

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 11 FEBRUARY 2025 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Roy Galley (Chairman), Abul Azad (Vice Chairman), Sam Adeniji, Matthew Beaver, Colin Belsey, Nick Bennett, Bob Bowdler, Charles Clark, Anne Cross, Godfrey Daniel, Johnny Denis, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Kathryn Field, Gerard Fox, Nuala Geary, Keith Glazier, Alan Hay, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Stephen Holt, Johanna Howell, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Tom Liddiard, Philip Lunn, James MacCleary, Wendy Maples, Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Carl Maynard, Matthew Milligan, Steve Murphy, Sarah Osborne, Peter Pragnell, Paul Redstone, Christine Robinson, Pat Rodohan, Phil Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Alan Shuttleworth, Bob Standley, Colin Swansborough, Georgia Taylor, David Tutt, John Ungar, Trevor Webb and Brett Wright

42. Minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2025

42.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the County Council meeting held on 9 January 2025

43. Apologies for absence

43.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Chris Collier and Carolyn Lambert.

44. Chairman's business

FORMER COUNCILLOR SYLVIA TIDY

44.1 The Chairman began with the sad news of the death of former Councillor Sylvia Tidy. Sylvia was elected to the County Council in 2005 and represented the Crowborough South and St Johns division until 2021. She served as the Lead Member for Children's and Families from 2013 to 2021 and was a Governor for the Virtual School during this time. Sylvia was a mentor for new Lead Members in the South East Region, as part of the South East Sector-led Improvement Programme. Additionally, she was a member of several committees of the Council: the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (2005–2007), the East Sussex Music Service Management Committee (2005–2013), and the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (2005–2013), which she chaired from 2005 to 2007. Sylvia also chaired the Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee from 2007 to 2011. She was a member of the Ashdown Forest

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Board of Conservators from 2011 – 2025 and Wealden District Council from 1995, representing Chiddingly and East Hoathly. She was a trustee of the Farley Arts Trust, and Chairman of the High Weald Advisory Committee.

44.2 The Leader of the Council and the other group leaders offered condolences and shared memories of Councillor Sylvia Tidy. The Council stood for a moment's silence as a mark of respect to Councillor Tidy.

DAWN WHITTAKER

44.3 The Chairman thanked Dawn Whittaker, the former Chief Fire Officer, for her contribution to the East Sussex Fire Authority and her exemplary service to the county.

44.4 The Chairman welcomed Mark Matthews, Chief Fire Officer for the East Sussex Fire Authority.

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

44.5 On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated all those who live or work in East Sussex who were recognised in the New Year's honours.

CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

44.6 The Chairman reported that he had attended a number of engagements since the last meeting of the Council including: the Eastbourne Civic Harvest Festival; the Sussex Multiple Sclerosis Centre; a visit to Polegate Ambulance Station with the Mayor of Polegate - followed by a visit to the Community Centre; the Battle Of Trafalgar Dinner; the Lord-Lieutenant's Awards Ceremony; the Eastbourne Silver Band's 13th Annual Concert of Remembrance; the High Sheriff East Sussex Judges Service; Remembrance Parades and Services for Maresfield, Lewes and the Seaford Royal British Legion; the AGM of Seaview; Picture News and SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education); a visit to the St James Trustin Seaford and Seaford Primary School; the Friends of Arundel Cathedral - Pontifical Sung Vespers; visits to Crowborough with the Mayor; standing in for the Lord-Lieutenant at a citizenship ceremony; St John Sussex Carol Service; a meeting with Sussex Community Foundation; the Good Company People; the Mayor of Seaford's Christmas Carol Concert; the Mayor of Peacehaven Carol Concert; the Mayor of Polegate Carol Concert; Christmas drinks reception with the Chair of Wealden District Council; and the Base Afterschool Club Celebration 21st Anniversary.

44.7 The Chairman thanked the Vice-Chairman for his ongoing support, including attendance at the St Peter's Church blessing of commemorative plaque; Hall and Woodhouse Community Chest Awards; and the Sleeping Beauty Pantomime with the Mayor of Polegate.

PETITIONS

44.8 The following petitions were presented before the meeting by Councillors:

Name of Presenting Councillor	Subject of Petition
Councillor Daniel Shing	Protect and retain the East Sussex Floating Support Service
Councillor Taylor	Opposing the closure of the Hookstead Day Service facility in Crowborough

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Councillor Murphy	Install a safe pedestrian crossing in Mill Road, Hailsham outside the entrance to Lion House Park and a 20mph speed limit in the road around the bend
Councillors Clark and Hollidge	Enforce the 7.5 ton weight limit to preserve historic listed building in Bexhill

PRAYERS

44.9 The Chairman Father John Wall, Rector of the Uckfield Plurality (Uckfield, Isfield and Horsted Parva) for leading the prayers before the meeting.

45. Questions from members of the public

45.1 Copies of questions from members of the public and the answers from Councillor Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health, and Councillor Fox, Chair of the Pension Committee. Nine supplementary questions were asked and responded to.

46. Declarations of interest

46.1 Councillor Daniel declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in item 5 on the agenda, as Associate Hospital Manager for Sussex Partnership Trust.

47. Reports

47.1 The Chairman of the County Council, having called over the reports set out in the agenda, reserved the following for discussion:

Cabinet report – paragraph 1 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR), paragraph 3 (Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing), paragraph 4 (Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy) and paragraph 5 (Annual Report of Looked After Children's Services).

Governance Committee report – paragraph 1 (Amendment to the Member Parental Leave Policy)

People Scrutiny Committee report – paragraph 1 (Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing).

Place Scrutiny Committee report – paragraph 1 (Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy).

NON-RESERVED PARAGRAPHS

47.2 On the motion of the Chairman of the County Council, the Council adopted those paragraphs in the report that had not been reserved for discussion as follows:

Cabinet report - paragraph 2 (Council Monitoring, Quarter 2 2024/25), paragraph 6 (Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2024/25) and paragraph 7 (the Conservators of Ashdown Forest – 2024/25 forecast outturn position and updated medium term financial plan including the 2025/26 budget).

Governance Committee report – paragraph 2 (Pay Policy Statement).

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48. Report of the Cabinet

Paragraph 1 – Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources

48.1 Under Standing Order 23, the Council agreed that the speeches of the Leaders of the 5 Groups (or their nominees) on paragraph 2 of the Cabinet's report be extended beyond 5 minutes.

48.2 Councillor Bennett moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Cabinet's report.

48.3 The following amendment was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded by Councillor Stephen Shing:

Delete paragraph 1.81 of the Cabinet's report and replace with:-

(1) approve, in principle, the draft Council Plan 2025/26 at Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the relevant Lead Members;

(2) approve the net Revenue Budget estimates totalling £579.6m for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix 2 (Medium Term Financial Plan) and Appendix 3 (Budget Summary) and authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Leader and Deputy the Leader, to make adjustments to the presentation of the Budget Summary to reflect the final settlement and budget decisions with the following amendments:

- (i) Reinstate savings proposed for Older People Directly Provided Services: Milton Grange - £521,000*
- (ii) Reinstate savings proposed for Older People Directly Provided Services: Phoenix Centre - £191,000*
- (iii) Reinstate savings proposed for Learning Disability People Directly Provided Services: Linden Court - £327,000*
- (iv) Reinstate savings proposed for Learning Disability People Directly Provided Services: Hookstead - £124,000*
- (v) Reinstate savings proposed for Adults with Mental Health needs Supported Accommodation Services - £356,000*

Total of proposed revenue amendments - £1,519,000

To be funded by:

- (vi) Use of available reserves arising from the deferral of May 2025 County Council elections - £1,519,000*

Total of proposed revenue funding amendments - £1,519,000

(3) in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to agree that:

- (i) the net budget requirement is £579.6m and the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as its council tax requirement (see Appendix 5) for the year 2025/26 is £394.4m;*

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- (ii) *the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as the basic amount of its council tax (i.e. for a band D property) for the year 2025/26 is £1,867.05 and represents a 4.99% (2% of which relates to the Adult Social Care precept) increase on the previous year;*

(4) approve to incorporate Climate Emergency Action Plan activities and key performance measures within the Council Plan;

(5) advise the District and Borough Councils of the relevant amounts payable and council tax in other bands in line with the regulations and to issue precepts accordingly in accordance with an agreed schedule of instalments as set out at Appendix 5;

(6) agree the Reserves Policy set out in Appendix 6;

(7) approve the Capital Strategy and Programme as set out at Appendix 8;

(8) note the progress with the Council Plan and Budget 2025/26 since quarter 2 set out in paragraphs 1.36 to 1.38 of the report;

(9) note the Medium Term Financial Plan forecast for 2025/26 to 2027/28, as set out in Appendix 2 and amended by the proposals in paragraph 1.81 above;

(10) note the comments of the Chief Finance Officer on budget risks and robustness as set out in Appendix 6;

(11) note the comments from the engagement exercises as set out in Appendix 7, and

(12) note the schedule of fees and charges that have increased above 4% at Appendix 9.

48.4 A recorded vote on the amendment proposed by Councillor Tutt was taken. The amendment was LOST, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Cross, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, MacCleary, Maples, Murphy, Osborne, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar, Webb, and Wright.

AGAINST THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Adeniji, Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Geary, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Milligan, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

ABSTENTIONS

None

48.5 The following motion was moved by Councillor Bennet to adopt paragraph 1 of the Cabinet report:

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- (1) approve in principle the draft Council Plan 2025/26 at Appendix 1 and authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the relevant Lead Members;
- (2) approve the net Revenue Budget estimate of £579.6m for 2025/26 set out in Appendix 2 (Medium Term Financial Plan) and Appendix 3 (Draft) (Budget Summary) and authorise the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, Leader and Deputy Leader, to make adjustments to the presentation of the Budget Summary to reflect the final settlement and final budget decisions;
- (3) approve to incorporate Climate Emergency Action Plan activities and key performance measures within the Council Plan;
- (4) in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to agree that:
 - (i) the net budget requirement is £579.6m and the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as its council tax requirement (see Appendix 5) for the year 2024/25 is £394.4m;
 - (ii) the amount calculated by East Sussex County Council as the basic amount of council tax (i.e. for a band D property) for the year 2025/26 is £1,867.05 and represents a 4.99% (2% of which relates to the Adult Social Care precept) increase on the previous year;
- (5) advise the District and Borough Councils of the relevant amounts payable and council tax in other bands in line with the regulations and to issue precepts accordingly in accordance with an agreed schedule of instalments as set out at Appendix 5.
- (6) agree the Reserves Policy set out in Appendix 6;
- (7) approve the Capital Strategy and Programme at Appendix 8;
- (8) note progress with the Council Plan and Budget 2024/25 since quarter 2 set out in paragraphs 1.36 to 1.38;
- (9) note the Medium Term Financial Plan forecast for 2025/26 to 2027/28, set out in Appendix 2;
- (10) note the comments of the Chief Finance Officer on budget risks and robustness, as set out in Appendix 6;
- (11) note the comments from engagement exercises set out in Appendix 7; and
- (12) note the schedule of fees and charges that have increased above 4% at Appendix 9.

48.6 A recorded vote was taken on the motion moved by Councillor Bennett. The motion was CARRIED with the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE MOTION

Councillors Adeniji, Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Geary, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Milligan, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

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AGAINST THE MOTION

Councillors Cross, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, MacCleary, Maples, Murphy, Osborne, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar, Webb, and Wright.

ABSTENTIONS

None

Paragraph 3 - (Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing)

48.7 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 3 of the Cabinet report with the report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 4 - (Scrutiny Review of Local Speed Limit Policy)

48.8 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 4 of the Cabinet report with the report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 5 – Annual Report of Looked After Children

48.9 Councillor Bowdler introduced the reserved paragraph in the Cabinet's report.

48.10 The paragraph was noted after the debate.

49. Report of the Governance Committee

Paragraph 1 (Amendment to the Member Parental Leave Policy)

49.1 Councillor Glazier moved the reserved paragraph.

49.2 The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate.

50. Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 1 – Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing

50.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of this report with paragraph 3 of the Cabinet's report.

50.2 Councillor Howell moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee report.

50.3 Councillor Maynard moved the adoption of paragraph 3 of the Cabinet's report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate.

50.4 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee's report, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate on the basis that implementation would be in accordance with the recommendations of the Cabinet.

51. Report of the Place Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 1 – Scrutiny Review – Pothole Management

51.1 The Chairman reminded the Council that he was taking paragraph 1 of this report with paragraph 4 of the Cabinet's report.

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51.2 Councillor Beaver moved the adoption of paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee report.

51.3 Councillor Claire Dowling moved the adoption of paragraph 4 of the Cabinet's report. The motion, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate.

51.4 The motion to adopt paragraph 1 of the Scrutiny Committee's report, including the recommendations, was CARRIED after debate on the basis that implementation would be in accordance with the recommendations of the Cabinet

52. Questions from County Councillors

52.1 The following members asked questions of the Lead Cabinet Members indicated and they responded:

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor Holt	Councillor Claire Dowling	Pedestrian crossings in Eastbourne.
Councillor Murphy	Councillor Maynard	Medical facilities within the Wealden District.
Councillor Field	Councillor Standley	Access to apprenticeships for young people over the age of 19.
Councillor Scott	Councillor Standley	Special Educational Needs and Disability provision.
Councillor Maples	Councillor Claire Dowling	Parking enforcement in Lewes, gritting of bus routes and street lights
Councillor Stephen Shing	Councillor Claire Dowling	Highways improvement grant.
Councillor Taylor	Councillor Maynard	Proposed closure of care facilities at Hookstead.
Councillor Ungar	Councillor Claire Dowling	Gritting of bus routes

52.2 Two written questions were received from Councillors Osborne and Tutt for the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. Councillors Stephen Shing and Tutt also asked questions to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health. The questions and answers are attached to these minutes. The Lead Members responded to supplementary questions.

53. Report of Urgent Decisions

53.1 The Chairman informed the Council of an urgent decision taken by the Cabinet at a meeting on 9 January under urgency provisions, and that the call-in procedure did not therefore apply.

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53.2 The reason for urgency arose because the English Devolution White Paper was issued on 16 December, followed by a letter from the Secretary of State imposing a 10 January 2025 response deadline which was the day following the Cabinet meeting.

53.2 The report was received and noted.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 14:15

The reports referred to are included in the minute book.

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question 1 – Josh Babarinde MP, Eastbourne, East Sussex

What consideration has ESCC given to the alternative cost-saving plan for Milton Grange contributed to by a former manager of the service?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

We have considered this proposal alongside several other suggestions that arose as part of the consultation and due diligence processes. These included reducing the level and scale of the service, reviewing the use of transport, back-office and administrative changes and changes to the staffing structure at Milton Grange.

All of these have been taken into account alongside the views and needs of people who use the service and their informal carers, the Equality Impact Assessment, the availability of alternative provision and the financial position.

All of the suggestions and ideas received are contained within the full consultation pack that will be available to all Members when the papers for Cabinet on 25th February are published.

Question 2 – Tania Bilton, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

Many clients depend on transport provided by ESCC to get them to and from their Day Care Provision at Linden Court. Therefore, if Linden Court closes then this needs to be in place for all those going to Beeching Park.

Please can the council give all families involved , a written guarantee that this will be provided forever and not taken away at a later date?

The council will be failing clients and their families if transport is not provided for as long as it is needed.

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

It is fully acknowledged that Linden Court is a well run and much valued services which has a profoundly beneficial impact on the people who use it. If the decision is made to close and reprovise we will make every effort to replace it with an equally beneficial, but more affordable, alternatives.

If the decision is made to close Linden Court, individual assessments of needs and preferences of all of the individuals will be undertaken. And alongside this we will also take into account the needs and views of their informal carers and family when agreeing how and where those needs can be best met.

Given the Council's financial situation and the need to maintain equity between all of the people who we provide care and support for, it is not possible to provide a blanket guarantee of indefinite funded transport to an alternative (or the existing) setting.

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Whilst Beeching Park is the main potential alternative provision, it is not the only one and as part of the evaluation process, alongside existing independent sector provision, consideration of potential solutions has also included the provision of a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days per week. Any such options, that are considered viable, will be included in the papers presented to Cabinet on 25th February.

Question 3 – Brett and Beverly Collison, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

Will the council be providing an alternative day service in Eastbourne for clients who are unable to cope with the travelling to Bexhill if Linden Court closes?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

If the decision is made to close and re-provision Linden Court, each person will be reviewed to identify how their eligible care and support needs can be met with appropriate provision.

Consideration of potential solutions to mitigate travel to Bexhill include the provision of a satellite in Eastbourne for 2 days per week. There are also day services run by other providers in Eastbourne that could offer an alternative service if people were not able to attend Beeching Park.

All of these considerations will be included in the papers presented to Cabinet on 25th February.

Question 4 – Cathy Jessup, Eastbourne, East Sussex

I would like to know how the results of the consultation and questionnaires were collated, and to what extent has ESCC considered these results?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

As part of preparing the final report and recommendations to Cabinet, all consultation responses are taken into account alongside the views and needs of people who use the service and their informal carers, the Equality Impact Assessment, the availability of alternative provision and the financial position.

Every single consultation response received is included within the full consultation pack that will be available to all Members when the papers for Cabinet on 25th February are published and a summary of the consultation responses is included within each individual Cabinet report.

Question 5 – Inge Keats, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

How have the Council looked into alternative ways of running Linden Court, i.e. sharing the building with other services such as Milton Grange, Mencap, etc.?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The outcome of our review of alternative operating models concluded that it wasn't possible to achieve the same level of saving through changing how the service at Linden Court is delivered.

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However, potential alternative solutions, such as the provision of a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days per week remain under consideration.

We also explored the potential co-location of the day services (eg: Linden Court and Milton Grange) but this is not possible as there is insufficient space, the needs of the people attending the different services require support that is specific to their need and the financial saving generated from sharing premises is insufficient .

Question 6 – Martin Keats, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

How have ESCC considered future clients requiring day care provision such as the new intake which will be leaving college this year as Beeching Park would be at full capacity?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

If Linden Court were to close, Beeching Park would still have surplus capacity even if all of the people from Linden Court transferred and could accommodate a maximum of 85 adults a day.

Currently an average of 56 adults attend each day.

The proposal sets out that, to accommodate additional people, Beeching Park would open for an additional day (from four to five days per week), in addition to the existing capacity in the service.

We also know that all the Adult Social Care day services currently have spaces, as do many independent sector day services (and/or the capacity to expand) which indicates that there is sufficient capacity to meet the anticipated future demand for those individuals who choose day services to meet their eligible needs.

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Question 7 – Ryan Keats, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

How will ESCC ensure all clients' needs are met if Linden Court closes?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

If the proposal to close and re-provision Linden Court is agreed, each adult would have a Care Act review to ensure their assessment of eligible needs is up to date. This would be used to inform their support plan and how we ensure eligible social care needs continued to be met.

Where appropriate, carer assessments would be offered alongside the reviews for adults using the services to identify and address their needs too.

Question 8 – Gina Murphy, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

I am concerned Beeching day centre in Bexhill won't be big enough for all clients moving over from Linden Court, I was told some current clients at Beeching Park day centre will be moved to a place in Hastings called Working Wonders?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Beeching Park day service is more than big enough to accommodate all of the people who use both services, if required.

The day service at Beeching Park currently also uses Working Wonders in Hastings, and when combined they provide a 30% larger physical area than Linden Court.

- Linden Court day service - 1006 m2
- Beeching Park day service - 893 m2
- Working Wonders - 439 m2

(Beeching Park and Working Wonders combined is 1332 m2).

People using the service currently attend Working Wonders and we will continue to utilise this valuable resource. This may be a more accessible option for people who live on that side of the County.

The consultation proposal sets out that, to accommodate additional people, Beeching Park would open for an additional day (from four to five days per week).

Question 9 – Lissa Potter, Hailsham, East Sussex

While looking at cost saving measures, which more local options have been considered, if any, as alternative premises to continue the day service for Linden Court clients? For instance, the currently unused part of the Grangemead Respite service, or the former Respite service building, Sandbanks, both situated in Hailsham. Both are much closer to Eastbourne and would hopefully be more easily accessible and less disruptive to family schedules, than travelling to Beeching Park.

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Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

A number of options have been considered but simply moving the location of the Linden Court service to another site and/or sharing premises with another service would not generate significant savings and the core costs of the service would remain. Additionally, there would be significant (one off) reconfiguration and refurbishment costs to bring both of the example sites within your question up to an acceptable operational standard.

We are however, exploring a range of mitigations including, for example, the provision of a satellite service in Eastbourne for two days per week.

Question 10 – Angela Pryor-Spiers, Hailsham, East Sussex.

How far away in miles and time does ESCC feel is acceptable for a vulnerable client to be away from their parent/carer in the event of an emergency?

It is 8.8 miles for my son to Linden Court, it is double that to Beeching Park 16 miles. Plus, more miles if other clients are picked up enroute.

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

All of our Adult Social Care services have robust policies, procedures and guidance for managing the safe transportation of clients including the management of any emergency situations that may arise in the service or during a journey or outing. These include individual and generic risk assessments, personal transport plans and specially trained staff.

We don't work to a generic figure for distance or duration as we consider each individual's specific situation, needs and wishes. This will be explored in each individual's person centred review of their needs and how they can continue to be met.

Question 11 – Connor Spiers, Hailsham, East Sussex.

Have ESCC considered at all the amount of vulnerable/ special needs clients and their families which will fall into crisis with no local day care centre locally to them?

It will have a huge impact on both mental and physical health of clients and family/carers and massive impact on quality of life for the clients as well as financial strain.

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

I am acutely aware of the number of people who would be affected by these proposals.

As a Council, we would not choose to be in a situation where we are needing to make decisions of this kind in respect of well run and much valued services, that we know have a profoundly beneficial impact on the lives of East Sussex residents.

However, we have a legal obligation to deliver a balanced budget, so we have to address this year's £55 million funding gap that Council faces.

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If decisions are made to cease services, those people with Care Act eligible needs who are affected will have those needs reviewed and individual plans developed to ensure that those needs continue to be met through alternative provision.

Where appropriate, carer assessments would be offered alongside the reviews for adults using the services to address their needs too.

Question 12 – Sophie Ticehurst, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

How have ESCC considered a range of financial funding methods and possible reduction costs to continue the service at Linden Court day centre before its threat of closure?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Before proposing the closure and reprovisioning of Linden Court, alternative savings, cost reductions and income generation were carefully considered but the conclusion was that it would not be possible to achieve any significant savings through changing how the service at Linden Court is delivered.

Question 13 – Andrew Wainwright, Eastbourne, East Sussex.

How have ESCC considered the crisis which will be created from the loss of Linden Court day centre and the influx need for premature full time residential care and the increased costs which will occur. Let alone the physical and emotional distress this will cause for the clients and their family members.

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Whilst I fully appreciate the anxiety, concern and disruption that the proposal to close and reprovision Linden Court has generated, it is important to note that, even if the service closes, all eligible social care needs of adults would continue to be met.

We would identify alternative suitable provision to meet people's eligible needs as part of the individual's (and carers) review of needs. The most likely alternative provision would be a different day centre or service, so the need for a change in an individual's living circumstances, directly as a result of the closure of Linden Court, is highly unlikely.

Question 14 – Claire Watts, Pevensey, East Sussex

As the parent of a young person who would have attended Linden Court in the next two years after the end of her education placement, what alternative provision to Linden Court will ESCC be making for her and all the other young people (whose numbers are increasing year on year) who will be finishing education?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

An individual's assessed eligible needs can potentially be met in many different ways, but if a young person 'preparing for adulthood' wished to have their needs fully or partially met through

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attending a Day Service, all of the Adult Social Care day services currently have spaces, as do many independent sector day services.

Additionally, subject to available demand and funding many services have the capacity to increase the number of individuals they are able to support or sessions they are able to offer (e.g.: many of our own Learning Disability Day Services only operate four days per week and/or occupy premises that have the physical capacity to accommodate more individuals).

Question 15 – Laurie Holden, Burwash, East Sussex

Over a period of five years, there have been questions sent to the East Sussex County Council calling for the Pension Fund to divest from its investments that include companies that supply Israel with weapons and military technology that it uses to kill Palestinians; companies that provide infrastructure for Israel's unlawful military occupation; and companies that conduct business activity in, or with, Israel's illegal settlements on stolen Palestinian land.

There are major investment companies and pension funds globally and in the UK that have divested from these companies. Local government pension funds have made a commitments to begin processes to divest. These include Waltham Forest Pension Fund, Islington Pension Fund and Lewisham Pension Fund. Local Councils have called on their pension schemes to divest. These include Manchester City Council, Bristol City Council, Tower Hamlets Council and Sutton Council. Some of these organisations have got the ball rolling and have shown that they are serious with their commitment to divest, e.g. the Waltham Forest Pension Committee has started discussions with its asset pooling company the London CIV and has taken legal advice to help it assess its options.

But the East Sussex Pension Fund has consistently refused to make any changes, even refusing to screen for these complicit companies and pinpoint in which of the ESPF funds they are held. At one point the pension fund committee acknowledged the issue of its investments in the illegal settlement industry. Instead of dealing with this, it 'kicked it into the long grass' by sending the issue to the LAPFF (Local Authority Pension Fund Forum). So LAPFF has, as we knew would the case, got nowhere.

So while other councils and LGPSs are taking steps to divest from complicit companies, the East Sussex Pension Fund has not only refused to divest, but has in fact increased its investments in these companies. The total invested now stands at £170 million. The number of companies on the UN list involved in the illegal settlement industry has risen to eight. And the fund still has companies that supply the Israeli military. This includes Airbus, BAE Systems, Rolls Royce, Thales and Ultra Electronics.

There are, of course, far reaching legal reasons for divesting. In July last year the International Court of Justice (ICJ) confirmed that Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and treatment of Palestinians is unlawful and that it is under an obligation to bring to an end its unlawful presence "as rapidly as possible." It also stated that Israel is "under an obligation to cease immediately all new settlement activities and to evacuate all settlers from the Occupied Palestinian Territory." This means that all illegal settlements must be disbanded.

On June 24, UN experts issued a statement demanding that both states and companies stop all arms transfers to Israel. In issuing their call, they outlined that financial institutions, such as banks and pension funds, investing in armaments companies supplying Israel must cease, stating that financial institutions' "failure to prevent or mitigate their business relationships with these arms manufacturers transferring arms to Israel could move from being directly linked to human rights abuses to contributing to them, with repercussions for complicity in potential atrocity crimes."

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And In January 2024 a landmark ruling by the ICJ affirmed that there is plausible evidence that Israel has been committing genocidal acts against the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip.

Therefore, the pension fund has a legal responsibility to act now in order to keep within international law.

So while other councils have been taking seriously their responsibilities over their investments that are complicit in war crimes and in breach of international law, isn't it time that the East Sussex County Council did the same? Therefore, I ask that the leader of the council arrange a meeting with members of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, along with members of the pension fund who have raised objections to the fund's constituents, to look at the methods in which other councils have started on the road to divestment and to work out how they can apply these to the East Sussex Pension Fund.

Answer by the Chair of the Pensions Committee

Under our legal obligation of Fiduciary Duty, the primary aim of the East Sussex Pension Fund (the Fund) is to provide pension benefits for members and their beneficiaries when due. To do this the Fund invests to secure the best financial return for its members balancing risk and return. The power of investment must be exercised for investment purposes, and not for any wider purposes. The Fund takes a risk-based approach in setting and implementing its investment strategy.

The Fund publishes its [Investment Strategy Statement](#) which includes the Responsible Investment Strategy and Funding Strategy Statement on its website, which clearly lays out the approach of the Fund when investing. The Fund also engages with its fund managers and with companies through collaborative engagement.

The Pension Committee issued a statement in July 2022 relating to the Fund's exposure in the companies flagged by United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner's ("OHCHR") A/HRC/37/39 Report as part of the Funds stewardship responsibilities to consider the operational impact on labour and other human rights issues, which can affect long term financial return of a company.

The Fund does not make individual investment decisions directly, this is delegated to professional investment managers through pooled investment vehicles, meaning there are multiple investors in the same mandate. This means the Fund cannot dictate the underlying holdings or investment decisions of an investment manager. The Fund does not have sight of any investment transaction made by an investment manager and has no sight of what is owned on any given day. Responsibility for day-to-day interaction with companies is delegated to the Fund's investment managers, including the escalation of engagement when necessary.

Investment managers have a mandate to deliver investment returns within a specific asset class and will regularly change the underlying assets or holdings within the portfolio. As the Fund is directed by Government to pool its investments, it does not set the parameters of the investment mandate and cannot intervene in any sale or purchase within a portfolio. As a result, to remove any specific investment exposure to a company the Fund would need to sell the entire investment manager position and procure and invest in segregated mandates.

The Fund recognises that Environmental, Social and Corporate Governance ('ESG') issues can have a material impact on the long-term performance of its investments. Investors have a role in shaping and influencing company actions relating to human rights bringing the 'S' of ESG into focus. Social performance of companies considers the operational impact on labour and other human rights issues of people and communities in which it engages.

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The Fund is an active member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), who carry out engagement on behalf of the member funds. We are supportive of the LAPFF position on the occupied territories, which seeks to encourage companies operating in that jurisdiction to review and have regard for the human rights of all individuals with whom they interact in the conduct of their operations.

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WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1. Question from Councillor Sarah Osborne to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Residents of Ditchling, many of whom are parents with children at Downlands School in Hassocks have been in contact with you about the dangers for pedestrians and cyclists along 'the Keymer straight' (the B2116) including submitting a petition asking for safety measures. So far, all their requests for any improvements have been rebuffed. They have also asked if you and an officer from the ESCC Road Safety Team to attend the site from 8-8:30am term time, to witness the danger to life for young people trying to access their place of education. All road users are put unnecessarily at risk due to the 60mph speed limit and we need to see a scheme suggested that primarily reduces the speed of traffic but also makes this stretch of road safer in the day and night for all users.

Will you take up their invitation please so that you can properly appreciate the situation?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

I can confirm that the Road Safety Team have previously visited the site in order to consider whether a lower speed limit would be in accordance with our policy and what, if anything can be done to address road users concerns on the B2116 at this point. As the Road Safety team have already visited the site, I do not feel it would be appropriate to attend a site meeting on this occasion.

I refer to the report presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in October 2024, in response to the petition received. The setting of appropriate and effective speed limits has been subject to a significant level of research nationally, which is also set out in the DfT's guidelines 'Setting local speed limits', which was revised in March 2024. The East Sussex County Council policy on setting speed limits is based on these guidelines.

It is important drivers are provided with a consistent message, so they know what is expected of them as they enter different road environments. The predominant factor considered when determining an effective speed limit is the number of properties that are visible to drivers which contributes to the road character and environment. There is little to no visible frontage development on the section of Keymer Road between the Ditchling Parish Council Car Park and the county boundary. This section of road does not meet the Council's policy requirements for a lower speed limit therefore the national speed limit is the most appropriate.

I acknowledge that, in many cases, we simply do not have the funding to implement the proactive road safety improvements that our residents wish to see, however I must stress that this road does not meet the requirements set out in our policy for a lower speed limit to be introduced and even if external funding was available to reduce a speed limit on the B2116, a lower speed limit still could not be supported here due to the requirements set out in the policy.

Implementing speed limits that are not appropriate are unlikely to result in a significant reduction in average speeds and can dilute the effectiveness of speed limits that are appropriately set. This will also lead to an increased demand for enforcement from Sussex Police.

Whilst this section of road is subject to the national speed limit, the onus is on the individual driver to drive in a safe and judicious manner, and to the conditions of the road and the surroundings through which they pass.

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2. Question from Councillor Stephen Shing to the lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Residents enquire about the process and statistics surrounding Blue Badge applications in our county area. They have raised concerns about the length of time it is taking to process applications. Currently, the waiting time is a minimum of 16 weeks from the submission of a completed application.

Could you kindly provide the following information:

1. The total number of Blue Badge applications received by the county council for the years 2023-2024 and 2022-2023.
2. The average waiting time for Blue Badge applications in these two periods.
3. The number of Blue Badges issued and the number of applications that were rejected in these two periods.
4. Does the county council monitor or carry out checks to ensure that Blue Badges are being used appropriately?
5. How many Blue Badge holders were disqualified and/or paid a penalty in 2023-2024 and 2022-2023?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The estimated waiting time for the processing of a Blue Badge application is reviewed regularly and is normally in the region of 12 weeks as per the response to Question 2 (Below).

It should be noted that renewal applications are prioritised and the processing time for those and for applications that are supported by all of the required evidence and documentation would be lower. All other applications are processed in the order that they were received. The current 16 week estimate has, in part, been influenced by the currently high proportion of applications received without any, or sufficient, supporting information, which take longer to process and resolve.

The following table responds to the numbered questions:

Year	New Applications	Renewal Applications	Total Applications (Note 1)	Issued	Rejected	Estimated Average Wait	Enforcement Action (Note 2)	
							Community Resolution	Seized
2022/23	6,819	6,623	13,442	11,031	1,715	12 Weeks	15	67
2023/24	7,870	6,979	14,849	11,763	3,034	12 Weeks	39	81

Note 1: In 2022/23 there were also 9 applications for a replacement for a lost, stolen or damaged badge and 1 in 2023/24.

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Note 2: There is an Enforcement Officer within the Blue Badge Team who inspects badges alongside the Parking Team. Enforcement action includes Prosecution and local resolution whereby the offender pays an administration fee and are invited to attend a video showing the impact of their actions on genuine badge holders.

3. Question from Councillor David Tutt to the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Please can you provide details of the number of delayed hospital discharges per month over the past year and the reasons for them?

Answer by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

'Delayed hospital discharges' are now described as patients who have 'No Criteria To Reside' (NCTR) and is used to describe when a patient no longer has a medical reason to be in an acute hospital. The definition and application of an individual's NCTR status differs significantly from the previous Delayed Transfer of Care (DToC) definition as it is solely determined by an NHS clinician (as opposed to a multi-agency, multi disciplinary team) and occurs much earlier in an individual's recovery journey.

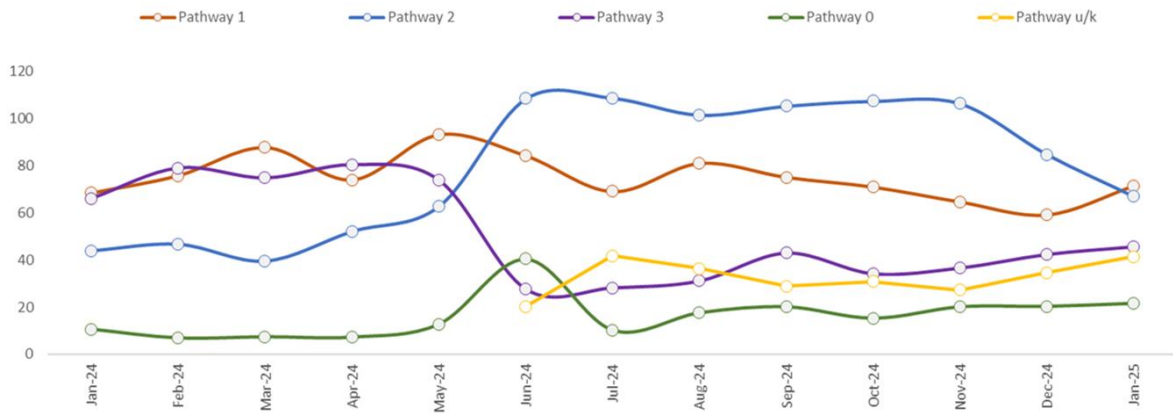
Delays are not attributed to individual agencies as it is acknowledged that all but the most simple discharges (Pathway 0) require a multi-disciplinary or whole system approach. Patients who are identified as NCTR by the NHS are categorised into one of five discharge pathways, as follows:

- Pathway 0: discharges home or to a usual place of residence with no new or additional health and/or social care needs
- Pathway 1: discharges home or to a usual place of residence with new or additional health and/or social care needs
- Pathway 2: discharges to a community bed-based setting which has dedicated recovery support. New or additional health and/or social care and support is required in the short-term to help the person recover in a community bed-based setting before they are ready to either live independently at home or receive longer-term or ongoing care and support
- Pathway 3: discharges to a new residential or nursing home setting, for people who are considered likely to need long-term residential or nursing home care. Should be used only in exceptional circumstances
- No Pathway identified – an individual has been recorded as NCTR but no route out of hospital has been identified or recorded.

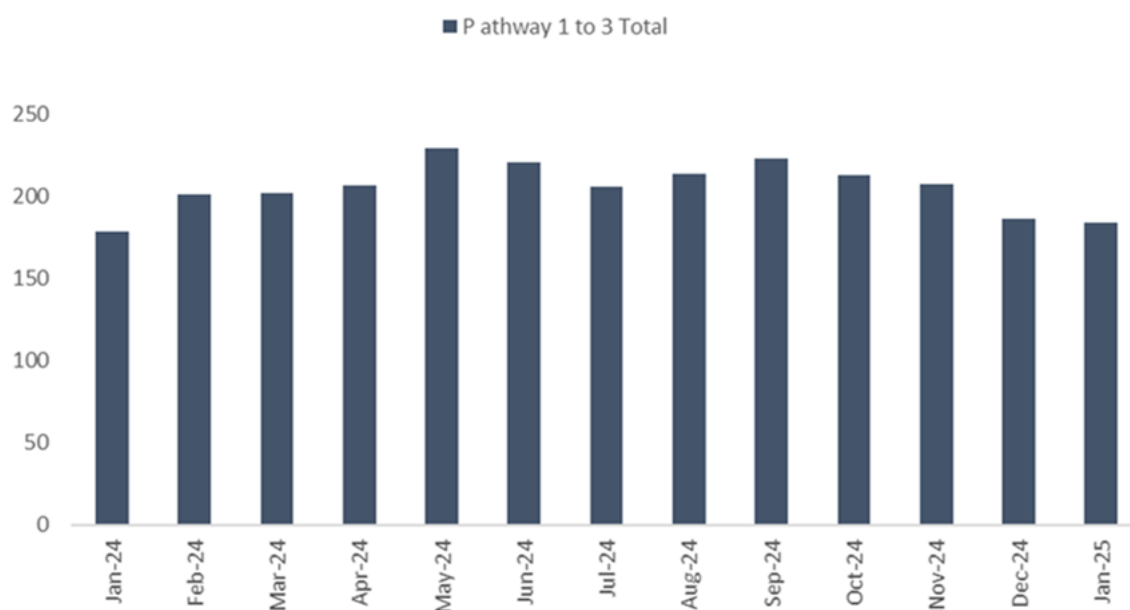
The table and charts below show the monthly mean daily number of East Sussex residents who have NCTR status, broken down by pathway.

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East Sussex	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24	Oct-24	Nov-24	Dec-24	Jan-25
Pathway 1	68	76	88	74	93	84	69	81	75	71	65	59	71
Pathway 2	44	47	40	52	63	108	109	101	105	107	106	85	67
Pathway 3	66	79	75	80	74	28	28	31	43	34	37	42	46
Pathway 0	11	7	7	7	13	40	10	18	20	15	20	20	22
Pathway u/k						20	42	36	29	31	27	35	41
Total	189	208	209	214	242	281	258	267	272	258	255	241	247
Pathway 1 to 3 Total	178	201	202	206	229	220	206	213	223	212	207	186	184



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Notes:

- *Data and charts provided by NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.*
- *Includes individuals in acute hospitals operated by East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT), University Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust (UHSx) and Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust (MTW):*
- *There was a change to national methodology in June 2024 and this has affected the P2/P3 levels in East Sussex compared to previous months.*
- *Changes in ESHT methodology will further impact on P2/P3 levels from June 2024 compared to previous months*

There are multiple reasons for an individual having No Criteria to Reside but remaining in an acute hospital bed:

- An inconsistent approach to the application of the NCTR definition (resulting in potential over reporting).
- An increase in the number of individuals admitted to hospital and the proportion requiring complex supported discharge (including lacking mental capacity and requiring a Best Interests decision and/or Deprivation Of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and/or Court of Protection Determination, Safeguarding and Homelessness).
- A reduction Discharge to Assess (D2A) Pathway 2 beds from 01/04/2024 – partially mitigated by an additional £1m joint investment by ESCC and NHS Sussex for additional Winter capacity.
- Insufficient NHS therapists, nurse assessors and social care assessors to maintain timely flow, as a result of increased activity, complexity and recruitment and retention challenges.

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- Actions and decisions required from individuals, their family members and informal carers – including those who are responsible for arranging and fully funding their onward care.
- The identification of highly specialist placements and packages for people with particularly complex and multiple health and care needs (including those eligible for NHS Continuing Healthcare – CHC)

4. Question from Councillor David Tutt to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Please can you tell me how many books have been presumed lost to East Sussex libraries in the past 3 years?

Answer by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

East Sussex libraries contain many thousands of books which are available for library members to borrow for free. However, each year some books are reported as lost. Over the last 3 years, on average each year 8,215 loans (books and items) were not returned.

Annually, the library team run an amnesty, and this commences on 17 February. During this period fines are waived by the library service for any books returned. Last year the amnesty resulted in over 700 books coming back into circulation during the amnesty period.

Books can be returned to any East Sussex library during opening hours. Alternatively, most libraries have drop boxes for out of hours returns. Some people may not have finished with the books they have out on loan, and in those cases the library service is asking members to renew them as soon as possible.

If customers are not quite ready to part with their favourite items, customers can help the library team by renewing the books online with their membership number and PIN.