services maximise the offers of support for people in their local communities.</p> | | | | |
| 11 Sep 2023 Page 262 | Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability | <p>Holy Cross CE Primary School</p> <p>To update the Lead Member following the consultation on the proposed closure of Holy Cross CE Primary School and to seek approval for next steps.</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Gary Langford 01273 481758 |
| 11 Sep 2023 | Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability | <p>Household Support Fund Round 4</p> <p>Approval of the proposed use of the Household Support Fund Round 4 for the period 1 October – 31 March 2024 for the spend on children and families. A report is also being considered by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health for the spend of this fund on adults.</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Jessica Stubbings 01323 463537 |
| 15 Sep 2023 | Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health | <p>Household Support Fund Round 4 (HSF4)</p> <p>Approval of the proposed use of the Household Support Fund Round 4 for the period (1 October – 31 March 2024) for the</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Paul Bolton 01273 336353 |

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| | | <p>spend allocations managed by adult Social care and Health (ASC&H) which include District and Borough allocations, Voluntary and Community Social Enterprise organisations (VCSE) allocations, allocations to Warmer Homes and allocations to Food Banks/Food Partnerships.</p> <p>A report is also being considered by the Lead Member for Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability (EISEND) for the spend of the Household Support Fund on children and families.</p> | | | | |
| 18 Sep 2023 Page 263 | Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change | <p>Exeat Bridge Improvement Scheme land acquisition and compensation</p> <p>Various parcels of land subject to acquisition and/or compensation in connection with the Exeat Bridge Improvement scheme. Scheme reported to Cabinet in 2017 and approved as part of the capital programme. Planning permission for the scheme was secured in December 2022.</p> | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Zoe Tweed 07701 021868 |
| 25 Sep 2023 | Lead Member for Transport and Environment | <p>Petition to 'introduce a lorry route network similar to the one in West Sussex, so that HGVs are redirected away from narrow local roads in our villages'</p> <p>To consider whether the existing approach to freight movements in East Sussex, as set out in LTP3, needs updating and to consider HGV movements through Ringmer</p> | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Lisa Simmonds, Tessa Sweet-Escott 0345 6080190, 0345 6080190 |

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| | | in order to respond to the petition calling on the County Council to introduce a lorry route network similar to the one in West Sussex. | | | | |
| 25 Sep 2023 | Lead Member for Transport and Environment | Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b & Victoria Place Levelling Up Fund (Seaside Road to Grand Parade) Public Consultation Results To approve the East Sussex County Council response and report on the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b public consultation, moving to complete the detailed design and construction of the Victoria Place section of the Terminus Road scheme. | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Isobel Kellett 07513 833903 |
| 28 Sep 2023 | Cabinet | East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and the South Downs NPA Waste and Minerals Plan Review To recommend to Full Council that; the modifications proposed to the Submission version of the Waste and Minerals Plan Review are published for statutory public consultation. These modifications are deemed necessary in order for the Plan to be found 'sound' and are in response to feedback received from the Planning Inspectorate following the Public Examination into the Plan in November 2022. | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Ed Sheath 01273 481632 |

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| 28 Sep 2023 | Cabinet | Report on the County Council's progress in becoming a carbon neutral council The agreed Notice of Motion covering ESCC's declaration of a climate emergency committed the County Council to: report annually on its progress towards the target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050. | | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Andy Arnold 01273 481606 |
| September 2023 Page 26 | Director of Adult Social Care and Health | Sexual Health Services Procurement Approve the award of the Specialist Sexual Health Contract that has been subject to competitive tender in line with the Lead Members decision to delegate the decision to the Director of Adult Social Care & Health on 20 April 2023. | KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Tony Proom 01273 335252 |
| 17 Oct 2023 | Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change | To approve the granting of a new Lease to the Trustees of the West Hills & District Community Centre The current Lease dated 12 March 2008 expires 11 March 2023 and it is proposed that ESCC grant the Trustees a new Lease for a period of 25 years which will allow the Trustees to be able to seek grant funding. | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Joanne Johnston, Zoe Tweed 01273 336621, 07701 021868 |
| October 2023 | Chief Operating Officer | Award of contract for Salary Sacrifice Lease Car scheme (Electric Vehicles) East Sussex County Council wants to introduce a Salary Sacrifice Lease Car scheme for electric vehicles. This will allow employees to access electric vehicles at a saving compared to conventional purchase. | P KD | | Report, other documents may also be submitted | Nicholas Earley 01273 335061 |

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| | | <p>This will help employees to access greener transport and will therefore support the Council's climate emergency plans. It will also provide an attractive staff benefit, helping to aid recruitment and retention. The scheme will be run as a managed service by a private provider, in order to facilitate employee access to a range of good quality vehicles which represent good value for money. The managed service will also ensure the council is compliant with all relevant HMRC legislation, and that the administrative burden for the authority is minimal.</p> | | | | |
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