



CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 2024

10.00 AM, COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

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

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024 (*Pages 3 - 6*)
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) - update on planning for 2025/26 and beyond (*Pages 7 - 48*)
Report by the Chief Executive.
6. HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection of Youth Justice Service delivered in East Sussex (*Pages 49 - 84*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
- 7a. Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing (*Pages 85 - 114*)
Report by the Deputy Chief Executive.
- 7b. Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing - Observations of the People Scrutiny Committee's report (*Pages 115 - 122*)
Report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.
8. Any other items considered urgent by the Chair
9. To agree which items are to be reported to the County Council

PHILIP BAKER
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5 November 2024

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NOTE: *As part of the County Council's drive to increase accessibility to its public meetings, this meeting will be broadcast live on its website and the record archived. The live broadcast is accessible at: www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/webcasts/default.htm*

CABINET

MINUTES of a meeting of the Cabinet held at Council Chamber, County Hall, Lewes on 26 September 2024.

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

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Bennett	- items 5, 6 and 9 (minutes 18, 19 and 22)
Councillor Collier	- items 5, 6, 7 and 8 (minutes 18, 19, 20 and 21)
Councillor Cross	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)
Councillor Daniel	- items 7 and 8 (minutes 20 and 21)
Councillor di Cara	- item 7 (minute 20)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 8 (minute 21)
Councillor Maples	- item 8 (minute 21)
Councillor Maynard	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)
Councillor Redstone	- item 8 (minute 21)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- item 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)
Councillor Shuttleworth	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)
Councillor Standley	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)
Councillor Swansborough	- items 5, 6 and 8 (minutes 18, 19 and 21)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5, 6 and 7 (minutes 18, 19 and 20)
Councillor Webb	- items 5 and 6 (minutes 18 and 19)

16. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2024

16.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 16 July 2024 were agreed as a correct record.

17. REPORTS

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

18. COUNCIL MONITORING QUARTER 1

18.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Chief Executive.

18.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) note the latest monitoring position for the Council; and

2) note the addition and amendments to the risk register as set out in paragraph 3.2 and Appendix 8 of the report.

Reason

18.3 The 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 June 2024.

19. RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE AND RESOURCES (RPPR): UPDATE ON PLANNING FOR 2025/26

19.1 The Cabinet considered a report from the Chief Executive.

19.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Note the updated planning position and the actions being taken to support the Council's financial position as set out in the report;
- 2) Agree that the Council consults where required on the savings proposals set out in the report and at appendix 1 of the report;
- 3) Agree that Chief Officers continue to identify further potential savings as set out in section 5 of the report;
- 4) Agree to continue lobbying vigorously through all available avenues for sustainable funding to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex.

Reasons

19.3 The Council's current and forecast financial position requires urgent action. The report outlines measures already being taken and the exceptional steps required to bring forward savings proposals ahead of the new financial year, in order to support the Council's legal duty to set a balanced budget.

19.4 We recognise the significant impact the proposals identified for consultation will have on local people, our staff and partners and on our ability to manage and respond to future need for services. These are not proposals we would want to make if there were other choices available to us and they are not made lightly.

19.5 Work will continue to develop and progress further savings. Another report will be brought to Cabinet in November with more detail on this work, as well as an overview of the latest national policy and financial context, our latest assessment of the Council's medium term financial plan position and an update on the capital programme.

19.6 Members' involvement will continue throughout the process through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, and specific engagement sessions.

20. EAST SUSSEX ECONOMIC PROSPERITY STRATEGY 2024 - 2050

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

20.2 It was RESOLVED to endorse the new East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy, developed in partnership with Team East Sussex (TES).

Reasons

20.3 The former function of Local Enterprise Partnerships for strategic economic planning has now transferred to local democratic institutions, in this case East Sussex County Council. Whilst government expects local places to publish their strategy within six months of receiving transition funding (which itself is yet to be received), the production of an updated economic strategy has already taken place and been endorsed by TES as the Economic Growth Board for the county. East Sussex is in a strong position to articulate to Government its economic narrative and areas of focus for future investment opportunities.

21. LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 - ADOPTION

21.1 The Cabinet considered a report from the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

21.2 It was RESOLVED to:

- 1) Approve the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4), Investment Plan and supporting documents to support and deliver transport infrastructure across the county; and
- 2) Note the further work planned beyond the adoption of LTP4, as outlined in paragraphs 2.13 – 2.16 of the report.

Reason

21.3 Local Transport Authorities are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) in place which sets the strategy and policy framework for transport across their geography. The East Sussex LTP4, which will cover the period 2024 to 2050, will ensure that we have an up-to-date LTP that is reflective of current national, sub national and local policy, which will place us in a stronger position to seek future funding.

22. ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT ON BECOMING A CARBON NEUTRAL COUNCIL

22.1 The Cabinet considered a report from the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and Chief Operating Officer.

22.2 It was RESOLVED to note the progress report.

Reason

22.3 The Council has recognised the severity of the climate crisis by declaring a climate emergency, by setting a clear science-based target and by committing an additional £9.9m of funding up to March 2025 to cutting corporate carbon emissions. The scale of the Council's functions and the diversity of providers the Council works with makes this a complex and substantial task. Significant work has already been undertaken to reduce emissions and will continue to be undertaken. The report sets out the further progress made during 2023/24.

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

23.1 It was agreed that items 5, 8 and 9 should be reported to the County Council.

[Note: the item being reported to the County Council refers to minute numbers 18, 21 and 22]

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Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	13 November 2024
By:	Chief Executive
Title of report:	Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) – update on planning for 2025/26 and beyond
Purpose of report:	To update Members on the latest policy context, Medium Term Financial Plan and capital programme.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- i. note the updated policy context as set out in paragraph 2;**
 - ii. note the updated Medium Term Financial Plan as set out in paragraph 3 and appendix 1;**
 - iii. note the reserves summary set out in paragraph 3;**
 - iv. note the savings proposals set out in paragraph 4 and appendix 2;**
 - v. note the capital programme update as set out in paragraph 5 and appendix 3;**
 - vi. note recent lobbying activity and agree to continue pressing Government for sustainable funding to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex, particularly in light of the immediate review of funding in light of local deprivation and need; and**
 - vii. note our ongoing commitment to work with partners to make best use of the resources we have and to identify ways to mitigate the impact of savings proposals wherever possible.**
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1. Background

1.1 The County Council provides a diverse and essential range of support to East Sussex residents, businesses and communities, particularly care services for the most vulnerable children and adults which make up over two thirds of our net revenue budget. The Council spends over £540m net (over £1bn gross) each year on services which make a daily difference to lives and livelihoods and delivers both local and national priorities. We are committed to strong partnership working to ensure we make the very best of the resources we have available as well as seeking to minimise, wherever possible, the impact of making necessary savings.

1.2 However, despite our efficient and effective services and partnerships, there remains a fundamental mismatch between the needs of East Sussex residents for essential statutory support, the level of demand, the cost of delivering these services, and the funding we expect to have, even after factoring in some additional short term national support. Councils across the country, including ESCC, have experienced a rapid escalation in both demand and costs as a result of national factors beyond local control. In particular, ongoing growth and complexity of need and increased costs in children's social care, special educational

needs and disability (SEND), home to school transport and adult social care, due to increased need, demographic change and national market conditions. The legacy of Covid and more recent cost of living increases has been both increased demand for a range of services and more complex needs, particularly in Children's Services.

1.3 These pressures are not unique to East Sussex but they are especially pronounced here because of the demographic make-up and needs of our population, the resources available to us, and the steps we have already had to take over many years to respond within limited and reduced resources, and funding mechanisms which do not properly reflect the level of need. East Sussex is ahead of the national ageing population trend and has pockets of significant deprivation which also impact on demand. The county differs substantially from the wider south east in this respect. East Sussex offer an exceptional natural environment in which to live and work but also places limitations on the development and infrastructure which support economic growth, prosperity and the related generation of business rates to help fund services. Earnings are below both the national and regional average.

1.4 Coupled with the significant needs within the county, we have fewer resources at our disposal than many other county councils. Our overall reserve balances have significantly reduced in recent years, and we have relatively limited assets. Our residents already experience relatively high Council Tax levels as there has been increasing reliance by Government on raising money to fund social care through this route. Business rates income is relatively flat, given the challenges in the local economy. Fundamentally, the national formula used to allocate funding to individual councils is long overdue for reform and does not reflect current local needs, particularly in places like East Sussex, with high demand for social care.

1.5 In September Cabinet considered an exceptional report, outside the usual Reconciling, Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) cycle, which set out the acute and growing financial challenge we face. A combination of national cost pressures and increasing local needs is impacting on the sustainability of the essential services the County Council provides, particularly to support our most vulnerable residents. The report set out the substantial shortfall in the funding available to the Council to respond to these escalating needs and costs, both in the current year and for the future. Cabinet considered and agreed the immediate steps needed in response to the deteriorating position including additional action, over and above the robust response already in place. Public consultations on an initial phase of savings proposals were agreed and are now underway, enabling us to better understand the impacts and issues to inform sound decision making later in the RPPR process. As signalled in September, we have also begin consulting with our staff where this has been necessary to progress potential savings.

1.6 This report provides our latest assessment of the financial outlook, including the potential impact of announcements made at the recent national Budget. It also provides, in line with our usual RPPR process, an overview of key national developments since the State of the County report in June which we need to take account of in our planning. The planning context has developed significantly since the general election and change of Government in July, as a result of national policy announcements and the developing economic picture, summarised at paragraph 2 below.

1.7 The updated assessment set out in this report confirms that the outlook remains highly challenging, with important decisions still to be made by the Government and information still to be received and assessed. The Government has acknowledged the substantial pressures on local authorities and the impact these are having on services for local people, and its first Budget signalled some additional support. But this was offset by additional costs, for the Council and our providers, as well as the uncertainty of major

financial and service reforms yet to come. Although welcome, the funding provided will be required to help meet future costs and is unlikely to make a fundamental difference to the overall underlying position we face. The impact on local businesses is yet to become clear.

1.8 The RPPR process, which brings together our policy, business and financial planning and risk management, is the tool we use to help us navigate a challenging and uncertain environment. It ensures we direct the resources we have on the evidence-based priorities we aim to deliver and where we will have most impact. The severe financial challenges we face present a renewed challenge to maintaining the decent and effective services our residents need and deserve. It is vital we maintain focus, through RPPR planning, on our four priority outcomes for the county and the Council:

- Driving sustainable economic growth;
- Keeping vulnerable people safe;
- Helping people help themselves; and
- Making best use of resources, now and for the future - the test applied to all activities to ensure sustainability of our resources, both in terms of money and the environment.

2. Policy context update

2.1 The general election on 4 July, and subsequent change of Government, has led to some significant shifts in national policy which will impact on our planning, with further announcements expected in the coming months. The key areas in which there have been developments since the State of the County report, or in which further developments are expected, are detailed below.

2.2 **Government priorities** – The new Government has set out its intention to be ‘mission-led’ with a focus on five key missions covering economic growth, clean energy, improving the NHS, safer streets and increasing opportunity through education. The King’s Speech in July provided further detail on the Government’s legislative priorities with key Bills of relevance to ESCC including those focusing on Children’s Wellbeing, English Devolution, Planning and Infrastructure, Better Buses, Mental Health and Employment Rights. Some of this legislation has now been published, with further detail expected in the coming months.

2.3 **National economic context** – Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), fell to 1.7% in the 12 months to September, a larger than anticipated reduction, which brought the rate below the Bank of England’s 2% target for the first time in three and a half years. However, the latest Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts expect CPI to increase in the short term, averaging 2.6% in 2025, before gradually falling back to target. These projections are higher than previous OBR forecasts published in March 2024. Reflecting the reduced rate of inflation, the Bank of England made the first cut in interest rates since the Covid pandemic to 5% in August, a reduction of a quarter of a percentage point, and held rates at this level in September. Analysts have predicted a further reduction this year, with the next rates decision to be made by the Bank of England on 7 November. After remaining flat in 2023, the economy is expected to grow by just over 1% this year, rising to 2% in 2025, before falling to around 1.5% over the remainder of the OBR’s five year forecast.

2.4 Previous higher levels of inflation and cost of living pressures have continued to impact on households. In September, the Government announced another extension to the Household Support Fund to March 2025. Deployment of this funding in East Sussex was agreed by Lead Members in September. It was announced at the Budget in October that the Fund would be extended into 2025/26 and further detail is awaited. From winter 2024/25, Winter Fuel Payments for people of state pension age will be restricted to those receiving

Pension Credit or other means-tested benefits. The Deputy Prime Minister and Work and Pensions Secretary have written to local authorities in support of the Government's Pension Credit awareness drive to identify households not claiming the benefit and encourage pensioners to apply.

2.5 Budget and Spending Review – In July, alongside the outcomes of a Public Spending Audit, the Chancellor announced that the Government would undertake a two stage Spending Review, with phase 1 setting revised departmental spending totals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 at the Autumn Budget, followed by phase 2 - a multi-year Spending Review to report in spring 2025. The Government's longer term intention is to undertake Spending Reviews on a two year cycle, to inform three year department settlements. The Chancellor has also committed to one major Budget statement a year, to be delivered each autumn.

2.6 The Chancellor delivered the Budget Statement on 30 October which focused on economic stability, public services and capital investment, with an overarching aim of driving economic growth. The Budget contained significant changes to taxation to raise additional revenue, notably an increase to the National Insurance contributions paid by employers, including those in the public sector. The Budget also confirmed that the National Living Wage will increase by 6.7% from April 2025, with a larger increase for employees aged under 21 as part of moving towards a single adult rate. This level of increase, plus the uplift to employer National Insurance contributions, will have significant impacts in the care sector.

2.7 Government department spending is planned to grow by an average of 2% per year in real terms between 2023/24 and 2029/30. This sets the overall funding envelope for Phase 2 of the Spending Review, concluding in late spring 2025, which will set out a longer-term settlement for public services with a focus on reform. The Budget also set a 2% productivity, efficiency and savings target for Government departments and formally launched the new Office for Value for Money.

2.8 Local government funding – Financial pressures faced by councils across the country have continued to attract national attention. The majority of local authorities are experiencing significant increases in demand, notably in children's services and adult social care and, with limited resources to respond, in-year overspends and increasing medium term deficits have been widely reported. The Local Government Association (LGA) submission to the Chancellor ahead of the Budget Statement highlighted that councils face a combined funding gap of £6.2bn over the next two years to keep services at current levels.

2.9 At the Budget the Chancellor provided some indications of the funding which will be available to local authorities for the coming year, although detail is awaited. There was welcome acknowledgement of the specific issues driving pressure on local authorities and the need for reforms in key areas, including increased focus on prevention. An additional £1.3bn grant funding for local government overall, including at least £600m new funding for social care, was announced. In addition, a £2.3bn increase in the Core Schools Grant will include £1bn for SEND in 2025/26. However, increases to the National Living Wage and National Insurance paid by employers will impact on our providers and, potentially, the costs of commissioning services, particularly in the care sector. Higher than expected inflation will further affect costs across a range of services. We will continue to assess the impact of these announcements for ESCC as we receive further detail from Government in the coming weeks. However, given the balance of funding and costs, it is already clear that the overall impact is likely to be limited and the Council will continue to face a substantial funding gap in the year ahead. Further detail on the potential impact of Budget announcements is set out in section 3.

2.10 Longer term, there remains considerable uncertainty. The Budget confirmed that there will be reform to local government funding arrangements in 2025, including the basis on which funding will be allocated to individual areas in future, to inform a longer term financial settlement for councils. Reforms to adult and children's social care and the SEND system will also be set out next year, with the potential for significant impacts, both financially and in service provision. There remain many unknowns which makes future planning very difficult.

2.11 The Government has committed to multi-year settlements for local authorities to support longer term planning, including simplifying the wider local funding landscape, reducing the number of grants and consolidating them into the Local Government Finance Settlement. The intention to end competitive bidding has also been set out. However, given the timescales for the Spending Review, another one year settlement is confirmed for 2025/26 with a multi-year settlement to follow from 2026/27. The Budget confirmed there will be reform of local government funding arrangements as part of this longer term settlement, indicating that this will include redistributing funding to ensure that it reflects an up-to-date assessment of need and local revenues. Government has already committed to reform of business rates but has ruled out reforming Council Tax.

2.12 A key foundation of Government's approach to local government finance is addressing the local audit backlog in England. Proposals, which will be set out in legislation, involve setting a series of backstop dates to clear the backlog of unaudited accounts, up to and including financial year 2027/28, to allow assurance to be rebuilt over several audit cycles.

2.13 **Workforce** – The broader economic context has been an important factor in pay negotiations. The Government has agreed a range of public sector pay uplifts in recent months. In October, the 2024/25 pay award for local government staff on single status grades was agreed, following negotiations between national employers and unions. There remains a competitive and challenging environment for recruitment and retention of staff in local government and a national recruitment campaign has been launched by the Local Government Association (LGA) to support local recruitment activity.

2.14 The Government has announced a new Employment Rights Bill which sets out a range of reforms, including establishment of a new Fair Pay Agreement in the adult social care sector and plans for a new 'Adult Social Care Negotiating Body' responsible for negotiating pay and conditions for care workers. The Bill also sets out the reinstatement of the School Support Staff Negotiation Body and 'day one' rights for workers, including protection against unfair dismissal, parental leave, flexible working arrangements and sick pay. The Bill also commits to end 'fire and rehire' practices and zero hours contracts, as well as the adoption of post-maternity leave protections. The Government is expected to hold a consultation on proposed reforms before implementation.

2.15 The draft Equality (Race and Disability) Bill, also announced in the King's Speech, will enshrine in law the full right to equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people and will mandate ethnicity and disability pay reporting for larger employers (those with 250+ employees).

2.16 **Children's services** – Significant pressures arising from demand and complexity of need continue to impact children's services nationally and locally. In the Autumn Budget it was confirmed that, in the short term, the Government will provide funding to continue testing children's social care reforms, including additional support for kinship and foster care. Plans for fundamental reform of the children's social care system will be set out in phase 2 of the Spending Review, including promoting early intervention to help children stay with their families where possible and addressing issues in the care market. The Secretary of State

has previously indicated her intention to address excess profit making by private residential care providers and it is likely that the development of Regional Care Co-operatives, bringing local authorities together to manage and develop the care market, will continue. The South East region was successful in bidding for one of the pathfinder projects and the County Council, as part of the project, will play an important role in shaping future delivery of this key development.

2.17 In response to ongoing pressures, the Council continues to embed a Valuing Care approach, focused on placement sufficiency and enhancing our ability to secure the right care for the right child for the right length of time. Connected Families Intervention Practitioners have continued to provide dedicated support to support families to stay together and improve the wellbeing and life chances of children, and additional funding has been invested in our in-house foster care programme. The Supporting Families transformation programme has also continued to develop a joined-up whole family, whole system approach to early intervention.

2.18 Demand and complexity in SEND also continues to rise. We remain concerned that the previous Government's SEND and Alternative Provision Improvement Plan does not address the underlying mismatch between the current legal framework and available resources. A recent joint study, commissioned by the County Councils Network and LGA, into an effective and financially sustainable approach to SEND in England, found that the 2014 reforms had failed to improve the educational outcomes for SEND pupils, despite costs trebling in a decade. The report stressed the importance of radical reform – recommending investment in therapists, educational psychologists and inclusion support within schools to reduce the reliance on specialist school places. As well as providing an initial uplift of funding in 2025/26 as set out above, the Government has confirmed its intention to bring forward plans to reform SEND provision to improve outcomes and address financial sustainability. Without sufficient steps being taken to address the sustainability of the system nationally, councils will continue to face significant pressure on resources for SEND at local level for the foreseeable future.

2.19 The Children's Wellbeing Bill is expected to bring together a range of measures including requiring free breakfast clubs in primary schools (750 schools with primary aged pupils will be invited to take part in a pilot from April 2025), and local authorities to maintain registers of children not in school and to provide support to home educating parents. The Bill is also expected to require school co-operation with councils on admissions and SEND inclusion and to require all schools to teach the national curriculum.

2.20 In addition, the Government has launched a curriculum review and abandoned previous plans to create the Advanced British Standard. The Department for Education is also seeking expressions of interest from schools interested in converting unused classrooms to additional nursery capacity, as part of its commitment to continue the roll-out of additional funded hours of childcare announced by the previous Government. In inspection and regulation, Ofsted's single word grades for schools and children's social care services have been replaced with a broader assessment, and a new programme of inspections will look at how local services link up in response to domestic abuse.

2.21 Other national announcements relating to children and young people include the establishment of a Child Poverty Task Force to develop a Child Poverty Strategy for publication in spring 2025 and a 'youth guarantee' of access to training, an apprenticeship, or support to find work for all young people aged 18-21.

2.22 **Adult social care** - In July, the Chancellor announced that the adult social care charging reforms, previously postponed to October 2025, would not go ahead. Given our and other councils' significant concerns about the affordability and deliverability of these

reforms on this timescale, this is welcome. However there remains an urgent need for a comprehensive plan for the funding and reform of adult social care which will ensure that those in need of care services can receive appropriate and timely care. The Government committed in its manifesto to create a National Care Service. Details have not yet been published, beyond suggesting this would be a long-term project underpinned by national standards, with the aim of delivering consistency of care across the country. Initial focus has been on a 'new deal for care workers' through a Fair Pay Agreement with engagement to inform this due to start soon. This, together with the reforms to workers' rights and the increase to the National Living Wage outlined above, has potentially significant implications for the care market.

2.23 Following a rapid review of the NHS, the Prime Minister signalled major reforms would be needed, which will also impact on social care and Public Health. The Government's 10 Year Health Plan, due to be published in spring 2025, will include moving from analogue to digital; shifting care from hospitals to communities; and moving focus from sickness to prevention. To inform the development of the plan, the Department for Health and Social Care has begun a national conversation on the future of the NHS. Ministers have indicated that a 10-Year Plan for social care will run alongside the 10-Year Plan for the NHS and that adult social care reforms will be announced within the next 12 months. In line with the focus on prevention, Government has committed to bringing forward legislation to strengthen controls on tobacco and vaping, including banning disposable vapes from June 2025 and introducing a new tax on vaping liquid from 2026.

2.24 Locally, we have supplied initial information to the Care Quality Commission as part of its assessment of how the Council meets its duties under the Care Act, to be carried out under its new local authority assessment programme. We expect a site visit as part of this process in the coming months, to be followed by an assessment report. Demand on our local acute hospitals remains high, creating ongoing challenges in maintaining the flow of discharges. The County Council, as a key member of the wider health and care system, is playing its part to mitigate the impact of these pressures.

2.25 **Devolution and local economic growth** – The Government has committed to deepening and widening devolution to all parts of the country through the English Devolution Bill, and to publishing an updated devolution framework, the full details of which are expected by the end of the year as part of a Devolution White Paper. Some aspects are expected to remain unchanged, particularly the Government's strong preference for a mayoral governance model and the reservation of certain powers for areas with this model. Shortly after the General Election, the Deputy Prime Minister wrote to all upper tier local authorities without a devolution agreement inviting them to submit initial devolution proposals. In September, the County Council, with the agreement of all five district and borough councils, submitted an expression of interest supporting exploring devolution on an East Sussex geography. Within the Budget, it was indicated that the forthcoming White Paper will also set out plans for Government to work with councils to move to 'simpler structures' and that it envisages 'efficiency savings from council reorganisation helping to meet the needs of local people'.

2.26 The Government has also published a Green Paper to inform the development of its Industrial Strategy. The document outlines plans for long-term sectoral growth and the Government's priority industries for investment, for consultation with businesses ahead of the final strategy being published in spring 2025 alongside the Spending Review. To align with the national Industrial Strategy, the Labour manifesto outlined a new statutory requirement for areas to produce Local Growth Plans, although details are yet to be confirmed, and the initial Government focus is on working with Mayoral Combined Authorities. In light of its focus on extending mayoral devolution, and working with Mayors and local leaders to deliver growth, the Budget indicated ministers are minded to cease

funding for the functions previously delivered by Local Enterprise Partnerships. Locally, the recently agreed East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy 2024-50 will act as a flexible and iterative economic growth strategy for the county, as the Government's plans become clearer.

2.27 Within the Budget it was confirmed that Levelling Up funding commitments made by the previous Government would largely be maintained. This includes funding to East Sussex districts and boroughs through Levelling Up Partnerships and the Long Term Plan for Towns. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which is also allocated to districts and boroughs, will continue for a further year at a reduced level. Government expects this transitional arrangement to allow local authorities to invest in local growth, in advance of wider reforms to the local growth funding landscape in phase 2 of the Spending Review.

2.28 A Get Britain Working White Paper will be published shortly, which will set out new plans to support people in returning to work. It is expected that this will focus on the root causes of ill-health-related inactivity, supporting young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET), and helping people to develop their career. Central government will also work with local authorities on the Connect to Work scheme, a new supported employment programme matching people with disabilities or health conditions into vacancies and supporting them in their roles.

2.29 In September, the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced a review of the role of the Office for Local Government (Oflog) by the end of 2024. In the meantime, Oflog has been asked to deliver its previous remit, but to pause the rollout of its current model of 'early warning conversations' while the Government considers its overall approach to early warnings and interventions.

2.30 **Transport** – The Government has pledged to repair one million more potholes a year nationally, in part with funding that had been earmarked for the A27 Arundel bypass in West Sussex, plans for which have been dropped following the Chancellor's statement on the public finances in July. The Budget confirmed updated national funding for roads maintenance. This has already been assumed as part of our modelling and will support our existing planned maintenance programme within the capital programme. The Chancellor also announced additional investment of £200 million in 2025/26 to accelerate the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, including funding to support local authorities to install on-street charge points across England, and an additional £100 million investment in cycling and walking infrastructure in 2025/26, to support local authorities to install cycling infrastructure and upgrade pavements and paths.

2.31 In addition, the Department for Transport (DfT) has announced the 'biggest overhaul to buses in a generation' through legislation that will give all local transport authorities the power to introduce a bus franchising system and reverses the ban on councils setting up and running their own bus companies. The Government has extended the bus fare cap, currently £2 to the end of December 2024, with a new cap from January to December 2025 at the higher rate of £3. Alongside this, there is an intention to develop a more sustainable model of Government support for the bus sector that is better value for taxpayers and bus passengers. On rail services, the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Bill, which would bring all passenger rail into national ownership under Great British Railways, as contracts with private operators expire, is currently progressing through Parliament.

2.32 **Environment and planning** – The Government views planning reform as a key enabler for its economic growth and housing ambitions. In July, amendments were made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to remove the de facto ban on new onshore wind farms. Also in July, MHCLG launched a consultation on proposed reforms to the NPPF, outlining changes it aims to make to the policy to support the Government's target of building

1.5 million homes over the next five years. The proposals include changes to the methodology for determining housing targets, new mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning, taking a 'vision-led' rather than 'predict and provide' approach to transport planning and increases in planning fees. A response to this consultation is expected by the end of this year. Further to amending the NPPF, the Government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill, expected in early 2025, will seek to will make improvements to the planning system at a local level, modernising planning committees and increasing local planning authorities' capacity to deliver services.

2.33 The Budget reaffirmed the Government's commitment to move towards a zero-waste economy and implement the Collection and Packaging Reforms Programme, including Extended Producer Responsibility. A rapid review of the Environmental Improvement Plan will be completed by the end of the year. The review will inform the development of a new, statutory plan to protect and restore the natural environment and delivery plans to meet each of the Environment Act targets.

2.34 **Migration** – The new Government has indicated that there will be changes to the approach to asylum seekers and refugees. Whilst more detail is expected, some current known developments are a new Border Security Command and measures to strengthen border security, enforce immigration rules and increase returns. The impact of these changes on local areas remains to be seen. Early indications are that the new Government will continue with the general direction and principles of Full Dispersal.

2.35 We expect detail on the Government's approach on these and other key areas, and the resulting implications for the County Council, to become clearer in the coming months and will continue to factor this information into planning for 2025/26 and beyond.

3. Medium Term Financial Plan

3.1 Planning for 2025/26 and beyond remains highly challenging. With demand for services, and the cost of providing them, continuing to rise, the total level of expenditure required to deliver our services continues to grow. As the level of Government funding that ESCC will receive between 2025/26 – 2027/28 is yet to be confirmed (the provisional Local Government Settlement 2025/26 is not expected until late December 2024), the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) has been updated for the best estimated available information.

3.2 The MTFP does not currently account for the impacts of the Budget Statement of 30 October 2024, the financial impacts of which will be worked through as further information and detailed council allocations are published.

3.3 The MTFP presented within the State of the County report in June estimated a deficit budget position by 2027/28 of £83.6m. Since then, the MTFP has been updated to include our latest assessment of departmental service pressures and updated financial modelling. The impact of the updates is summarised in the table below and provides a deficit budget position by 2027/28 of £84.6m.

Medium Term Financial Plan	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m
Annual Budget Deficit / (Surplus)	42.619	14.064	13.598
Carry Forward of 2024/25 Deficit	14.344		
Annual Budget Deficit / (Surplus) after Carry Forward	56.963	14.064	13.598
Total Budget Deficit / (Surplus)	56.963	71.027	84.625

3.4 A detailed MTFP after normal updates and proposed pressures is shown at appendix 1.

3.5 As set out above, our estimated deficit for 2025/26 is £57.0m. Given the uncertainty around future funding levels, scenarios are being explored to bridge the deficit and present a balanced budget for 2025/26. Current identified options have the potential to reduce the 2025/26 deficit, as set out below:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Revised deficit	56.963	14.064	13.598	84.625
Scenarios currently being considered				
Continuation of Adult Social Care (ASC) grant funding	(5.386)			(5.386)
Proceeds of Business Rates (NNDR) pooling	(2.194)	2.194		0.000
Council Tax: Premiums on second homes	(3.524)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(3.666)
Council Tax: Eastbourne Reduction Scheme Proposals	0.778			0.778
Reduction in contractual inflation in line with forecasts	(6.481)			(6.481)
Council Tax Flexibility: Add a further 3.00% to our current 1.99% assumption to get to 4.99% (2.99% plus 2.00% ASC Precept) in all years	(11.138)	(12.254)	(13.476)	(36.868)
Deficit/(surplus) after scenarios	29.018	3.934	0.050	33.002

3.6 Given the scale of the remaining deficit, even if all the above scenarios materialise, at this point in the RPPR process it is not possible to present a balanced MTFP.

3.7 Cabinet requested in June that officers explore areas of search for savings as part of work to address the projected deficit. Departments have undertaken work to identify how savings could be delivered, identifying a total potential saving of £16.1m for 2025/26. The impact of the proposals is set out in the table below. This includes the c£4m of proposals set out to Cabinet in September. These proposals relate to all departments, and impact on both frontline and supporting services across the Council. More detail is provided in section 4:

Department	Savings £m			
	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Adult Social Care & Health	8.930	2.525	0.000	11.455
Business Services	1.077	0.000	0.825	1.902
Children's Services	4.033	0.070	0.020	4.123
Communities, Economy & Transport	1.842	0.621	0.374	2.837
Governance Services	0.248	0.063	0.000	0.311
Total	16.130	3.279	1.219	20.628

3.8 The impact on the MTFP, should the savings proposals be delivered in full, is set out in the table below:

Medium Term Financial Plan After Savings	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Deficit / Surplus after scenarios	29.018	3.934	0.050	33.002
Savings	(16.130)	(3.279)	(1.219)	(20.628)
Deficit / (Surplus) after savings	12.888	0.655	(1.169)	12.374

3.9 As illustrated in the table above, even if the proposed savings are delivered in full, ESCC will face a deficit of £12.9m for 2025/26 after likely scenarios, and £12.4m at the end of the MTFP period, subject to any impact from the recent Budget Statement.

3.10 On 30 October, The Chancellor delivered the Autumn Budget Statement, announcing an increase in local government funding for 2025/26:

- Additional £1.3bn grant funding for local government, including £600m for social care and £700m of un-ringfenced resources, with the allocation of this funding to be determined in the Provisional Local Government Settlement in December.
- A £1bn increase to SEND and Alternative Provision funding, equivalent to 6% real growth, that will reduce councils' SEND deficits. This will not impact on the Council's MTFP in 2025/26 due to the statutory override that allows SEND deficits to be excluded from councils' revenue budgets.
- £233m additional spending in 2025/26 on homelessness, paid to district and borough councils, bringing total spend to £1bn.
- £1.1bn of new Extended Producer Responsibility funding in 2025/26 through the implementation of the scheme to improve recycling outcomes from January 2025.

3.11 While ESCC welcomes the additional funding, there were a number of other developments which will increase the financial risk to the Council for 2025/26 and beyond:

- From April 2025, the National Insurance rate for employers will rise from 13.8% on earnings above £9,100 per year to 15% on earnings above £5,000 per year. It is understood that the increased cost to public sector organisations will be funded, although the mechanism has not been announced.
- The National Living Wage will rise by 6.7%, from £11.44 to £12.21 from April 2025. For 18 to 20-year-olds, the minimum wage will rise by 16% from £8.60 to £10, and for apprentices, the minimum wage will rise from £6.40 to £7.55 (up 18%). Whilst not directly impacting on the Council's pay costs, the impact will be felt by service providers, particularly in social care.
- Inflation (CPI) is higher than reported in the Spring Budget, throughout the forecast, which will add the Council's non-pay and contractual inflation costs.
- Government plans to reform local authority funding and take a more targeted approach to the distribution of funding, in particular to areas of increased need based on levels of deprivation, could risk impacting the funding the Council will receive in 2025/26 and beyond. Our current modelling assumes that existing grants will carry forward on the same basis, but the impact of reforms means this is not expected to be the case. A policy statement is expected from MHCLG by end of November which will provide more detail although, until the provisional local government settlement is issued on 19 December, significant uncertainty remains and the opportunity to lobby will be significant.

3.12 It is not possible to calculate the financial impact to the Council of the Budget until we receive detailed allocations in the provisional financial statement. However, there is nothing in the Budget that would suggest ESCC should stop the work currently being undertaken to address future deficits.

3.13 The Council reported a projected overspend for 2024/25 of £9.4m at Quarter 1, which will require a further draw on strategic reserves. The updated projected revenue outturn at Quarter 2, which will be available in December, will provide a further indication of the likely impact. The latest projected reserve balances as at 1 April 2029 are set out in the table below. This position reflects the additional draw to balance 2024/25, based on the Quarter 1 forecast, but is prior to any draw on balances required to set a balanced budget for 2025/26.

Reserves Balance (£m)	Balance at 1 Apr 2024	Estimated balance at 1 Apr 2025	Estimated balance at 1 Apr 2029
	£m	£m	£m
Earmarked Reserves:			
Held on behalf of others or statutorily ringfenced	31.3	27.8	29.6
Named Service Reserves			
Waste Reserve	19.5	18.9	11.8
Capital Programme Reserve	9.9	9.5	0.0
Insurance Reserve	7.4	7.4	7.2
Adult Social Care Reform Reserve	3.0	0.6	0.0
Subtotal named service reserves	39.8	36.4	19.0
Strategic Reserves			
Priority Outcomes and Transformation	7.3	2.6	1.8
Financial Management	35.8	7.6	5.4
Subtotal strategic reserves	43.1	10.2	7.2
Total Earmarked Reserves	114.2	74.4	55.8
General Fund Balance	10.0	10.0	10.0
TOTAL RESERVES	124.2	84.4	65.8

3.14 The projected level of strategic reserves of £10.2m as of 1 April 2025 means that the Council will have very limited scope to use reserves to address the budget deficit or any emergent pressure, without further action over and above current steps. We continue to take a range of robust measures to contain costs in-year, including the implementation of stringent spending and recruitment controls on top of our existing robust governance and financial management systems. These measures will have some impact but the difference they will make will be limited in the context of the overall deficit and ongoing pressures on services.

4. Savings

4.1 In light of the substantial projected deficit forecast in the State of the County report, which has since grown as set out above, Cabinet requested in June that officers explore areas of search for savings with a focus on:

- Discretionary and non-statutory preventative services;

- Directly provided services;
- Support services and back office functions;
- Income generation.

4.2 Departments have undertaken work to identify how savings could be delivered, guided by these areas of search. As reported in September, there are significant constraints, as the majority of the Council's budget is now spent on delivering or supporting statutory services and meeting other statutory duties, leaving fewer areas for consideration. Many discretionary areas of work have already been reduced or removed in previous rounds of savings. Some areas of work are funded through ringfenced grants with specific criteria. There are also restrictions on actions that can be taken at pace given ongoing contracts and commitments. The approach taken in each service area is detailed below at 4.6 onwards, with the detailed proposals set out in appendix 2.

4.3 It was clear in September, when Cabinet agreed to begin a number of consultations on proposals to reduce services, that this would be the first phase, and that further savings proposals would be needed as we work towards bridging the 2025/26 financial gap. The Budget has not removed or reduced the requirement to identify savings given the legal requirement to balance the budget. Further difficult choices are required to address the expected financial gap for the coming year. Following further work, this report now sets out the next phase of savings proposals to be considered. This broader set of proposals affects a range of frontline and supporting services and has further significant and wide ranging impacts – on residents, partners and staff. It is important to restate that savings are being brought forward out of necessity given the financial position we face. They are all tough choices. There are no easy options and these are not proposals that we would want to make.

4.4 The additional proposals set out, if implemented, would not fully close the funding gap we expect to have. After many years of service reductions, transformation and efficiencies, this reflects the very limited opportunity to make further savings whilst still meeting our statutory duties and basic operating requirements. The savings proposed would, however, make a significant contribution towards bridging the deficit.

4.5 Ahead of further detailed funding announcements we will continue to take all opportunities to impress on Government the position faced by ESCC, the impacts on the people, businesses and communities of the county, and the financial and service reforms needed, and we have been engaging the support of local MPs in making this case.

Adult Social Care and Health

4.6 Savings proposals for Adult Social Care and Health have been developed taking into account five priority areas to protect as far as possible. As set out in September, these include the community care budget; maintaining a sufficient workforce to manage the increase in demand and carry out statutory assessments, including financial assessments; and working with the care market to ensure the availability of appropriate and best value care. In addition, infrastructure funding for the VCSE and support for unpaid carers has been protected as far as possible, recognising the significant contribution they make to managing demand for services.

4.7 A number of savings proposals have already been progressed to public consultation with Cabinet's agreement, where they would entail significant changes to services. These are included and highlighted in appendix 2. Additional proposals now brought forward focus on the following themes:

- Reducing capacity and improving efficiency in management and support functions
- Budget reductions and reallocations
- Optimising charging and income

- Review of service models
- Refocusing of external grants to better align with Council priorities, while still in line with grant conditions
- Seeking efficiencies in contracts

Children's Services

4.8 Children's Services' focus remains on taking forward our programmes of work to address the ongoing significant pressure on the availability and cost of suitable care placements for looked after children. We also want to continue investment in prevention where we have good evidence that it is having an impact on managing demand and reducing pressures on statutory services such as safely reducing the numbers of children in care and on child protection plans.

4.9 In identifying further savings, we have incorporated anticipated cost reductions from the above work and we have reviewed the few remaining non-statutory areas of provision within the department. We have also looked at our support services to identify potential for further savings. Detailed proposals are set out in appendix 2 with key areas of focus being:

- Support services – reducing capacity, including through consolidating functions across the divisions within the department and reductions in staff support costs;
- Maximising income – including through our traded services and performance-related grants; and
- Reviewing service models in home to school transport and Buzz Active.

4.10 As set out in the appendix, the proposed savings would reduce the department's capacity to deliver improvements, transform services and respond to new demands. Reduced capacity will also impact on the resilience and responsiveness of a range of support services and the outcomes which can be delivered.

Communities, Economy and Transport

4.11 A large proportion (72%) of the Communities, Economy and Transport department budget is committed to the major, long-term contracts covering highways maintenance and waste and the statutory requirement to provide concessionary fares. These commitments significantly limit the ability to make savings in these areas. In addition, the department provides a range of frontline services which deliver statutory requirements. The department has sought to identify and develop savings proposals primarily in areas of the budget which are not contractually committed, as well as in remaining areas of discretionary work. Opportunities for efficiencies or budget reductions have also been identified where possible.

4.12 The savings proposals set out in appendix 2 cover all divisions within the department, and impact on a range of frontline services. They focus on:

- reducing preventative work – including in Trading Standards and Road Safety;
- stopping non-statutory work – particularly in Economic Development;
- increasing the use of technology and other efficiencies – including in Libraries and the Registration Service;
- reducing the staff capacity and non-staffing budgets in a number of services – including Rights of Way, Planning and Waste;
- increasing income to ensure it offsets costs – including in parking and registration; and
- undertaking further reviews of service models to identify potential savings.

4.13 As set out in the appendix, these savings would have an impact on the services we offer to residents. This may include longer response times, reduced access or less work undertaken. A number of savings have impacts on partners, including district and borough councils. They also impact on the resilience of services to new or unexpected demands.

Business Services and Governance Services

4.14 Business Services and Governance Services provide a range of essential support services for the organisation as a whole, including areas such as Human Resources (HR), Information Technology (IT) and Digital, Procurement, Finance, Legal Services, Communications and corporate governance functions. In doing so, the departments ensure the Council meets a wide range of statutory requirements. These support functions have been subject to significant savings over the past decade as back office services were reduced earlier and more significantly, in order to maintain funding for frontline services for as long and as far as possible. This means that these services are already run very leanly and include single points of failure.

4.15 The scale of the proposed savings across departments, set out in this report, necessitates significant change, and the necessary expertise and support will be needed to deliver the change required. This will create additional demand on the support services over the next 12-18 months alongside the usual business needs of the Council. Once agreed savings have been implemented, with support provided to manage the processes involved, it will then be possible to review the ongoing needs of the organisation and identify where further reductions in support functions can be made. The approach to savings proposals reflects these demands.

4.16 All services provided by these departments have been reviewed to identify where further reductions or efficiencies could be made. The proposals set out at appendix 2 focus on:

- Reductions in IT provision and maximising the use, efficiency and financial return of property assets;
- Reduced staff capacity in a range of teams providing support functions to the whole organisation and, in some cases, to partner organisations;
- Reduced support for business planning and performance improvement; and
- Reduced communications support for service priorities, residents' information needs and staff information needs.

4.17 Income generating assets and planned capital receipts are routinely incorporated into the core budget and the capital programme. As part of identifying further savings or sources of income, the full portfolio of assets has been reviewed to identify any further marginal financial gains in the 'sweating of assets', reflecting the level of property team capacity available to deliver on these (noting capacity levels referenced in 4.14). This most notably includes the planned closure of sections of County Hall to reduce running costs (albeit only marginally) and to generate income through the letting out of freed up space to third parties.

4.18 The savings proposed would bring the support budgets down to a level whereby any further reduction would impact on support to statutory and other customer facing services and the overall resilience of the organisation. Consequences would include:

- Increased risk of plant failure (e.g. heating, lighting, lifts)
- Increased risk of IT incidents (e.g. data loss, system or WiFi failure)
- Increased risk of challenge to procurement processes and delay in procuring services
- Risk of inability to provide key information and support to enable the Council to continue to function effectively with appropriate levels of governance (e.g. financial information, HR, legal)
- Risk of not meeting the communication needs of service departments and to the resilience of the Council's online information and services.

Savings - next steps

4.19 The potential savings in 2025/26 from these proposals, if agreed, are set out in appendix 2. The savings identified to date have the potential to reduce the potential £29m 2025/26 financial gap, after scenarios, by £16m. This incorporates the £4m from proposals already brought forward in September and currently subject to public consultation, if they were implemented.

4.20 All savings proposals identified will be taken forward through our usual governance, decision making and HR processes. Progressing potential savings will entail consultations with our staff on restructures and potential redundancies. As noted by Cabinet in September, in some cases it has been necessary to begin these processes already in order to be in a position to implement agreed changes ahead of the new financial year and deliver a full year saving to support the budget position. We will work hard to minimise compulsory redundancies as far as possible, applying our comprehensive redeployment processes and support to retain valued staff within the organisation wherever we can. We currently estimate that in the region of 160 posts (130 full time equivalent) may be deleted as a result of savings proposals, although the picture will become clearer as service reviews and consultations progress.

4.21 Even if all identified savings were fully delivered, which is subject to further consultations and decisions, as well as delivery risks, a substantial gap of c£13m would remain for 2025/26, subject to any impact from the recent Budget Statement.

4.22 We will continue to work through the impacts of Budget announcements and await further detail and specific allocations through the financial policy statement expected from MHCLG later in November and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement in December. This will enable us to confirm or amend our assumptions, and clarify the position in relation to specific grants, providing an updated deficit position. In light of this, options for setting a balanced budget for 2025/26 can be considered.

5. Capital programme

5.1 The capital programme has been updated in accordance with Capital Strategy principles and the risk based review of the programme. Appendix 3 presents a revised programme of £670.0m, of which £210.6m is planned for delivery in the period to 2027/28. The programme will be updated further to reflect the impact of the Budget once detailed allocations are known.

5.2 The capital programme is funded from several sources and can be split into the elements that are funded from identified specific sources (such as grants, developer contributions and earmarked specific reserves), and elements considered to be Core Council Funded. Core Council Funded relates to those projects funded from Council resources that ultimately increases the Council's need to borrow.

5.3 In order to reduce the cost of borrowing appendix 3 proposes changes to the capital programme outside of normal Capital Strategy updates, to reduce the level of investment in Core Council Funded programmes. The recommendations made throughout the report are based on an assessment of risks and likely implications made by services of removing or reducing core funded programmes based on set criteria. The projected impact of this review is an annual reduction in borrowing costs of £3.9m by the end of the MTFP period.

6. Engagement, lobbying and communications

6.1 We will continue to engage and communicate openly and widely with our residents, partners and staff on our approach to the financial position and the impacts of specific savings proposals, and to progress specific consultations where these are required.

6.2 The current financial position, and in particular the Government's recently announced review of how funding is targeted to reflect increased need in areas of deprivation, means it is essential that we continue to press Government as strongly as possible for additional funding and support to be provided to East Sussex. Since September this has included:

- writing to all local MPs to outline the urgency of the Council's financial situation, the requirement to make savings, and to seek their support in making the case to Government;
- the leaders of all ESCC's political groups meeting with all East Sussex MPs to reiterate the position and how they can help;
- a further meeting of a number of MPs with the Leaders of ESCC and district and borough councils to discuss the financial pressures facing all councils;
- officer engagement with officials at MHCLG; and
- continuing to contribute to national campaigning undertaken by the County Councils Network and LGA.

All of this activity has focused on standing up for the interests of East Sussex, and ensuring Government is fully aware of the unsustainable situation faced by the County Council, the consequences for local people, staff and partners, and the immediate and longer term steps needed to secure the sustainability of services which can meet local needs.

6.3 We will continue to press home these vital messages - individually and with our local, regional and national partners - ahead of the policy announcement expected by the end of November, the provisional financial settlement expected on 19 December, the final settlement in February and the longer term Spending Review in the spring. We will continue to call for immediate support with the impacts of current demands, costs and market conditions over which we have very limited control locally. We will highlight the lack of funding to invest in the preventative approaches which are the only way to mitigate increasing need, as well as to achieve the best outcomes for our residents, and we will work to influence reforms. And we will continue to make the case for a sustainable funding regime for local government, which is appropriately reflective of local need and the costs of delivering statutory services.

7. Looking ahead - conclusion

7.1 The Council's financial position continues to be highly challenging, despite indications of some additional national support. This report outlines the substantial financial gap we continue to face which means we must propose further reductions to our services and the support we provide to local people.

7.2 Much is still to be determined around specific funding allocations for the coming year, and the funding outlook for 2026/27 onwards, the impact of new and ongoing national reforms, and the medium to longer term impact of the increases in demand and cost our services continue to experience.

7.3 Work will continue into the winter to understand the detailed funding picture as it emerges, the implications of national policy developments, and to refine our understanding of the county's needs. This analysis will feed into our ongoing business and financial planning, ahead of final proposals for the 2025/26 budget and Council Plan being brought to Cabinet in January for consideration, and Council in February for decision.

7.4 We will also progress the savings proposals set out to Cabinet through our consultation, governance and decision making processes, to ensure that Members have the information necessary to take budget decisions in the new year.

7.5 Members will continue to be involved in developing plans through Cabinet, County Council, Scrutiny Committees, and specific engagement sessions throughout the 2024/25 RPPR process.

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

1. Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) Update (November 2024)

- 1.1 The MTFP has been updated for regular calculated adjustments and the additional year of 2027/28, the movements are summarised below. The overall position includes a deficit of £14.344m carried forward from 2024/25 that was temporarily funded from a one-off contribution from reserves. The full MTFP is provided at Annex 1.

	Ref	Estimate (£m)			
		2025/26 Annual	2026/27 Annual	2027/28 Annual	Total Cumulative
Council 6 February 2024 DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)		30.978	16.503	0.000	47.481
CARRY FORWARD OF 2024/25 DEFICIT		14.344	0.000	0.000	14.344
Total After Carry Forward		45.322	16.503	0.000	61.825
Normal Updates:					
Council Tax Inflation				(8.010)	(8.010)
Council Tax Base	A			(5.948)	(5.948)
Business Rates Retention (inflation and growth)	B	(0.032)	(0.211)	(2.195)	(2.438)
Revenue Support Grant inflation update	C	(0.002)	(0.009)	(0.089)	(0.100)
Inflation for contracts (normal and contract specific)	D	0.032	0.210	15.116	15.358
CET: Waste Housing Growth	E	(0.048)	0.026	0.342	0.320
Treasury Management: Update		(0.100)	(0.100)	1.800	1.600
Treasury Management: Capital Programme Review	F	(0.800)	(2.000)	(1.100)	(3.900)
Treasury Management: Impact of SEN deficit		<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>	<i>tbc</i>
Pay award	G	1.491	0.567	5.555	7.613
Levies Increase	H			0.014	0.014
General Contingency	I		0.030	0.150	0.180
Pressures added to / (removed from) the MTFP:					
ASC: Growth & Demography				3.917	3.917
ASC: Service Demand	J	5.709			5.709
CSD: Growth & Demography				0.808	0.808
CSD: Home to School Transport Growth & Demography	K	5.908	1.926	1.858	9.692
CSD: Service Demand – Looked After Children	L	0.763	(4.328)	0.680	(2.885)
CET: Waste PFI additional income	M	(1.800)	0.400	0.700	(0.700)
Pressures approved by Protocol	N	0.520	1.050		1.570
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER NORMAL UPDATES		56.963	14.064	13.598	84.625

Updates to be considered – for review of likelihood and/or for local decision:					
Continuation of Adult Social Care grant funding	O	(5.386)			(5.386)
Proceeds of NNDR Pooling	P	(2.194)	2.194	0.000	0.000
Council Tax: Premiums on Second Homes	Q	(3.524)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(3.666)
Council Tax: Eastbourne Reduction Scheme Proposals	R	0.778			0.778
Reduction in contractual inflation in line with forecasts	S	(6.481)			(6.481)
Council Tax Flexibility: <i>Add a further 3.00% to our current 1.99% assumption to get to 4.99% (2.99% plus 2.00% ASC Precept) in all years.</i>	A	(11.138)	(12.254)	(13.476)	(36.868)
DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER UPDATES TBC		29.018	3.934	0.050	33.002

Normal Updates:

A Council Tax Inflation and Base

The Government provided local authorities in England additional flexibility in setting Council Tax by increasing the referendum limit for increases in Council Tax to 3% and the ability to increase the Adult Social Care Precept by up to 2% in 2024/25, however, this flexibility has not been confirmed for future years. Council Tax inflation is therefore currently assumed at 1.99% only for all years in MTFP, with potential continuation of the increased flexibility included as an update to be considered.

For every 1% increase in Council Tax charged, it is estimated to generate an additional £3.720m in 2024/25. Therefore, to fund the current deficit of £57.638m (before scenarios), there would need to be a council tax increase of approximately 17.50% (current base assumption of 1.99%, plus an additional 15.51% to fund the deficit). There would undoubtedly be an impact on collection rates, which is not factored into this calculation.

Council Tax base growth is being estimated at 1.5% for all years. Regression analysis suggests that the base position will continue to improve following reductions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Estimates will be updated based on submissions from District and Borough Council in December.

B Business Rates Retention and Growth

Business rates have been updated for the additional year reflecting the latest inflation estimates by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) published in March 2024.

Business rates will continue to be monitored along with the collection fund and reviewed alongside the District and Borough Councils latest collection forecasts to understand any further impacts.

C Revenue Support Grant

The current planning assumptions for Revenue Support Grant (RSG) reflect latest inflation estimates each year ahead of any potential funding reform or multiyear settlement.

D Inflation for contracts (normal and contract specific)

The inflation model as per the approved pressures protocol allows for contracts to be uplifted annually per the contract conditions but does not provide inflation for utilities and other running costs e.g. building maintenance, communications and software. Contractual negotiations, e.g. Foster Care and Concessionary Bus Fares are considered for inclusion within the MTFP by CMT.

The service inflation model has been updated for an additional year and reflects the latest inflation estimates by the Office of Budget Responsibility (OBR) published in March 2024. As per normal practice, the inflation model will be updated to reflect latest inflation due in October 2024. The table below shows changes in inflation estimates published in March 2024 compared to those included as part of the approved budget in February 2024.

	2024/25		2025/26		2026/27		2027/28	
	Nov 23	Mar 24	Nov 23	Mar 24	Nov 23	Mar 24	Nov 23	Mar 24
CPI*	3.33%	1.65%	1.60%	1.63%	1.43%	1.64%	1.78%	1.98%
RPI*	4.76%	2.51%	2.40%	2.17%	2.55%	2.59%	2.85%	3.01%
RPIX*	3.65%	1.74%	2.10%	2.19%	2.30%	2.43%	2.68%	2.86%
NLW**	£11.44	£11.44	£11.60	£11.59	£11.76	£11.75	£12.08	£12.04

*Inflation estimates are as of September of each calendar year to provide the best mid-point within each financial year.

**National Living Wage per hour. Contracts will not necessarily increase in line with the NLW; however, this would be a key driver for some contracts with a high element of staffing.

The MTFP normal update includes inflation increases from 2025/26 onwards. Normal practice is that in year services would be expected to manage movement in actual inflation through contract/budget management and the pressures protocol.

E CET: Waste Housing Growth

The forecast pressure for 2027/28 has been added to the current plan. Further review and update will be required to reflect the latest modelling and reflect any offset, such as increased recycling prices.

F Treasury Management

The additional year of 2027/28 shows the budget estimated cost to support the borrowing required to fund the approved Capital Programme and Strategy.

In addition, the Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB) has conducted a capital programme risk review to consider the risks and implications of removing / reducing core funded programmes to seek reductions to the cost of borrowing that impact the MTFP position. The revised capital programme, including the impact of the capital programme risk review, would reduce the level of borrowing to £39.9m up to 2027/28, which is estimated to have a positive MTFP impact for cost of borrowing of £3.9m per annum by the end of the MTFP period.

A further update will be provided following the Q2 monitoring and Autumn Statement to factor in any reported slippage on the capital programme, changes to reserves forecasts and a forecast interest rate update in early November following the Autumn Statement.

G Pay Award Added Year and uplift

Estimated based on the National Employers offer of £1,290 up to LMG2 SP10 and a 2.5% increase for higher grades for 2024/25 (now agreed for LGS for 2024/25) are higher on average than the flat rate 3% previously provided, and has an impact on future years. An estimate of the additional year of 2027/28 has been included and provision for an award of 2.5% in all years of the MTFP.

H Levies Increase

The figures are reflective of the latest estimates of the Flood & Coastal Protection Levy and Sussex Inshore Fisheries Levy.

I General Contingency

This is calculated at an agreed formula of 1% of net budget less treasury management. The figures reflect the addition of 2027/28 and impacts of other changes.

Pressures added to / (removed from) the MTFP:

J ASC: Services Growth & Demography and Demand

Values for ASC growth and demography and additional demand have been included based on a continuation of current pressures.

K CSD: Services Growth & Demography

Values for CSD general growth and demography have been included based on a continuation of current pressures, plus updated estimates for Home to School Transport as the annual average increase in the number of pupils requiring home to school transport continues to increase.

L CSD: Service Demand – Looked After Children

Updated estimate of changes in demand; assumes lower case growth in LAC numbers.

M CET: Waste PFI Additional Income

The budget requirement for 2025/26 can be reduced by £1.8m; mainly due to electricity and recycling income forecast above baseline assumptions, less an allowance to offset Highways streetlighting electricity overspend. Reducing electricity prices will result in annual pressures with £0.4m expected for 2026/27 and £0.7m for 2027/28.

N Pressures Protocol

There has been an adjustment in the MTFP for a previously approved bid to reflect that the project is due to end in 2026/27, plus a number of bids that have been approved in principle by CMT, see table below:

Pressures Protocol	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Previously approved:				
CET: Access to Employment and Skills - adjustment		(0.200)		(0.200)
Approved by CMT:				
BSD: Occupational Health and Employee Assistance	0.036			0.036
CET: Statutory Concessionary Fares reimbursement increases		1.250		1.250
BSD: IT&D Microsoft 365 Licencing	0.351			0.351
BSD: Corporate ArcGIS Licencing	0.044			0.044
BSD: Controller of Premises for Corporate Estate	0.089			0.089
TOTAL	0.520	1.050	0.000	1.570

Updates to be considered pre review of likely / less likely:

O Continuation of Adult Social Care grant funding

The Government provided additional, previous unannounced grant funding of £500m as part of the Local Government Settlement 2024/25, with the ESCC share being £5.386m. Future years allocations are uncertain, however, due to the ongoing pressures in the social care system, it is likely that this value will be rolled into future financial years.

P Proceeds of NNDR Pooling

Confirmation has been received that pooling will continue into 2026/27. The council is working with ESFRS and Districts & Boroughs to submit the application.

Q Council Tax: Premiums on Second Homes

Under the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, council tax billing authorities have been given the discretion to introduce a premium in respect of second homes (dwellings that are unoccupied but furnished) of up to 100%. Where a decision to impose a premium is made, it must be taken at least 12 months before the financial year to which it would apply, and therefore the earliest the change would take effect would be the 2025/26 financial year. The estimated impact on ESCC is provided in the scenarios based on reports from the billing authorities, with the full impact of these changes is to be assessed with District / Borough councils and reflected in the ongoing council tax assumptions.

R Council Tax: Eastbourne Reduction Scheme Proposals

Eastbourne Borough Council are currently consulting on changes to their Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) for 2025/26 which will see a reduction on Council Tax income received by the County Council, estimated to be £0.778m. ESCC have submitted a response to the consultation following approval by the Lead member for Resources and Climate Change on 1 November.

S Reduction in contractual inflation in line with forecasts

The impact of lower than previously forecast inflation rates will need updating following the revised OBR rates.

Annex 1 Medium Term Financial Plan

Medium Term Financial Plan	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Approved Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£million	£million	£million	£million
TAXATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDING		(538.102)	(545.458)	(560.822)
Council Tax	(352.015)	(9.515)	(13.483)	(13.958)
Adult Social Care Precept	(21.535)			
Business Rates (Inclusive of BR Pooling in 2022/23)	(102.469)	1.676	(1.809)	(2.195)
Social Care Grant	(45.393)			
ASC Market Sustainability and Improvement Grant	(11.312)			
Services Grant	(0.478)			
Revenue Support Grant	(4.346)	(0.071)	(0.072)	(0.089)
New Homes Bonus	(0.554)	0.554		
TOTAL TAXATION & GOVERNMENT FUNDING	(538.102)	(545.458)	(560.822)	(577.064)
SERVICE PLAN				
Service Expenditure	457.488	515.467	558.368	581.794
Inflation				
Non-pay Inflation	28.222	15.783	16.220	15.094
Allocation of pay award and pensions to service departments	10.401	1.948		
Adult Social Care				
Better Care Fund - Discharge Funding	(2.035)	5.088		
Discharge Funding - New Burdens	2.035	(5.088)		
Growth & Demography	3.917	7.491	3.917	3.917
Future demand modelling net of attrition (Covid-related)	(0.365)			
Pressures approved via protocol: ASC Strategy	0.330	0.330		
Service Demand		5.709		
Children's Services				
Growth & Demography	0.973	0.808	0.808	0.808
Looked After Children Placements Covid-related	(0.347)	(0.519)		
Covid Grant Funding for Looked After Children Placements	(0.442)	0.519		
Family Safeguarding	(0.194)	(2.075)	(3.533)	
Net Operational Pressures incl. Careleavers and Locality		0.475	2.929	
Pressures approved via protocol (23/24)	0.124			
Looked After Children Demand	18.340	3.856	0.042	0.680
Locality Social Work and MASH	0.782			
IT & Digital Systems Development	0.044	0.039	0.144	
Foster Care Service	1.540			
Additional Staffing Capacity	0.645	(0.105)		
Subject Access Requests Resource	0.122			
Reprofile of Public Health Investment	(2.420)	0.459	(0.586)	
Home to School Transport Growth & Demography		5.908	1.926	1.858
Communities, Environment & Transport				
Waste Housing Growth	0.265	0.307	0.414	0.342
Waste PFI Additional Income	(3.000)	1.200	0.400	0.700
Highways Contract Mobilisation	(2.313)			
Highways Contract Mobilisation (offset by Reserve Contribution)	0.817			
Pressures approved via protocol (23/24)	(0.800)			
Local Planning Advice Resourcing	0.090		(0.080)	

Annex 1 Medium Term Financial Plan

Medium Term Financial Plan	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	Approved Budget	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£million	£million	£million	£million
Access to Employment and Skills	0.200		(0.200)	
Local Nature Recovery Scheme		0.100		
Pan Sussex Tourism	0.225		(0.225)	
Highways Core - TUPE Updated Data	0.158			
Highways Core - Second Grass Cut	0.080			
Pressures approved via protocol 24/25: Statutory Concessionary Fares reimbursement increases			1.250	
Business Services				
Pressures approved via protocol (prior years)	(0.078)			
Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS)	0.386			
Licences, including digital and robotics	0.403			
Pressures approved via protocol 24/25:				
Occupational Health and Employee Assistance		0.036		
IT&D Microsoft 365 Licencing		0.351		
Corporate ArcGIS Licencing		0.044		
Controller of Premises for Corporate Estate		0.089		
Governance Services				
Pressures approved via protocol incl. Coroners Services	0.567	0.148		
Savings				
Review of BSD Savings Options	(0.693)			
NET SERVICE EXPENDITURE	515.467	558.368	581.794	605.193
Corporate Expenditure	43.814	36.979	44.053	50.055
Treasury Management	(2.850)	3.700	0.400	0.700
General Contingency	0.390	0.040	0.150	0.150
Contingency for Potential Pay Award, Recruitment and Retention	(3.343)	4.413	5.419	5.555
Inflation Risk Provision	3.245	0.015	0.019	0.022
Provision for Energy Price Increase	(1.300)			
Pensions	(3.149)			
Movement in Reserves	0.144	(1.107)		
Levies & Grants	0.028	0.013	0.014	0.014
TOTAL CORPORATE EXPENDITURE	36.979	44.053	50.055	56.496
TOTAL PLANNED EXPENDITURE	552.446	602.421	631.849	661.689
CUMULATIVE DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	14.344	56.963	71.027	84.625
ANNUAL DEFICIT/(SURPLUS)	14.344	42.619	14.064	13.598
One of use of Financial Management Reserve	(14.344)	14.344	0.000	0.000
ANNUAL DEFICIT/(SURPLUS) AFTER USE OF RESERVES	0.000	56.963	14.064	13.598

Savings Proposals 2024/25 to 2027/28

Department	Gross Cashable Saving £'000				
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
Adult Social Care and Health	1,510	7,420	2,525	0	11,455
Business Services	17	1,060	0	825	1,902
Children's Services	794	3,239	70	20	4,123
Communities, Economy and Transport	349	1,493	621	374	2,837
Governance Services	15	233	63	0	311
Total	2,685	13,445	3,279	1,219	20,628

Adult Social Care & Health - Proposed Savings (Shaded lines are proposals which were included in the September Cabinet report and are already subject to public consultation)			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy / Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information
Older People's Directly Provided Services	Phoenix Centre - Lewes: Proposal to close the day service for older people with physical and mental health needs, and to support people to access alternative services in the community.	Potential reduction in choice and control for individuals currently using these services, including people in some rural areas. Potential disruption caused by changing provision, potential loss of friendship networks, and increased concern for carers (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk).	273		191			191	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
Older People's Directly Provided Services	Milton Grange day service - Eastbourne: Proposal to close the Milton Grange day service for older people with a range of physical and mental health needs associated with dementia, and support people to access alternative services in the community. Dementia outreach service - Countywide: Proposal to cease the specialist mental health community outreach service and provide services via existing universal services.	For day services: Potential reduction in choice and control for individuals currently using these services, including people in some rural areas. Potential disruption caused by changing provision, potential loss of friendship networks, and increased concern for carers (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk). For MH community outreach: Potential impact in choice and control for individuals currently using the service, as they would need to access universal services.	872		521			521	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
Learning Disability Directly Provided Services	Linden Court - Eastbourne and Beeching Park - Bexhill: Proposal to close the Linden Court day service for people with a learning disability, and to merge with the Beeching Park day service or to support people to access alternative services in the community.	Potential reduction in choice and control for individuals currently using these services, including people in some rural areas. Potential disruption caused by changing provision, potential loss of friendship networks, and increased concern for carers (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk).	652		200	127		327		Y									Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Learning Disability Directly Provided Services	Community Support Services: Proposal to cease the service which currently supports adults living independently at home and to adapt the service for adults living in supported accommodation, and to support people to access alternative services. The service supports with tasks such as shopping, preparing meals, and accessing the community. People living at home would be found alternative support in the community, while Supported Living services would be reconfigured so an individual's support was all provided by the accommodation based staff.	Potential impact on individuals with a learning disability receiving support in their own home and in the community, including the possible reduction in opportunities to participate in community activities.	637		286			286		Y									Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Learning Disability Directly Provided Services	Steps to Work (including Shine Car Wash at County Hall, Lewes) - Countywide Service: Proposal to close the service, which helps people with a learning disability to prepare for, access, and retain employment and to support people to access alternative services in the community.	Potential reduction in choice and control for individuals currently using these services, including people in some rural areas. Potential disruption caused by changing provision, potential loss of friendship networks, and increased concern for carers (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk). Potential impact on employment for individuals (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk).	418		194			194		Y									Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Learning Disability Directly Provided Services	Hookstead Day Service – Crowborough and St Nicholas Centre – Lewes: Proposal to close the Hookstead day service for people with a learning disability, and to merge with the St Nicholas Centre day service or to support people to access alternative services in the community.	Potential reduction in choice and control for individuals currently using these services, including people in some rural areas. Potential disruption caused by changing provision, potential loss of friendship networks, and increased concern for carers (although measures will be put in place to minimise this risk).	995		124			124	Y	Y									Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Vulnerable Adults Supported Accommodation	Supported accommodation provision for vulnerable adults: Proposal to cease on-site support to develop independent living and tenancy sustainment skills, and support to access training, qualifications and employment.	Potential increased risk of people becoming homeless. Potential impact on district and borough councils, which have statutory responsibility for housing. Potential impact on care management teams in adult and children's social care, and potential impact on health services.	258		129	129		258	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
Adults with Mental Health needs Supported Accommodation	Supported accommodation provision for adults with mental health needs: Proposal to cease on-site support to develop independent living and tenancy sustainment skills, and support to access training, qualifications and employment.	Potential increased risk of people becoming homeless. Potential impact on district and borough councils, which have statutory responsibility for housing. Potential impact on care management teams in adult and children's social care, and potential impact on health services.	356		178	178		356	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
Housing - Related Floating Support	Housing related floating support provision: Proposal to significantly reduce funding for this service which supports people aged 16+ years with their housing, or helps them to stay in their own home.	Potential increased risk of people becoming homeless. Potential impact on district and borough councils, which have statutory responsibility for housing. Potential impact on care management teams in adult and children's social care, and potential impact on health services.	4,373		1,937	1,936		3,873	Y	Y	Y				Y				Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Substance Misuse Contracts	Drug and Alcohol Services: Proposal to cease the funding of drug and alcohol recovery services when the current contracts for carers service, street community service, and support networks end.	If the reduction in recovery services contributes reduced relapse prevention, then there is a potential greater demand for treatment services, and possible increase in drug and alcohol related harm. Reducing recovery services funding may also present a barrier to receiving future grants.	319		234	85		319		Y									Carers are also impacted
Substance Misuse Contracts	Drug and Alcohol Services: Proposal to reduce funding for treatment services.	Potential increased risk of people being unable to access the full range of treatment services they require. Measures would be put in place to minimise the impact of these proposals. However, reducing treatment is likely to increase the number of people with drug and alcohol dependency, and therefore a potential increase in the number of associated hospital admissions and deaths, as well as a potential increase in the broader social and societal costs of drug and alcohol misuse. In addition, the proposals may potentially widen health inequalities.	158	100	407			507	Y	Y									Rurality is a further impacted characteristic
Learning Disability Commissioning	Proposal to close the Learning Disability Development Fund budget	Limited likely impact as there is an existing budget underspend.	50		50			50										Y	

Adult Social Care & Health - Proposed Savings (Shaded lines are proposals which were included in the September Cabinet report and are already subject to public consultation)			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy /Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information
Strategy	Review of Adult Social Care Strategy action plan: Proposal to reduce potential activity in some areas of the Action Plan.	Likely curtailment of some of the service enhancements contained within the Adult Social Care Strategy: What Matters to You. Likely impact is the opportunity cost of potential activity in some areas of the Action Plan, including aspects of preventative work.	400	150	180			330	Y	Y	Y		Y				Y		Carers are also impacted
Operations	Benefits Maximisation: Reviewing approx.1800 clients to ensure all clients are receiving correct benefits and paying the correct contribution to their care, in line with ESCC's charging policy.	Potential insufficient benefit claims to be identified following other benefit maximisation activity.	0		80			80										Y	
Operations	Review of charges for clients who self-fund: Reviewing policy on charging these clients for advice and assessments.	Clients who fully fund the cost of their own care may choose not to access this service if it becomes chargeable. If this proposal is progressed it would be subject to a full public consultation.	0		70	70		140	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
Operations	Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS): Proposal to cease the DESSS and provide support via alternative funds.	Limited likely impact as use of the current DESSS budget has been superseded by the introduction of other schemes.	130	130				130										Y	
Operations	Sensory Support Team: Proposal to merge this team into the existing Occupational Therapy Team.	Potential reduction in specialist management oversight but limited impact on frontline service delivery as existing Rehabilitation Officers for the Visually Impaired (ROVIs) will continue to provide support to adults with sensory needs in the community.	593		120			120		Y									Carers are also impacted
Operations	Grangemead service model: Review service model at Grangemead respite unit to enable the in-sourcing of complex bedded respite care for adults with a Learning Disability.	Whilst the service will remain open and operational, existing clients of planned respite may experience a change in the timetable for their rolling programme of respite to maximise occupancy and create capacity for the new cohort of clients.	966		500			500		Y									Carers are also impacted
Operations	Review high cost care packages: Negotiate with providers to ensure current care costs reflect the level of need and care and support being provided through the package of care.	Limited likely impact on clients. This activity would focus on high cost care packages.	NA	180				180		Y									Carers are also impacted
Community Development	Consolidated programme: Bringing together three separate VCSE and Community Development support programmes (Making it Happen, GIS, and Community Networks) into a single programme.	Potential limiting impact on scale and scope of ESCC community and VCSE development work beyond infrastructure funding.	978	461	500			961	Y	Y		Y	Y					Y	Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
Community Development	Reapportionment of migrant support service costs in Children's Services to the Homes for Ukraine grant.	Maximisation of external grant funding within existing conditions. Likely impact is the opportunity cost of alternative investment of the grant funding.	0	200				200					Y						
Planning, Performance and Engagement	Review of Training and Development, contracts, and staffing structures	Potential impact on support and training to operational staff. Decreased capacity to support strategic and delivery goals.	1,041	289	425			714		Y									Carers may also be impacted
Public Health	Public Health review and realignment: Public Health funding is ringfenced to address public health outcomes but some existing contracts and targeted outcomes would be reduced as a result to fund alternative workstreams more aligned to Council Plan priorities but still within Public Health grant conditions.	An overall reduction in funding towards prevention activities is likely to result in a higher demand for health and care services in the future, and may affect our more vulnerable communities more. Out of the 21 identified areas for savings across the public health budget, 3 have been identified to have an impact on equalities and equalities considerations are underway. We will be closely monitoring the impacts on health equalities over time. (NB: the Public Health grant for 2024/25 is £30.389m)	0		1,094			1,094											Difficult to say impact because of varied funding impacting varied groups; specific Equality Considerations will be done for each of the proposals.
TOTAL - Adult Social Care & Health				1,510	7,420	2,525	0	11,455											

Business Services - Proposed Savings			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy /Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information
Information Technology (IT) and Digital	Adjust the core IT provision to meet minimum user requirement and council financial constraints	Reduced data usage, increasing recycling and re-using of IT kit, reduced licencing costs and capitalisation of new user laptops	8,805		464			464										Y	
Corporate Office budget	Reduce running costs, increase rental income and maximise efficiency from the corporate estate	Alternative use of County Hall space in the context of the asset being currently underutilised. Reducing running costs and maximising use, efficiency and financial return for property assets in general.	1,409		174			174										Y	
Financial Planning	Financial Planning service review	Risk of not being up to date with information on local government finance, including benchmarking of costs against comparator authorities and external funding opportunities, in a rapidly changing environment.	801	17	117			134											Consequence of potential missed funding is unidentifiable
Services to Schools traded income	Revise charging model to generate additional contribution to the cost of service provision	There are significant risks from academisation, particularly given that academies have historically preferred to keep finance services in-house. Increased contributions would help to cover the costs of service provision more adequately. The proposal also includes £10k of additional income from Services to Schools conference stalls	235		25			25										Y	
Property (Joint Use)	Review of Joint Use Agreements	As joint use agreements are renewed and placed on longer term or alternative footings, less property resource would be required to support them	300				100	100											Currently unknown - is dependent on the arrangements put in place
Postal Hub	Review use of the postal hub (ESCC's inbound and outbound post service)	Reduced costs of running the postal hub and potential upside to be explored on use of the hub by third parties	370		80			80										Y	
Business Services Department (BSD)	Review of support services across the department	Service reviews will be undertaken to ensure capacity within support services is aligned to changed organisational needs and resources. In the medium term this is likely to result in reductions in capacity/staffing in a number of services. In the short term It is necessary for BSD to retain the capacity to support the delivery of wider savings. For example, it is not possible to undertake robust staff consultations without Human Resources (HR) support or to make changes to the uses of certain assets without Property support.	26,105		200		725	925										Y	
TOTAL Business Services				17	1,060	0	825	1,902											

Children's Services - Proposed Savings			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics											
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy /Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information	
Early Help and Social Care	Robust management of the placement market, maximising recruitment and use of ESCC foster carers and reducing need for high cost residential placements	This proposal seeks to implement a range of initiatives to reduce the numbers of children in our care (against a picture of national growth) and to reduce the number of high cost placements. This would mean more children would be placed in family homes (with foster carers) rather than more expensive agency placements. We believe, for most children, it is better to be in a family environment rather than a residential setting.	46,335		1,593			1,593											Y	Changing placement mix and reducing number of Looked After Children will impact on children aged 0-18, but we will be keeping within our statutory requirements and still discharging our responsibilities.
Education	Review of staffing and resources across education teams	Administration teams have been amalgamated into three teams which will generate efficiencies. In addition, there will be a review of staffing structures (including vacancies) in targeted areas, which could impact negatively on outcomes for children especially the most vulnerable. It is also proposed to increase traded activity within the safeguarding team, which may reduce capacity for core work. This could increase the risk of unsafe practice in schools, including where safeguarding has been judged ineffective by Ofsted.	Various	40	360			400											Y	
Buzz Active	Review of different operating models for Buzz Active.	We are proposing to undertake a sale/transfer of entity process to enable the consideration of alternative, viable providers to operate Buzz Active. Different operating models could help Buzz Active access alternative sources of funding and investment, thus ensuring a financially sustainable future.	110		107			107	Y	Y										Buzz provides valuable outdoor physical activities for children and young people and has recently enhanced the offer for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. The service also serves rural areas. The council is seeking to transfer Buzz as an entity to an alternative provider and the criteria for such a transfer will enable Buzz to continue to provide accessible activities for vulnerable children.
Home to School Transport	Reduction in solo taxis and increased use of personal transport budgets.	Proposals for cost avoidance are being developed by CET and CSD. These proposals will look at ways to reduce the number of solo taxis and include a review to enhance the personal transport budget (PTB) strategy. Other areas being explored include reviewing the commissioning policy and practice to better understand current pressures and future needs, supplier management, and independent travel training.	23,086	651	728			1,379	Y	Y										It is normal operational practice to aim to optimise the numbers of pupils who travel in vehicles together. However, individual needs assessment will continue to be undertaken and if it is deemed necessary to provide a solo taxi, it will be provided. In addition, we will continue to provide personal travel budgets (PTB) to families when this is the most cost effective transport option.
All divisions	Consolidation of similar functions across the three divisions within Children's Services.	In order to achieve savings there will be a review of staffing and resources in replicated support functions and a reprioritisation of deliverables with some activities ceasing and agreement reached on a set of core deliverables. Inevitably with any consolidation/centralisation there is a risk that the functions become less aligned to divisional priorities and can become less responsive to emerging needs.	4,035		229	70	20	319	Y	Y										The consolidation proposals for children and young people's (CYP) participation do not include a reduction in the numbers of youth voice groups. The oversight and coordination of CYP participation will provide an opportunity for a better integrated approach to inclusion of vulnerable CYP, particularly disabled CYP and those known to early help and social care, and those provided with a schools Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing offer.
Supporting Families programme	Achieving additional performance-related income	We will increase income through more effective deployment of the Supporting Families team in order to increase our performance against the national criteria for payment by results.		100	100			200											Y	
Communication, Planning and Performance	Review of structures and budgets within the Communication, Planning and Performance division, including Personal Assistants and Information Governance.	These proposed reductions would result in reduced capacity to support Children's Services with organisational change at a point where service reductions and transformation are required for financial sustainability. This is likely to put additional pressure on busy operational managers. There will also be reduced capacity to support Children's Services teams, for example with data protection impact assessments, data breaches, information sharing, advice and guidance and complaints. There will be a reduction in the level of subsidy for early years settings safeguarding courses resulting in a small increase in the course price.	1,107	3	122			125	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y			
TOTAL - Children's Services				794	3,239	70	20	4,123												

Communities Economy and Transport - Proposed Savings (Shaded lines are proposals which are already subject to public consultation following Cabinet or Lead Member agreement to consult)			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics											
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy /Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information	
Trading Standards	Review the delivery of the Trading Standards European Union (EU) exit statutory duties and the preventative interventions undertaken to inform vulnerable people about the risks of becoming victims of financial and doorstep crime.	We will maintain trading standards services, using a risk based approach to target areas where we need to intervene or act. There would be no change to the direct interventions to protect vulnerable people who have been targeted or been victims of financial and doorstep crime, however, there would be a reduction in the number of preventative engagement sessions delivered. In addition, we will not have the capacity to respond to any new duties or new legislative requirements.	1,095	95	94			189	Y	Y										
Emergency Planning	Review of current team core duties and functions	We will maintain core Emergency Planning services but will have less capacity to support Sussex Resilience Forum and partnership work and will target resource where it provides best return. We will not have the capacity to respond to new duties.	279	28				28										Y		
Road Safety	Review the delivery of road safety training and engagement duties and functions.	Reduced capacity to respond to road safety enquiries which would result in longer response times and greater use of standard responses to queries. There will a reduction in face to face engagement activities with partners and stakeholders, instead providing advice via telephone/written correspondence.	926	14	18	17		49										Y		
Archives	Review of the Archive service offer	Potential changes to the current service offer.	664			75		75										Y		
Registration Service	Review customer contact and seek to manage demand through creating more opportunities for customers to self-serve. Fee increase in statutory fees.	Introduction of customer self-check in at the four registration offices, and slower response times to customer queries and document requests. A fee increase has been agreed by Lead Member and takes effect in 2025/26.	1,750	15	119	51		185	Y	Y									To avoid equality impacts a member of staff will always be present to assist. No further equality impact assessment is required.	
Library and Information Service	Refocus our accredited adult learning in libraries to an online offer.	Accredited online English, Maths and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) courses that learners could undertake in our libraries with support from the commissioned supplier if there is not a suitable local provider which meets the learners needs, and also IT learning through courses including IT4U and Step into Reading. This will remove the current duplication of face-to-face adult learning, with comparable training available in the locality provided by local further education colleges.	4,198		92			92	Y	Y										
Library and Information Service	New contract procured for purchase of stock	Efficiencies achieved as stock can be delivered to more than one location.	4,198		100			100										Y		
Library and Information Service	Review the Libraries Strategic Commissioning Strategy Accessibility Analysis	An addendum to the current Strategy will be completed which may result in a change to the service offer	4,198				187	187										Y		
Parking	Increase on street pay and display parking charges by 5%	The cost of providing parking services needs to keep up with inflation to ensure our towns allow for a turnover of parking spaces. Any surplus generated goes to support transport related improvements across East Sussex. We also want to make sure parking costs are equitable across East Sussex, including pay and display and permits.	(265)		110			110	Y										Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics	
Parking	Adjustments to the current parking regime in Rother District	Introduction of parking charges at Broomhill Sands. Changes to the pay and display tariff to bring Rother district in line with other civil parking enforcement (CPE) areas, and changes to permit charges	(265)		438			438	Y										Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics	
Waste	Introduction of a booking system for all East Sussex County Council household waste recycling sites	The introduction of a booking system will mean less queueing to deposit waste, and reduced costs for the County Council through better policing of trade waste. There is no evidence that suggests a booking system increases fly tipping. This proposal would make the visit to a tip an easier experience and it should be possible to book slots 'on the day' depending on demand.	33,317		50			50	Y	Y										
Waste	In light of changing government policy we will review of waste management services in relation to management of closed landfill and waste transfer, including a review of waste disposal sites.	Slightly less maintenance for closed landfill sites each year. Adjustments to the methodology for transfer station use for collection authorities. Changes to household waste disposal sites. Additional disposal cost savings as a result of national policy changes.	33,317	25	65	270		360										Y		
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites	Review and changes to Rights of Way operations, including countryside management	The outcomes of this work mean it will take longer to deal with footpath diversions and enquiries from the public and local access groups. It may impact on our ability to maintain our rights of way network and essential repairs will take longer.	852	45	48			93										Y		
Highways	Do not replace Agency Asset Engineer post when current contract ends in September	This has always been a very difficult role to recruit to, hence the long term use of agency staff. We will endeavour to recruit a permanent member of staff to the post.	16,616	50	50			100										Y		
Economy Division (Service-Wide)	Review of economic development offer to reflect post Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) environment, and service-wide vacancy management process	No funding for business case preparation and pipeline project development, therefore significantly compromising our ability to secure external funding, including funding required to enable infrastructure for new development in local plans.	2,170	77	309	208	187	781										Y		
Planning and Environment	Cease direct Climate Change activity	Will effectively remove our ability to deliver on the County Council's decarbonisation commitment where only indirect activity will be able to be delivered (e.g. through non-decarbonisation specific programmes, such as transport schemes delivered through the Local Transport Plan (LTP4))	1,239		60			60										Y		
TOTAL Communities, Economy & Transport				349	1,493	621	374	2,837												

Governance Services - Proposed Savings			Net budget £'000	Gross Cashable Saving £'000					Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	Proposed Action	Likely Impact	2024/25	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total	Age	Disability	Sex	Gender Reassignment	Ethnicity	Marriage / Civil	Pregnancy /Maternity	Religion / Belief	Sexual Orientation	No impacts identified	Further Information
Member Services and Policy	Reduction in staff	This proposal involves sharing administrative support across the Member Services and Policy Teams, resulting in decreased administrative support for both teams.	1,017		32			32										Y	
Performance, Research and Intelligence	Reduction in staff and non-staffing budgets	This proposal involves reducing the size of the current Performance, Research and Intelligence Team and the non-staffing budget for the team. The reduction will limit the performance improvement support provided by the team to other services under our corporate Best Value duty. It will also mean the team will have reduced capacity to support improvements to how we deliver analytics work across the Council. It is also proposed that the funding of the East Sussex in Figures (ESIF) site is reviewed and funded through the Public Health grant if possible.	529	15	99			114										Y	
Communications	Reduction in staffing and non-staff budget	This proposal reduces the size of the Communications Team and its non-staff budget. The reduction would mean the Communications Team would no longer be able to meet all service departments' current demand for campaigns and projects. These communications projects include work on web, design, marketing, media and social media and they support key activity by service departments. There would also be less support for internal communication so the Council's ability to keep staff informed and supported to do their jobs would be reduced. Savings would delete or reduce resources for public engagement and software.	1,211		62	63		125										Y	
Coroner's Service	Property costs	No negative impact, service improvement and reduced costs.	1,400		40			40										Y	
TOTAL - Governance Services				15	233	63	0	311											

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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 2024 the target led basic need capital strategy of 20 years, supported by a 10-year planned capital programme was approved. The approved programme was further updated at State of the County in July 2024 to reflect the 2023/24 outturn, project and programme reprofiles and approved variations, revising the gross programme to £797.0m to 2033/34. For planning purposes, the first 3 years of the programme are considered approved, whilst the remaining years are indicative to represent the longer-term planning for capital investment.
- 1.3 The capital programme is funded from a number of sources, and can be split into the elements that are funded from identified specific sources (such as grants, developer contributions and earmarked specific reserves), and elements considered to be Core Council Funded. Core Council Funded relates to those projects funded from council resources that ultimately increases the Council's need to borrow.
- 1.4 The financial outlook for local authorities is increasingly challenging, with uncertain funding allocations, inflationary pressure on contracts and wages, increasing service demands and the impact of national reforms leaving much uncertainty about the Council's future financial position, with a large financial deficit being forecast as part of the RPPR planning process. Capital investment decisions have a direct impact on the council's revenue budget, particularly relating to borrowing costs, and are therefore to be considered in the context of their impact on the MTFP.
- 1.5 This update proposes changes to the Capital Programme outside of normal Capital Strategy updates, to reduce the level of investment of core council funded programmes that increase the Council's borrowing requirement. The recommendations made throughout this update are based on an assessment of risks and likely implications made by services of removing / reducing core funded programmes based on set criteria.

2 Capital Programme Update

- 2.1 Table 1 below summarises the gross movements to the approved capital programme since State of the County in July 2024 and proposed updates to be made in accordance with Capital Strategy principles and the risk-based review of the programme. The updates provide a revised capital programme of £670.0m, of which £268.4m is planned for delivery in the period to 2027/28. The first three years of the programme over the MTFP period to 2027/28 are to be presented for approval, whilst the remaining years to 2034/35 are indicative to represent the longer-term planning for capital investment. A detailed capital programme that reflects all the proposals outlined in this update is provided at **Annex A**.

Table 1 - Capital Programme Gross Expenditure Updates	Ref:	Current Year 2024/25 £'000	MTFP Period			2028/29 to 2034/35 £'000	Total £'000
			2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000		
Approved Capital Programme (State of the County 2024)		108.305	116.650	67.960	72.251	431.879	797.045
Approved Variations	A	0.931	2.710	0.039	-	-	3.680
Capital Programme Extension	B	-	-	-	1.150	35.185	36.335
Capital Programme Risk Review	D	-	(16.185)	(14.547)	(19.418)	(116.871)	(167.021)
Total Updates		0.931	(13.475)	(14.508)	(18.268)	(81.686)	(127.006)
Revised Capital Programme		109.236	103.175	53.452	53.983	350.193	670.039
Capital Slippage Risk Factor	C	(24.281)	(14.769)	(7.291)	(5.086)	51.427	0.000
Approved Capital Programme (after Capital Slippage Risk Factor)		84.955	88.406	46.161	48.897	401.620	670.039

Normal Capital Strategy Updates

A Approved Variations

There is a gross increase to the programme of £3.7m relating to fully funded schemes having a net nil impact on the capital programme borrowing due to the identification of specific funding in accordance with the Capital Strategy, as detailed in Table 2 below:

Table 2 – Approved Variations since State of the County 2024	Gross Variation (£m)
School Basic Need - National Wraparound Childcare Programme (funding from specific grant)	0.165
Hollington Youth Centre (funding from specific grant)	3.412
Children's Services Essential System Developments (funding from approved revenue contribution)	0.103
Total Net Nil Approved Variations	3.680

B Capital Programme Extension

The capital programme has been updated to extend the programme by a further year to maintain a 10-year planning horizon. This extends annual envelopes of funding for ongoing programmes of work and those fully funded by grants by one year into 2034/35.

C Capital Slippage Risk Factor

A capital slippage risk factor was applied to the capital programme from 2024/25 onwards to reflect likely slippage based on a risk assessment of historic levels of actual expenditure and slippage at a project/programme level and has been updated to reflect the latest capital proposals. The risk factor is held at a corporate level to enable services / project managers to manage project budgets at a local level, whilst ensuring greater robustness to the planning and monitoring process at a corporate level.

Capital Programme Risk Review

D Capital Programme Risk Review

The Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB) conducted a capital programme risk review, starting from an assumed base position of removing all core funded projects and providing the capital programme at funded levels only, to provide the maximum level of potential MTFP savings. This would reduce the capital programme by £129.2m over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28. Services then considered the risks and implications of removing / reducing core funded programmes from the capital programme based on set criteria. The outcome of the review is summarised below.

Remove/Reduce the following programmes:

- Remove Adults and Children's Carers House Adaptations programme and seek alternative funding sources.
- Reduce Special Educational Needs place planning to anticipated grant levels only.
- Reduce the Schools Basic Need programme to provide for temporary place requirements only over the MTFP period.
- Reduce the Integrated Transport Programme back to funded levels (DfT Grant and developer contributions) only.
- Remove the core-funded element of the Highways Structural Maintenance Programme and provide at DfT grant levels only.
- Remove the core-funded element of the Broadband programme, with the remaining committed programme requirement to be funded from gainshare funding held.
- Remove Economic Intervention Fund (Grants), Stalled Sites and Upgrading Empty Properties programmes.
- Remove future years allocation of the Newhaven Port Access Road project, to reflect anticipated project underspends and absorb future costs within other existing funded programmes.
- Remove Queensway Depot Programme.
- Remove the Climate Emergency Works programme, subject to review of alternative funding proposals*

Maintain the following core-funded programmes:

- Capital Corporate Building Improvement programme to ensure essential health and safety works are maintained and to support pressure on the Council's revenue reactive maintenance budget.
- Special Educational Need Provision at Grove Park as this was approved on an invest to save business case basis. Options to maximise external funding from developer contributions will be explored.
- Children's Services Essential System as this was subject to an approved business case.
- Bridge / Structure Maintenance and Street Lighting Replacement programmes as these are critical to maintaining public safety.
- Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridges programme as this provides essential health and safety works to ensure public safety in line with statutory duty, although seek to maximise funding from alternative sources (e.g. developer contributions) where possible.
- Libraries Basic Need programme as this is essential to maintain libraries in a safe condition.
- Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment programme as this is required to ensure that the council continues to offer sites and amenity block facilities that are safe and meet the basic needs of our Gypsy and Traveller community.
- Various projects funded by Local Enterprise Partnership Option 4 grant, as removal would result in the need to repay grant values; although seek to maximise funding from alternative sources (e.g. in-year grant underspends) where possible.

*Proposals for reduced investment include removing climate emergency works from the capital programme, together with associated revenue spend. This would have an impact on meeting the corporate climate emergency targets. Corporate climate change work that could continue as part of business as usual includes:

- Producing the local nature recovery strategy for East Sussex and working with partners to deliver biodiversity net gain.
- Climate change adaptation through flood risk management on relevant highway schemes.
- Work to align relevant Council decisions with the organisation's climate change ambition where possible and appropriate.
- Carbon reduction that will be achieved through the Property planned maintenance programme, to ensure replacement of heating systems, window replacement, insulation and roof replacement are focused on energy reduction and carbon emissions.
- Training for site managers and controllers of premises on energy efficiency.
- Awareness-raising and engagement with staff and Members.
- Staff travel offers that promote cycling, as well as the use of public transport and electric vehicles.
- Bidding for external funding.
- Lobbying government for long-term and sustainable levels of funding.
- Monitoring and reporting annually on progress.

3 Capital Programme Funding Update

3.1 Table 3 below provides an updated capital programme funding position to reflect the capital programme updates and their associated funding assumptions outlined above and other more specific updates.

Table 3 – Capital Programme Funding Update	Ref:	Current Year 2024/25 £'000	MTFP Period			2028/29 to 2034/35 £'000	Total £'000
			2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000		
Gross Expenditure		84.955	88.406	46.161	48.897	401.620	670.039
Specific Funding	E	(30.575)	(36.075)	(3.796)	(1.150)	-	(71.596)
Specific Developer Contributions	F	(3.613)	(2.022)	(2.179)	(2.512)	(0.100)	(10.426)
Net Expenditure		50.767	50.309	40.186	45.235	401.520	588.017
Formula Grants	G	(25.772)	(27.130)	(26.930)	(28.520)	(191.577)	(299.929)
Capital Receipts	H	(4.802)	(3.950)	(4.075)	(4.795)	-	(17.622)
Reserves & Revenue Set Aside	I	(11.391)	(0.440)	(0.385)	(0.452)	(6.383)	(19.051)
Capital Reserve	J	(1.558)	(2.589)	-	(3.836)	(5.884)	(13.867)
Developer Contribution Target	-	-	-	-	-	(17.601)	(17.601)
Capital Programme Borrowing	K	7.244	16.200	8.796	7.632	180.075	219.947

E Specific Funding

The approved programme is supported by £71.6m of scheme specific grants and external funding which is sourced and managed by services at a project level, in the main comprising of DfT grants for Bus Service Improvement Plan, social care capital grants towards supported living improvements; Youth Investment Fund grant towards youth centre improvements; Levelling Up Fund grant towards Exceat Bridge replacement; and Devolved Formula Capital grant toward schools delegated capital works.

F Developer Contributions

Developer contributions is a collective term used to refer to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 106 planning obligations, being funding secured in support of the provision of infrastructure and to mitigate the impact of development, largely in respect of school places provision, transport and rights of way improvements, and libraries provision. The Council seeks to maximise the use of Developer Contributions to fund basic need requirements and unfunded infrastructure schemes (via net nil variation). For future planning purposes, capital programme includes a reasonable funding target for future years. An assessment of the current developer

contribution position has identified £0.983m of S106 to be added to the capital programme to fund basic need programmes and reduce the future years funding target.

G Formula Grants Update

The capital programme is supported by £299.9m of non-specific government formula grant towards capital expenditure. Formula grant assumptions reflect best estimates but noting that there continues to be risk in relation to these grants as values for future years are still yet to be announced. The level of assumed formula grants will continue to be reviewed to ensure that they represent prudent estimates and updated once the detailed implications of any announcements are known, noting that changes in funding formula could change the level of grants anticipated and impact on the level of borrowing. In accordance with Capital Strategy principles, formula grants are used to fund the approved Basic Need capital programme and reduce the Council's need to borrow.

H Capital Receipts

Property Services hold a schedule of capital receipts available to support the capital programme, which is reviewed regularly with estimates being based on Property Officers' professional judgment on a site by site basis. In accordance with Capital Strategy principles, the profile of capital receipt funding has been updated to prioritise funding towards assets with the shortest useful life, such as IT equipment, to reduce the requirement to borrow for assets that attract a greater annual Minimum Revenue Provision cost on the revenue budget.

I Reserves and Revenue Set Aside

The Council can use revenue resources to fund capital projects, where these have been approved as part of the budget setting process, an approved business case or approved variation. This includes specific reserves, payback from invest to save schemes and revenue contributions. The revised profile of reserve and revenue funding of the capital programme reflects the wider review of Council reserves to ensure usages provides best value.

J Capital Programme Reserve

The Council also holds a Capital Programme Reserve to support the capital programme to reduce the need to borrow, that has a consequential increase in pressure on revenue budgets. In accordance with Capital Strategy principles, the profile of capital reserve funding has been updated to prioritise funding towards assets with the shortest useful life, such as IT equipment, to reduce the requirement to borrow for assets that attract a greater annual Minimum Revenue Provision cost on the revenue budget.

K Capital Programme Borrowing

The updated capital programme has a total borrowing requirement of £219.9m, of which £39.9m is anticipated over the period to 2027/28. This presents a decrease in required borrowing of £39.1m over the period to 2027/28 compared to that reported in the State of the County 2024 due to the updates presented in this report, largely being the impact of the capital programme risk review, capital programme reprofiles and their impact on the slippage risk factor.

4 Impact on the Revenue Medium Term Financial Plan and Treasury Management Capacity

- 4.1 Decisions on future capital investment should be considered in the context of the impact on the Treasury Management (TM) capacity to fund the investment and the revenue budget position, whereby the cost of funding and Minimum Revenue Provision needs to be included within the MTFP. The proposed capital programme has been prepared to seek reductions in the Council's borrowing requirement to support the revenue budget position, whilst considering the level of risk associated to removing/reducing investment.

4.2 Current TM modelling for the direct costs of borrowing estimates that **for every £10m of additional borrowing, there would be an associated revenue cost of approximately £750,000 per year over the full life of the asset** (based on a 30 year asset life), although the value and profile of costs will vary dependent on a number of variables such as timing, internal balances and interest rates. As highlighted at budget setting in February 2024 the current planned programme borrowing requirement will need Treasury Management budget increases outside the current MTFP period.

4.3 The revised capital programme, including the impact of the capital programme risk review, would reduce the level of borrowing to £39.9m up to 2027/28, which is estimated to have a positive MTFP impact for cost of borrowing of £3.9m as detailed in Table 4 below. Treasury Management modelling takes a holistic approach considering a number of variable factors including availability of cash balances and interest rates impacting borrowing costs and return on investments. Therefore any updates to the MTFP will consider the overall impact on the TM budget.

Table 4 – Cost of Borrowing Impact on the MTFP	MTFP Period			Total £'000
	2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'000	
Normal Capital Strategy Updates	-	-	-	0.000
Capital Programme Risk Review	(0.800)	(2.000)	(1.100)	(3.900)
Total Impact on the MTFP	(0.800)	(2.000)	(1.100)	(3.900)

5 Risk Provision Update

5.1 A £7.5m ongoing risk provision was approved in February 2024 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. Its utilisation, if approved by CSAB would, therefore, require additional borrowing and be reported through the RPPR process and quarterly monitoring in the normal way.

5.2 There are several risks and uncertainties regarding the programme to 2027/28 and beyond which have necessitated holding a risk provision. These risks previously reported include:

- 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 developer contribution targets.

5.3 There may be increased risks following the proposed recommendations throughout this report, particularly relating to reductions in the capital programme. Potential risks include reputational, impact of service delivery and revenue budgetary implications. All recommendations have been made based on an assessment of risk against the level of borrowing reductions in an environment of significant revenue pressure. The level of risk associated to the capital programme and required risk provision will continue to be monitored as part of the ongoing RPPR process.

6 Capital Strategy

6.1 The CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) Prudential Code was includes the requirement for Local Authorities to produce a Capital Strategy. The Council's current Capital Strategy covers the period 2024/25 to 2044/45 and was approved as part of

RPPR 2023/24. The Capital Strategy has been reviewed to ensure it continues to reflect emerging risks, principles and corporate priorities, and informed by decisions made as part of the RPPR process.

Annex A – Detailed Capital Programme

Detailed Capital Programme (Gross Expenditure)	Current Year 2024/25 £'000	MTFP Period			2028/29 to 2034/35 £'000	Total £'000
		2025/26 £'000	2026/27 £'000	2027/28 £'0000		
Adult Social Care						
Adults House Adaptations	0.050	-	-	-	-	0.050
Learning Disability Support Living Scheme	3.700	1.256	0.081	-	-	5.037
Greenacres	0.070	0.070	-	-	-	0.140
Adult Social Care Total	3.820	1.326	0.081	-	-	5.227
Business Services						
SALIX Contract	0.350	-	-	-	-	0.350
Lansdowne Secure Unit	0.039	-	-	-	-	0.039
Youth Investment Fund	7.003	-	-	-	-	7.003
Hollington Youth Centre	0.663	2.710	0.039	-	-	3.412
Disability Children's Home	0.024	-	-	-	-	0.024
Westfield Land	0.017	-	-	-	-	0.017
Special Educational Needs Provision	0.525	0.500	0.500	0.500	-	2.025
Special Educational Needs Provision Grove Park	1.300	11.000	3.390	1.430	-	17.120
Schools Basic Need Provision	0.518	0.400	0.512	5.941	54.668	62.039
Capital Building Improvement (Schools)	5.781	4.589	4.389	4.389	30.723	49.871
Capital Building Improvement (Corporate)	4.401	4.000	4.000	4.000	28.000	44.401
IT&Digital Strategy Implementation	6.399	6.409	4.075	8.631	45.720	71.234
IT & Digital Strategy Implementation – Oracle Implementation	9.634	-	-	-	-	9.634
IT&D – Utilising Automation	0.024	-	-	-	-	0.024
Business Services Total	36.678	29.608	16.905	24.891	159.111	267.193
Children's Services						
Children's House Adaptations	0.050	-	-	-	-	0.050
Schools Delegated Capital	1.150	1.150	1.150	1.150	-	4.600
Children's Services Essential System Developments	0.839	0.885	0.958	0.774	-	3.456
Children's Services Total	2.039	2.035	2.108	1.924	-	8.106
Communities, Economy and Transport						
Broadband	0.065	1.945	-	-	-	2.010
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road Complementary Measures	0.241	-	-	-	-	0.241
Economic Intervention Fund – Grants	-	-	-	-	-	0.000
Economic Intervention Fund – Loans	-	0.300	0.300	0.300	0.797	1.697
Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	-	-	-	-	-	0.000

Growing Places Fund Loan Scheme	-	-	-	-	4.958	4.958
Community Match Fund	0.379	0.066	-	-	-	0.445
Community Road Safety Interventions	0.547	-	-	-	-	0.547
Newhaven Port Access Road	0.135	-	-	-	-	0.135
Real Time Passenger Information	0.180	0.131	-	-	-	0.311
Passenger Services Software	0.005	-	-	-	-	0.005
Bus Service Improvement Plan - Bus Prioritisation	6.933	11.380	-	-	-	18.313
Bus Service Improvement Plan - Passenger Transport	1.251	-	-	-	-	1.251
Queensway Depot Development	0.120	-	-	-	-	0.120
The Keep	0.172	0.040	0.085	0.152	0.628	1.077
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	2.957	4.595	4.818	3.523	20.587	36.480
A22 Corridor Package	0.100	-	-	-	-	0.100
Excerpt Bridge Replacement	5.340	0.880	-	-	-	6.220
Schools Streets	0.150	-	-	-	-	0.150
Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	0.316	-	-	-	-	0.316
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	0.706	8.624	-	-	-	9.330
Libraries Basic Need	0.773	0.550	0.467	0.449	0.898	3.137
Highways Structural Maintenance	24.704	19.100	19.100	19.101	133.707	215.712
Bridge Assessment and Strengthening	7.945	2.901	2.901	1.830	14.447	30.024
Street Lighting Replacement Programme	3.835	3.988	3.429	1.041	8.790	21.083
Rights of Way Programme	0.588	0.643	0.662	0.702	5.780	8.375
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.070	0.490	0.770
Visibly Better Roads	0.504	-	-	-	-	0.504
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	0.400	2.298	1.843	-	-	4.541
Flood & Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	0.758	0.989	0.683	-	-	2.430
Flood Management and SuDS in Schools	0.218	-	-	-	-	0.218
Climate Emergency Works	3.336	-	-	-	-	3.336
Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2a	2.079	1.746	-	-	-	3.825
Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2b	0.022	5.050	-	-	-	5.072
Eastbourne / South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	0.990	1.328	-	-	-	2.318
Hailsham / Polegate / Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	0.134	-	-	-	-	0.134
Hastings / Bexhill Movement and Access Package	0.746	3.582	-	-	-	4.328
Communities, Economy and Transport Total	66.699	70.206	34.358	27.168	191.082	389.513
Capital Programme Total	109.236	103.175	53.452	53.983	350.193	670.039

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 13 November 2024

By: Director of Children’s Services

Title: Inspection of youth justice services in East Sussex

Purpose: To provide an update on the inspection outcome and next steps

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1) Welcome the findings of the inspection of the work of youth justice services in East Sussex published on 17 September 2024 attached at appendix 1 of the report; and
- 2) Note the action plan at appendix 2 of the report which has been developed to address the areas for improvement

1 Background

1.1 HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) undertook an inspection of our youth justice services (YJS) 10 – 14 June 2024. The inspection covers three broad areas:

- the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service
- the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts
- the quality of out-of-court disposal work

2 Supporting information

2.1 A copy of the report, published on 17 September, is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 The overall rating for East Sussex YJS is Good. The quality of resettlement policy and provision is rated separately and was rated as Requires improvement. The judgements for each area of the inspection are set out below. Five of the thirteen areas are Outstanding and four are Good.

Judgement	Rating
Overall Rating	Good (25/36)
1. Organisational Delivery	
Governance and leadership	Good
Staff	Good
Partnerships and services	Outstanding
Information and facilities	Outstanding
2. Court disposals	
Assessment	Good
Planning	Inadequate
Implementation and delivery	Outstanding

Judgement	Rating
Reviewing	Outstanding
3. Out-of-court disposals	
Assessment	Requires improvement
Planning	Requires improvement
Implementation and delivery	Outstanding
Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Good
4. Resettlement	
Resettlement policy and provision	Requires improvement

2.3 During the inspection week the inspectors reviewed 37 cases. They met with staff, partners, children and young people and parents and carers. The report notes 'Partners engage well at board meetings and are excellent ambassadors for YJS children' and praises the staff, 'Staff are highly committed to delivering positive outcomes for children'.

2.4 The report highlights key areas of strength including:

- Partnership working that provides tangible, individualised services for children with different lived experiences is a notable strength.
- Activity to tackle disproportionality is clear at both a strategic and operational level, and action plans are leading to better outcomes for children with complex needs.
- Leaders and partners have worked positively to build a clear vision and carve out a road map to help children live their best lives and thrive. The Chief Officers Group (COG) management board is led well by a dedicated chair.
- Partners take their responsibilities seriously and work collectively to overcome any structural barriers experienced by children.
- The integration of the voices of children and their parents and carers into service development is impressive and has led to service improvements.
- YJS staff are highly motivated and focused on helping each child to thrive.
- They are led well by an experienced, passionate and forward-thinking strategic lead for specialist adolescent services.
- Senior leaders, managers, stakeholders and operational staff across the partnership seek feedback from children and their parents and carers, and actively use it to improve service delivery.
- The partnership has access to a wide range of reports and management information about the profile of children. This is helping the service to direct its resources towards identified need.

2.5 The report includes three areas that require improvement and one that is inadequate. The report makes four recommendation three for the YJS and one for East Sussex Police.

The East Sussex Youth Justice Service should:

1. improve the quality of assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others
2. ensure that management oversight is consistently effective in reviewing Asset Plus activity, so that practitioners are clear about what they need to improve
3. ensure that all children have robust contingency plans in place that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

The East Sussex Police should:

4. review the police YJS referral form so that it pays more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.

2.6 An improvement plan has been developed to address the areas for improvement. This has been shared with HMIP. The improvement plan is attached at appendix 2.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 East Sussex has maintained a focus on the key priority outcome of keeping vulnerable people safe. As set out in the report 'the YJS partnership can rightly be satisfied with many aspects of its work and celebrate the effective way that it carries this out.' We will work with the partnership to address the recommendations and deliver the best outcomes for the children and young people.

3.2 Cabinet is asked to note the contents of the inspection report and note the inspection improvement plan which has been developed to address the areas for improvement.

Carolyn Fair

Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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HM Inspectorate
of Probation

An inspection of youth justice services in

East Sussex

HM Inspectorate of Probation, September 2024

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Acknowledgements

This inspection was led by HM Inspector Avtar Singh, supported by a team of inspectors and colleagues from across the Inspectorate. We would like to thank all those who helped plan and took part in the inspection; without their help and cooperation, the inspection would not have been possible.

The role of HM Inspectorate of Probation

HM Inspectorate of Probation is the independent inspector of youth justice and probation services in England and Wales. We report on the effectiveness of probation and youth justice service work with adults and children.

We inspect these services and publish inspection reports. We highlight good and poor practice and use our data and information to encourage high-quality services. We are independent of government and speak independently.

Please note that throughout the report the names in the practice examples have been changed to protect the individual's identity.

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Published by:

HM Inspectorate of Probation
1st Floor Civil Justice Centre
1 Bridge Street West
Manchester
M3 3FX

Follow us on Twitter
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ISBN: 978-1-916621-53-4

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Foreword

This inspection is part of our programme of youth justice service (YJS) inspections. We have inspected and rated East Sussex YJS across three broad areas: the arrangements for organisational delivery of the service, the quality of work done with children sentenced by the courts, and the quality of out-of-court disposal work.

Overall, East Sussex YJS was rated as 'Good'. We also inspected the quality of resettlement policy and provision, which was separately rated as 'Requires improvement'.

Partnership working that provides tangible, individualised services for children with different lived experiences is a notable strength. Activity to tackle disproportionality is clear at both a strategic and operational level, and action plans are leading to better outcomes for children with complex needs. For example, the new 'girl code' is an effective approach to working with girls, and there are good arrangements to support children who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans or exploring their sexual orientation. The Seeds of Hope project is an exciting innovation that is intended to be inclusive and available to all children.

Leaders and partners have worked positively to build a clear vision and carve out a road map to help children live their best lives and thrive. The Chief Officers Group (COG) management board is led well by a dedicated chair, who provides robust leadership, drills into detail, has a sharp mind, and is progressive in her thinking. There are effective relationships in place, leading to positive outcomes for children. Partners take their responsibilities seriously and work collectively to overcome any structural barriers experienced by children.

YJS staff are highly motivated and focused on helping each child to thrive. They are led well by an experienced, passionate and forward-thinking strategic lead for specialist adolescent services. Senior leaders, managers, stakeholders and operational staff across the partnership seek feedback from children and their parents and carers, and actively use it to improve service delivery. The partnership has access to a wide range of reports and management information about the profile of children, covering first-time entrants, the use of out-of-court disposals and understanding children's reoffending. This is helping the service to direct its resources towards identified need.

However, the quality of work specifically linked to planning for children's safety and wellbeing and the potential to cause harm to others is variable. This needs to improve. Our inspection found that, across court and out-of-court work, not all staff consistently understood and followed the systems and processes to keep children safe and prevent them from causing harm to others. Furthermore, better contingency planning and more effective management oversight are needed.

The YJS partnership can rightly be satisfied with many aspects of its work and celebrate the effective way that it carries this out. However, it must also ensure that its work to protect children and others is consistent.

















Martin Jones CBE
HM Chief Inspector of Probation

Ratings

East Sussex Youth Justice Service
Fieldwork started June 2024

Score 25/36

Overall rating	Good	
1. Organisational delivery		
1.1 Governance and leadership	Good	
1.2 Staff	Good	
1.3 Partnerships and services	Outstanding	
1.4 Information and facilities	Outstanding	
2. Court disposals		
2.1 Assessment	Good	
2.2 Planning	Inadequate	
2.3 Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
2.4 Reviewing	Outstanding	
3. Out-of-court disposals		
3.1 Assessment	Requires improvement	
3.2 Planning	Requires improvement	
3.3 Implementation and delivery	Outstanding	
3.4 Out-of-court disposal policy and provision	Good	
4. Resettlement¹		
4.1 Resettlement policy and provision	Requires improvement	

¹ The rating for resettlement does not influence the overall YJS rating.

Recommendations

As a result of our inspection findings, we have made four recommendations that we believe, if implemented, will have a positive impact on the quality of youth justice services in East Sussex. This will improve the lives of the children in contact with youth justice services, and better protect the public.

The East Sussex Youth Justice Service should:

1. improve the quality of assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others
2. ensure that management oversight is consistently effective in reviewing Asset Plus activity, so that practitioners are clear about what they need to improve
3. ensure that all children have robust contingency plans in place that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.

The East Sussex Police should:

4. review the police YJS referral form so that it pays more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.

Background

We conducted fieldwork in East Sussex YJS over a period of a week, beginning on 10 June 2024. We inspected cases where the sentence or licence began between Monday 12 June 2023 and Friday 05 April 2024; out-of-court disposals that were delivered between Monday 12 June 2023 and Friday 05 April 2024 and resettlement cases that were sentenced or released between Monday 12 June 2023 and Friday 05 April 2024. We also conducted 37 interviews with case managers/managers.

East Sussex is a county of contrasts: coastal and rural; large towns and small villages; natural beauty and significant deprivation. When compared to other parts of the south-east it is defined by its differences. Most of the population lives along the coastal strip, particularly the seaside towns of Hastings and Eastbourne, and in the market towns inland, with the rest of the county comprising relatively sparsely populated countryside. Pockets of significant deprivation affect demand for services. For example, geographically isolated Hastings is in the top 10 per cent most deprived local authority areas nationally. There are almost 112,000 children and young people aged 0 to 19 years in the county, and over 68,000 children in school. Of these, 18.6 per cent are in low-income families, compared with 16.2 of the county's statistical neighbours. Children from a minority ethnic background make up 15.4 per cent of the school population compared with 36 per cent in England (January 2023). Girls make up 21 per cent of the current caseload in the YJS, 11.5 per cent of children are from a minority ethnic background, 67 per cent have an assessed substance misuse need, and 37 per cent have emotional wellbeing needs.

The YJS is part of East Sussex County Council's children's services department, within the portfolio of the assistant director for early help and social care (under the head of specialist services). The post of strategic lead for specialist adolescent services was created in 2019 to support the integration of youth justice within service structures that can respond effectively to adolescent risk and behaviour. The strategic lead for specialist adolescent services also has the operational lead for child exploitation and manages a county-wide child exploitation team.

YJS practice follows the East Sussex 'Connected Practice' model, which prioritises the development of a trusting relationship between the worker and the child. The service is organised into three teams: two locality-based teams (east and west) and a county-wide prevention and diversion team. Case managers hold generic caseloads, including court, out of court, and resettlement cases. In the past 18 months data shows that the overall rate of reoffending has reduced among the cohort of children that East Sussex YJS has worked with. This ranges from 19 per cent at pre-court level through to 26 per cent for first tier referral orders. The Youth Justice Board measure of reoffending among the statutory cohort shows that the binary reoffending rate for the most recent cohort has fallen to 32.4 per cent. The YJS has developed effective, strengths-based interventions to support their needs.²

² All statistical information in this section has been provided by East Sussex YJS.

Domain one: Organisational delivery

To inspect organisational delivery, we reviewed written evidence submitted in advance by the YJS and conducted 12 meetings, including with staff, volunteers, managers, board members, and partnership staff and their managers.

Key findings about organisational delivery were as follows.

1.1. Governance and leadership



The governance and leadership of the YJS supports and promotes the delivery of a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- The COG board has set the YJS's direction and strategy through meaningful engagement with the service and its partners and stakeholders. This has been articulated well in the YJS strategic plan (2023/2024).
- The YJS focuses explicitly on diversity and addressing disproportionate outcomes for children; for example, it has a comprehensive disproportionality and diversity action plan.
- The board includes partners at the appropriate level of seniority. Partners engage well at board meetings and are excellent ambassadors for YJS children. The board is led well by a passionate chair who holds members to account. Her leadership is robust: she drills into detail, has a sharp mind, and is progressive in her thinking, approachable and committed to supporting vulnerable children to live their best lives.
- The chair sends a 'key messages' communication to all staff at the end of each meeting. This keeps the partnership updated with critical current and emerging issues.
- Effective induction arrangements for board members ensure that partners understand their roles and responsibilities.
- The Collaboration Against Child Exploitation (CACE) group gives parents a voice. It brings them together with other parents to share their experiences, helping them to feel valued and less alone.
- The integration of the voices of children and their parents and carers into service development is impressive and has led to service improvements.
- Partnership arrangements support the delivery of effective work with children.
- Local strategic partnerships (community safety, reducing reoffending, serious youth violence) understand the needs of YJS children and direct resources appropriately to meet their needs. For example, they have secured additional resources to support substance misuse needs and health outcomes.
- The strategic lead for specialist adolescent services is well respected by the COG board and produces regular reports to help members understand the operational

performance and needs of the YJS. The operating model (Connected Practice) is understood and applied well across the partnership.

- There is an effective link and effective dialogue between the YJS leadership team and the COG board. This contributes to a 'support and challenge' organisational culture. The YJS leadership team promotes openness, constructive challenge and innovation.
- Business risks are understood well by leaders and there are appropriate controls in place to mitigate risk.

Areas for improvement:

- Not all YJS staff are fully aware of the board's work.
- The board could be more ethnically diverse.
- Board members need to be more forensically focussed on their assurance of the quality of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work.
- The continued professional development of new managers needs to be enhanced so that their oversight of practice is more consistent.
- Attendance from some board members, such as the police, health and the Police and Crime Commissioner, has been inconsistent.

1.2. Staff



Staff within the YJS are empowered to deliver a high-quality, personalised and responsive service for all children.

Good

Strengths:

- Staffing resources are used well, planned and suitably reviewed to respond to the changing demands and profile of the children being supervised by the YJS.
- The workloads of practitioners, business administrators and managers are reasonable, and managers take appropriate care to ensure that staff are not overstretched.
- Staff are sent an inspiring and motivational Friday email by a YJS manager. Staff in the partnership appreciate this.
- There is an effective strategy that ensures the quality of work is not compromised during planned and unplanned absences.
- Cases are suitably allocated to youth justice workers with suitable skills and qualifications. Co-working of cases offers additional accountability, learning and development.
- Staff receive regular supervision and speak positively about the quality of their pastoral and professional support.
- Staff are assisted well in their professional development and progression into other roles. Notably, the volunteer strategy includes the development and progression of volunteers.
- The training offer is comprehensive.
- All staff have access to in-service learning opportunities. In the past 12 months, staff have completed training in harmful sexual behaviour and AIM3; trauma-informed practice and case formulation; attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in custody; child to parent violence and abuse; depression and self-harm; county lines; domestic abuse; gangs; allyship and race equality; anti-racism practice; Black history; safeguarding; substance misuse and safety wellbeing/risk management.
- The partnership collectively promotes and embraces a culture of learning and continuous improvement.
- Employment opportunities are advertised fairly.
- Staff are highly committed to delivering positive outcomes for children.
- Attention to staff safety and wellbeing is robust. This builds staff resilience.

Areas for improvement:

- Management oversight is not consistent across all areas of casework, particularly in relation to planning around safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.
- Learning, development and training are not yet leading to effective and consistent casework to address safety and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.

1.3. Partnerships and services



A comprehensive range of high-quality services is in place, enabling personalised and responsive provision for all children.

Outstanding

Strengths:

- There is up-to-date scrutiny of children's desistance needs. The analysis considers safety and wellbeing and risk of harm factors, as well as diversity needs. This is informed by management information extracted from Asset Plus, audits, thematic reviews and quality assurance processes.
- There are well-established, embedded and effective links and relationships with a range of statutory partners, providers and agencies that provide desistance, safeguarding and public protection interventions.
- The YJS provides impressive access to mainstream and specialist services that help children to desist from offending and keep them and others safe. These include interventions by the SWIFT specialist family service, the Safeguarding Adolescents from Exploitation and Risk (SAFER) process, the substance misuse service, consultations with psychologists, consultant child psychiatry, Forensic Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (FCAMHS), I-ROC (emotional wellbeing), the liaison and diversion service, the sexual health team, the connected families team, the Brightpath project, the youth employability service, the child discovery exploitation team, CACE, REBOOT (the referral route through Sussex Police to the YJS prevention and diversion team), youth work/clubs, mentoring, and Aspens (autism support). Of particular note is the habitual knife carrier programme, links with Allsorts (support for LGBT+ children and their families) and the innovative Seeds of Hope project.
- The YJS has effective connections with local sentencers, and this ensures that courts are aware of the services available to support sentencing.
- All partners take a child-first, trauma-informed approach to service delivery. They have a strong commitment to helping children transition from a pro-offending to a pro-social identity.
- Education workers are proactive in supporting children's education, training and employment (ETE) needs, both before and after children turn 16 years old.
- The YJS has recently secured a speech and language therapist resource as a result of the partnership's persistence. Before this, the alternative provision available was strong and children were receiving the appropriate level of support.
- The quality of delivery and implementation of all aspects of casework was sufficient in a large majority of inspected cases.

1.4. Information and facilities



Timely and relevant information is available and appropriate facilities are in place to support a high-quality, personalised and responsive approach for all children.

Outstanding

Strengths:

- The YJS has a collection of policies, procedures and guidance in place that enable staff to carry out their responsibilities. All staff who responded to the HMI Probation staff survey (18/18) reported that they understood 'quite well, or very well' the policies and procedures that applied to their roles.
- Policies are regularly reviewed operationally, and changes communicated well within the partnership. Action planning to address disproportionality is robust, with clear milestones for measuring success.
- Learning is facilitated through self-evaluation, scrutiny by independent organisations and applying the findings from reviews. This leads to innovation (such as the Seeds of Hope project) and changes in practice.
- Information-sharing, service level agreements, memoranda of understanding and governance arrangements are robust.
- Services for children are provided in welcoming, safe and accessible places.
- ICT access works well, enabling staff to carry out planning, service delivery and reviewing. Staff can work effectively both from the office and remotely.
- There are a range of quality-assurance processes, which include random and scheduled auditing, deep dives and thematic activity.
- There are effective processes in place to ensure that the YJS learns from things that go wrong. These include critical learning reviews and audits. Learning is disseminated well across the partnership.
- Views of children and their parent/carers are sought formally, at key stages of the supervisory process, on completion of interventions and at the COG board. The participation strategy is a robust document.

Areas for improvement:

- Despite a clear audit framework, quality assurance of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work needs to be more consistent across some aspects of casework.

Involvement of children and their parents or carers

East Sussex YJS has an effective approach to participation, which it uses to collect the views of children and their parents or carers. This is articulated well in its 2024 participation strategy. There is evidence that it listens to children and parents/carers at various stages of the supervisory process and makes changes in response to feedback. The YJS and its partners are keen to help children develop confidence in contributing to improvements. For example, it displays their feedback in offices. The YJS has improved engagement by holding listening events, getting direct feedback about the quality of services received, and taking opportunities to adjust resources to make them more child friendly. This has produced an environment that champions the voices of children and their parents or carers.

The YJS contacted, on our behalf, children who had open cases at the time of the inspection, to gain their consent for a text survey. We delivered the survey independently to the 23 children who consented, and 11 replied. We also spoke to six children and held a focus group with a group of parents and carers (CACE). Almost respondents to our text survey gave the YJS's work a score of nine or 10 out of 10. One child wrote:

“My worker helped me with my school, my friends, my family. They were nice, down to earth and just fantastic. Really kind, helped me with everything and made me stop carrying knives – now I don't carry a knife when I go out”.

In our telephone and face-to-face interviews, six out of the six children who responded reported that they understood what the YJS is trying to achieve. When asked if they thought the staff had the right skills, all six responded 'yes'. One child said of her YJS officer:

Comments from parent and carers included:

“They go the extra mile to help introduce extra agencies and people who can join and add something to our struggle.”

“Brilliant support from the service.”

“My son is a much better person since working with them.”

When asked 'what do you most like about the YJS', one child replied:

“Having someone to talk to that isn't family or a partner.”

Some of the other feedback from children included:

“We would normally go out in the car and go for a walk. This was helpful because I don't really like people and I get distracted easily. I felt safe during contacts with my worker.”

“They (YJS) have given me a laptop, but I must keep it here. I have also been given two phones previously. I have meetings every weekday and I am given a timetable. They mix up what I am doing so it does not get boring.”

“They (YJS) have helped me access school, no one else was able to help me with this. I have been going to an online school.”

Diversity

- The COG takes a deliberate approach to meeting the diverse needs of YJS children and leads from the front. There is a strong partnership responsibility focusing on disproportionality and services delivered. The YJS cross-references youth justice disproportionality issues with other relevant outcomes for children, such as school exclusion, experience of exploitation and the lived experience of discrimination and its impact on children's identity. Disproportionality is covered extensively in the Youth Justice Plan and Service Development Plan 2023-2024. This is supported by a Disproportionality Strategy to strengthen the YJS's drive to improve services for children from different lived and cultural backgrounds. The YJS is represented strategically and operationally within the East Sussex County Council equality and diversity forums and has played an active role in a race equality pilot. The practice manager who leads on diversity attends the wider council race equality staff group. The diversity working group also highlights and shares resources aimed at challenging discrimination. These can be either external, for example 'Show Racism the Red Card', or internal council procedures, such as support for staff who experience racism when working with families.
- Services are personalised and this was evidenced in the casework that inspectors reviewed. Inspectors found some excellent examples of where children's learning needs (such as ADHD, autism spectrum disorder and neurodiversity) had been managed sensitively and effectively. Notably, the work with children who had a dual diagnosis was impressive. Staff are confident in having conversations with children about their lived experiences. Their understanding, awareness and confidence in dealing with diversity issues is noteworthy. Where possible, practitioners are encouraged to offer children from minority ethnic backgrounds the opportunity to speak with a member of staff from a minority ethnic background if the child feels that they would be more comfortable talking about their experiences of discrimination with someone who has had similar experiences. Not only is the YJS committed to addressing diversity and disproportionate outcomes for children, but there is also evidence that it tackles structural barriers. Children can access a range of mentors and LGBT+ children can get support through the Allsorts youth project. Staff who identify a diversity need have their needs met well. For staff who need reasonable adjustments (such as adapted furniture or software on laptops), these are provided in a timely way.
- Inspectors found several examples where there were effective arrangements to support children with their personal circumstances and diversity needs. In December 2022, the YJS produced a service user feedback report that focused on the experience of children from minority ethnic backgrounds in the YJS and the wider criminal justice system. The information gathered helped the service to identify areas of good practice and areas for improvement. The YJS is currently piloting a programme to help improve its relationships with children and parents from minority ethnic backgrounds. The Coffee with a Copper project is a joint venture between the YJS and Sussex police and will focus on encouraging and facilitating informal conversations between minority ethnic children and police officers.
- Management information is strong and attention to broader protected characteristics is developing well.

Domain two: Court disposals

We took a detailed look at 13 community sentences managed by the YJS.

2.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Good

Our rating³ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Does assessment sufficiently analyse:	% 'Yes'
how to support the child's desistance?	62%
how to keep the child safe?	77%
how to keep other people safe?	69%

Overall, assessment work to support children to not reoffend requires further development. Practitioners did not consistently explore in detail all the reasons contributing to a child's offending. They did not take enough account of historical and current information. Youth justice practitioners understood diversity needs well. We found that they had generally made good use of information held by partner agencies in their assessments. Additionally, they sought to understand the child's level of maturity and level of motivation in most of the inspected cases. Assessment mostly focused on the child's strengths. In most cases, practitioners considered the needs of victims, where they had identified these, at the start of the assessment process. They also consistently welcomed and included the voices of children and their parents and carers. This informed their understanding of the causes of the child's offending behaviour.

Practitioners sought to identify any risks to the child's safety and wellbeing in most cases. They appropriately gathered and included relevant information from other agencies and largely used it well to better understand the risks to the child's safety.

Assessments to identify all relevant factors linked to keeping other people safe were variable. We found that practitioners had not effectively identified all the individuals who were potentially at risk from the child, as well as the nature of that risk, in all cases where this was relevant. Information held by other agencies about children's previous and current behaviours was mostly used well. This included information on previous use of violence in the home, carrying weapons, broader anti-social behaviours, police arrests, lifestyle, gang affiliation and peer associations. Practitioners needed to pay more attention to the impact of potential controls and interventions to mitigate risk of harm to others.

³ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

2.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, holistic and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Inadequate

Our rating⁴ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Does planning focus sufficiently on:	% 'Yes'
supporting the child's desistance?	92%
keeping the child safe?	46%
keeping other people safe?	46%

Planning to address desistance was individualised and completed jointly with children. In every case, planning was proportionate to the disposal and targets agreed were achievable within the timeframes in almost every case. Plans were aligned with those completed by other agencies to prevent repetition and help the child and their family to understand the roles of each service. There was a suitable balance of attention to both strengths and areas of concern, and practitioners explored the child's motivation and maturity well. In some cases, practitioners had helped the child to access mainstream services, such as working with the Allsorts youth project (mentoring), joining a gym and accessing local youth provision in the community. Planning to meet the child's diversity needs could have been stronger in some cases. Planning activity consistently took the child's views into account, and those of their parents/carers. This supported effective engagement.

Planning to address children's safety and wellbeing needs to improve. Where required, it was not always evident that practitioners had liaised well with other agencies. There was insufficient evidence that roles of different professionals were consistently coordinated in planning activity and some planning lacked specificity and cohesion in how a child's safety and wellbeing would be supported, by whom, and when. Inspectors found that practitioners' analysis of the child's lived experiences, as well as ETE and health needs, including any history of emotional wellbeing, was mostly completed well. However, contingency planning was inconsistent.

Planning to keep other people safe was variable and requires further attention. Practitioners' understanding of the specific concerns of actual victims and needs of potential victims was weak. In too many of the inspected cases, practitioners did not seek information from public protection partners. Additionally, where relevant, planning did not set out the necessary controls and interventions to promote the safety of other people in five out of the 11 cases inspected. Again, contingency arrangements were poor. Practitioners made appropriate use of the risk management panel and/or taking enforcement action as the primary courses of action. Broader and more comprehensive arrangements were needed to support potential changes in circumstances.

⁴ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

2.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Outstanding

Our rating⁵ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Does the implementation and delivery of services:	% 'Yes'
effectively support the child's desistance?	100%
effectively support the safety of the child?	100%
effectively support the safety of other people?	85%

Practitioners are confident in developing and maintaining meaningful relationships with children and families that lead to positive outcomes. Children accessed a number of services that addressed areas of need and concern, including pro-offending identities, education, substance misuse, propensity for violence in the home, and emotional wellbeing. They were also signposted to various opportunities to build on their strengths, and were encouraged to access mainstream services, including positive activities in the community and mentoring. In every inspected case, sequencing of interventions and the delivery of services were proportionate and achievable within the timescales. Accounting for the diversity needs of children was excellent. In one case, the practitioner showed considerable resilience in supporting a child with complex learning needs. They accessed funding to secure some boxing sessions, and this helped to improve the child's confidence and emotional wellbeing.

Practitioners delivered high-quality and effective work to keep children safe in every case reviewed by inspectors. They delivered planned work, which focused on keeping the child safe. This included the risks of carrying weapons, exploitation, experience of prejudice, and emotional regulation. Partnership working and transition work between agencies were robust. In one case, the practitioner used the SAFER multi-agency meetings to work collaboratively to monitor the child's risk of exploitation. They also attended contextualised safeguarding meetings to ensure they maintained a focus on the child and their peers who were also at risk. The practitioner was proactive in their relationship with the social worker, and this contributed to several joint meetings and effective information-sharing.

Work to keep other people safe was done well overall, but not enough services were delivered in all the inspected cases. Where relevant, practitioners had not consistently paid sufficient attention to keeping actual and potential victims safe. The involvement of public protection partners was strong. Intelligence from the police was used well and practitioners accessed the appropriate risk, safety and wellbeing panel arrangements.

⁵ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

2.4. Reviewing



Reviewing of progress is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Outstanding

Our rating⁶ for reviewing is based on the following key questions:

Does reviewing focus sufficiently on:	% 'Yes'
supporting the child's desistance?	85%
keeping the child safe?	92%
keeping other people safe?	85%

The reviewing of work to assess the impact of interventions on reducing reoffending is a strength. Practitioners complete formal, informal and dynamic reviews as the child's personal circumstances change. They consider the child's strengths; their diversity needs and analyse personal and familial circumstances.

Practitioners mostly reviewed children's motivation and considered any barriers that they identified whether individual or structural. Discussions with children and their parents and carers during reviewing (and direct feedback from parents/carers to inspectors) were evidenced well in almost all the inspected cases. This helped practitioners to gain a fuller understanding of the children's broader day-to-day lived experiences and empowered parents and carers to become actively involved in their children's supervision.

Reviewing activity to keep children safe was done very well in the cases inspected. Where required, reviews responded appropriately to changes linked to safety and wellbeing, in particular new intelligence from the police, non-compliance with curfew requirements and domestic abuse in the home. Practitioners gathered information from other agencies that were involved, and adjusted plans to support ongoing work. This methodical approach was helping children to recognise their changing vulnerabilities. Additionally, this awareness was helping children to build on the progress they were making.

Practitioners did not always respond effectively to changes in factors related to risk of harm. This meant that they sometimes failed to amend plans to protect others from harm when required. When necessary, information from other agencies involved with the child was used well. Written reviews were completed in a timely manner in all the inspected cases, as required. This ensured that other practitioners involved in work to manage risk of harm had access to up-to-date information. Of note was the timely attention that practitioners gave to securing alternative accommodation in instances where there had been violence in the home.

⁶ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

Domain three: Out-of-court disposals

We inspected 20 cases managed by the YJS that had received an out-of-court disposal. These consisted of four youth conditional cautions, four youth cautions and 12 community resolutions. We interviewed the case managers in 17 cases.

3.1. Assessment



Assessment is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating⁷ for assessment is based on the following key questions:

Does assessment sufficiently analyse:	% 'Yes'
how to support the child's desistance?	90%
how to keep the child safe?	60%
how to keep other people safe?	70%

In most of the inspected cases, the practitioner had sought to understand how much responsibility the child took for their behaviour, their attitude towards their offending and their explanation for becoming involved in offending. This approach allowed practitioners to search deeper into the child's identity and how adverse lived experiences may have contributed to their offending. Practitioners analysed diversity issues very well, and inspectors found a robust analysis of strengths and areas of concern. They examined the child's familial and social circumstances well, and understood the impact of early traumatic experiences on children's presenting behaviours. Assessments were well supported by multi-agency case discussions at the YJS out-of-court disposal panel and consultations from specialist service providers, for example substance misuse and education.

In most cases practitioners had accessed a wide range of information from other agencies to support their assessments of children's safety. In most of the cases reviewed, there was a clear written assessment of the child's safety and wellbeing. Practitioners recognised any issues around violence in the home, separation and the impact of poor educational experiences. However, the risks to others were not consistently understood and the reviews required more detail about the broad range of risks. Most practitioners used information from available sources correctly. Intelligence-gathering from the police was a strength. Information provided by the victim worker at the panel ensured that victims' needs were understood more fully. Furthermore, safety and wellbeing panels were used well to support assessments and suitable attention was paid to potential triggers that could lead to harm being caused to others.

⁷ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

3.2. Planning



Planning is well-informed, analytical and personalised, actively involving the child and their parents or carers.

Requires improvement

Our rating⁸ for planning is based on the following key questions:

Does planning focus on:	% 'Yes'
supporting the child's desistance?	95%
keeping the child safe?	80%
keeping other people safe?	55%

Planning to address desistance took a child-first, trauma-informed and whole-family approach. In all of the inspected cases, planning was appropriate to the disposal imposed and targets agreed were realistic and achievable within the timeframes. The strengths in the partnership ensured that YJS plans were aligned with those completed by other agencies. There was a proportionate focus on strengths, protective factors and areas of concern, and practitioners considered the child's motivation and maturity well. In many cases, services had been identified to support the child's access to mainstream services, such as boxing sessions and anger management. Parents and carers were also signposted to services to support them. In almost all cases, the child's diversity needs had been considered well. For example, practitioners liaised with the education worker and the psychologist for advice on developing a plan that comprehensively met the child's desistance needs.

Planning to address children's safety and wellbeing was done well overall. However, when required, practitioners did not consistently liaise with other agencies to ensure that plans fitted together well, or fully understand the role of each service provider. The latter finding was reinforced by some practitioners reporting, in the staff survey, that they did not always know how to access services. Inspectors observed good partnership work with health (for example in managing anxiety) and education. Practitioners liaised with schools and carried out joint home visits. Contingency planning was too broad in far too many cases and not always linked to identified risks.

Planning to keep others safe was variable and needs to improve. Some practitioners did not sufficiently consider the needs of actual and potential victims. Too often, information obtained from public protection agencies was not used well to inform plans and keep others safe from harm. There were opportunities to introduce external controls, but this did not always happen. Contingency planning to keep others safe was weak. In this work not all risks were fully considered and there was no methodical approach to identifying broader risks to others, for example family members.

⁸ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

3.3. Implementation and delivery



High-quality, well-focused, personalised and coordinated services are delivered, engaging and assisting the child.

Outstanding

Our rating⁹ for implementation and delivery is based on the following key questions:

Does service delivery effectively support:	% 'Yes'
the child's desistance?	90%
the safety of the child?	80%
the safety of other people?	95%

The quality of services to help children to not commit further offences was impressive. We found examples where educational support, reparation projects and health interventions were provided, and these had encouraged the child to build a pro-social identity and desist from offending. Many of the letters of apology reviewed by inspectors were suitable and demonstrated empathy and good reflection from children. Practitioners had regular contact with children and their parents and carers, with high levels of engagement. We found strong advocacy from practitioners to actively support positive desistance outcomes.

When required, service delivery to keep children safe was mostly done well. However, responses from some partners were delayed and some practitioners did not follow up queries in a timely manner. On the other hand, the quality of work and liaison with the substance misuse workers, the psychologist and education workers was good. Practitioners within the partnership engaged well with schools to maximise children's attendance and attainment. Inspectors also found some innovative examples of children being provided with safe spaces to complete examinations outside of school, with oversight being arranged by an invigilator who had been sourced by the YJS. Collaboration with parents and carers was notable, as evidenced by the feedback given in a focus group that inspectors held with family members.

In two of inspected cases, not enough services were delivered to keep other people safe, when required. Overall, there was evidence of risk meetings taking place and information from these meetings leading to activity to keep others safe. Generally, practitioners paid sufficient attention to the needs of potential and actual victims. In one case, inspectors found that the practitioner had made excellent use of the SAFER panel. It was clear that the network had been monitoring the child's risk thoroughly. Work had also been supported by the child undertaking a knife crime awareness programme through the use of a VR headset.

⁹ The rating for the standard is driven by the lowest score on each of the key questions, which is placed in a rating band, indicated in bold in the table. [A more detailed explanation is available on our website.](#)

3.4. Out-of-court disposal policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based out-of-court disposal service in place that promotes diversion and supports sustainable desistance.

Good

We also inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for out-of-court disposals, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. Our key findings were as follows:

Strengths:

- There is a clear protocol in place with East Sussex Police. This sets out a locally agreed out-of-court disposal policy that incorporates joint and defensible decision-making. The YJS has an out-of-court multi-agency disposal panel with the appropriate level of representation. This includes the police (including police early intervention team), YJS managers, who chair the meetings, a restorative justice/victim liaison practitioner, a substance misuse practitioner, a CAMHS worker and children's social care (early help services).
- The out-of-court policy (the YJS out of court panel – policy and procedures) is comprehensive. It effectively covers pre-panel, at-panel and post-panel information-gathering, eligibility criteria, enforcement, escalation arrangements, decision-making in cases where children have previous offending histories, liaison arrangements with partners and other agencies and diversion. Children who do not fully admit their offending are given access to a range of diversionary pathways.
- Outcome 22 is used well as a deferred prosecution measure to support diversion and prevention.
- Arrangements are in place to ensure that the voice of victims, children and their parents and carers are central to the decision-making process.
- Enforcement arrangements are clear and YJS practitioners can return to the panel when children are not engaging.
- The disposal panel has access to the same range of interventions that are available for post-court cases. These include harmful sexual behaviour consultations with CAMHS; parenting support; the habitual knife carriers programme; parenting support; police early help intervention; liaison and diversion; CAMHS In-reach; substance misuse (Connect); contextual safeguarding; education welfare, ETE workers, and mentoring.
- The YJS uses several comprehensive methods of reviewing its out-of-court disposal provision to ensure that the work is effective.

Areas for improvement:

- The additional scrutiny panel focusing on YJS children, which is about to be introduced, needs time to embed.
- The police YJS referral form needs to pay more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.

4.1. Resettlement

4.1. Resettlement policy and provision



There is a high-quality, evidence-based resettlement service for children leaving custody.

Requires improvement

We inspected the quality of policy and provision in place for resettlement work, using evidence from documents, meetings and interviews. To illustrate that work, we inspected four cases managed by the YJS that had received a custodial sentence. Our key findings were as follows.

Strengths:

- The 'Youth Justice Service Custody and Resettlement Policy' is supported by a comprehensive guidance document. Pathways such as suitable accommodation, health and ETE all feature well in the policy. The policy identifies the importance of the principles of constructive resettlement, including well-coordinated, personalised services with network partners. It explicitly sets out the need for timely communication and effective information exchange with partners, providers and other key stakeholders. The cases reviewed evidenced this being undertaken in practice. There is a comprehensive 'Release Preparation Meeting, Record and Plan' process to ensure a seamless transition of services once the child is released.
- An emphasis on developing a pro-social identity is evident, and this was demonstrated well in the cases reviewed. The YJS forensically reviews resettlement work.
- The YJS approach to resettlement ensures that the three domains of risk are discussed and managed appropriately. There are referrals to the risk, safety and wellbeing panels, including multi-agency public protection arrangements screening where necessary.
- The policy on resettlement is reviewed regularly and adjusted in line with changes to the service's operating model.
- There is evidence that victims' needs are identified in resettlement work.
- Practitioners seek to overcome structural barriers faced by children's resettlement needs.

Areas for improvement:

- More consistent attention should be given to resettlement work at the COG.
- The narrative from cases show that the 'Release Preparation Meeting, Record and Plan' is not always effectively drawn up or implemented.
- Information-sharing in regard to keeping people safe was effective in only two of the four cases reviewed.
- Arrangements for the ETE needs of children should be planned for before release so that children have suitable provision on release. There was insufficient planning for ETE in three out of four cases. All behaviours in custody should be included in pre-release assessments, so that there is an accurate understanding of the safety of the child and the other people.
- Staff need to have more access to specific resettlement training.

Further information

The following can be found on our website:

- [inspection data, including methodology and contextual facts about the YJS](#)
- [a glossary of terms used in this report.](#)

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East Sussex Inspection Improvement Plan – 2024

East Sussex (YJS) was inspected by His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in June 2024 for one week in duration. The service was rated as ‘good’ scoring 25 points out of 36. Across 12 domains, 9 were rated as good or outstanding. Two of the areas assessed were found to ‘require improvement’ and the quality of planning for Court Orders was deemed to be ‘inadequate.’ The quality of resettlement policy and provision was rated separately and was also given a rating of ‘requires improvement,’ although does not contribute towards the overall outcome.

This action plan sets out the actions that East Sussex will take, as a partnership, to deliver the recommendations that have been set out and requested by HMIP. There are four priorities that are identified by HMIP in the report – three for the YJS, and one for Sussex Police. We have also included other areas for improvement identified in the report.

Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
1.Improve the quality of assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others			
1.1 Assessment and planning work to keep children safe and manage the risk of harm they present to others.	1.11 Whole staff training for new Prevention and Diversion assessment tool to be delivered - learning embedded in Team Meetings, Reflective Practice Meetings and 1:1 Supervision. 1.12 Engage with staff to understand barriers to effective assessment & planning - this will inform future practice development sessions. 1.13 QA schedule to be developed and reported quarterly to COG. To include joint auditing with COG members as well as monthly management audits.	1.11 Completed - Initial sessions delivered September 2024. Pre-assessment reflection sessions introduced to support practitioner reflection and thinking re: assessment & planning. 1.12 Oct 2024 – Staff engagement in team meetings and individual supervision. Practice Development Sessions to commence in Dec 24. 1.13 Dec 2024 - NM to present to COG in December 2024 – new section to be added to	Case Audits will evidence improvements in the quality of assessment and planning for safety and wellbeing and risks to others.



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
		performance report to include audit outcomes to be reported quarterly.	
2.Ensure that management oversight is consistently effective in reviewing Asset Plus activity so that practitioners are clear about what they need to improve			
<p>2.1 Management oversight to be consistently effective in reviewing the quality of assessment and planning.</p>	<p>2.11 Training for managers to support effective QA of Asset Plus – to include ‘must have’ checks and support understanding difference between QA and detailed case audits.</p> <p>2.12 Managers training pathway updated to incorporate expectations around management oversight, direction and supervision.</p> <p>2.13 Delivery of workshop to managers on expectations re management oversight, direction and challenge and ways to improve recording.</p> <p>2.14 Ensure opportunities are available for managers to come together quarterly to moderate assessments and plans.</p> <p>2.15 Re-visit management oversight and supervision audit completed in February 2024 to evidence progress.</p>	<p>2.11 Nov 2024 - Half day training to be commissioned and delivered by Silver Bullet</p> <p>2.12 Nov 2024 - NM to liaise with SWET team re: outcome of LNA and ensure that training pathway updated to reflect this – November 2024.</p> <p>2.13 Jan 2025 - Workshop delivered to CSC managers to be adapted to meeting needs of YJS – January 2025.</p> <p>2.14 Completed - Moderation meetings to be prioritised. Key themes to be shared at team meetings, staff development days and recorded in agenda and minutes.</p>	<p>Managers will have baseline standards, which are consistently and clearly communicated to the team.</p> <p>The training pathway for managers support continuous professional development to ensure that oversight of practice is more consistent.</p> <p>Management oversight audit will evidence high quality and impactful management oversight, supervision and direction.</p> <p>Practitioners report receiving high quality support, direction through supervision and wider management oversight.</p>



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
		2.15 Jan 2025 - Management oversight and supervision audit to take place to include managers from other parts of CS.	Children's case records demonstrate increased clarity regarding direction, and rationale for decisions.
2.2 Quality assurance needs to be more consistent across some areas of casework.	<p>2.21 Enhance QA processes to include stronger focus on Risk of Harm and Safety and Wellbeing and ensure appropriate levels of scrutiny are in place to provide assurance to the COG.</p> <p>2.22 QA process to be re-issued to service with particular emphasis in impact section – which outlines how learning embedded to ensure all cases 'get to good.'</p> <p>2.23 Asset moderation meetings to take place quarterly – expended to include new P & D tool and Turnaround.</p>	<p>2.21 Dec 2024 - QA schedule to be shared with COG and new section to be added to performance report to include audit outcomes to be reported quarterly.</p> <p>2.22 Feb 2025 - Team event scheduled for new year with focus on QA processes.</p> <p>2.23 Completed - Quarterly meetings scheduled for 12 months in advance.</p>	<p>Consistent QA of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work will be evidence across all aspects of casework.</p> <p>Quarterly reporting to the COG will provide assurance of the quality of safety and wellbeing and risk of harm work.</p>
<p>3.Ensure that all children have robust contingency plans in place that address their safety and wellbeing, and risk of harm to others.</p>			
3.1 Children have robust contingency plans in place that address their safety	3.11 Increase staff understanding of contingency planning, external controls and interventions to mitigate risks through provision of practice workshop. To be	3.11 Nov 2024 - workshop to be delivered by lead PM and SP's Practice guidance to be issued as part of training – impact to be tested through audit of contingency plans.	Practitioners and managers have a clear understanding of contingency planning to support children's plans and interventions.



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
and wellbeing and risk of harm to others.	<p>supported by practice guidance, including 'live' examples.</p> <p>3.12 Ensure that risk management is a live process and that timely reviews are completed in line with practice standards.</p> <p>3.13 Partnership and services directory/document to be kept live to support practitioners awareness of services available to support effective contingency/exit planning.</p>	<p>3.12 Nov 2024 - Update supervision recording template to ensure that risk management and planning is covered and reinforce to managers.</p> <p>3.13 Feb 2025 - Build on interventions directory produced ahead of HMIP, ensuring that this is regularly updated.</p>	Case audits will evidence that all children have robust contingency plans which address their safety and wellbeing and risk to others.
4. Review the police YJS referral form so that it pays more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.			
4.1 Review police YJS referral form so it pays more explicit attention to diversity and trauma.	<p>4.11 YJS lead to work with Sussex Police to revise referral form to ensure appropriate attention is paid to diversity and trauma.</p> <p>4.12 Referral form to evidence that 10 point CPS checklist has been considered in all cases where child is looked after.</p>	<p>4.11 Feb 2025 - is on agenda for next Pan-Sussex OOCR meeting.</p> <p>4.12 Completed. Any relevant cases where this has not happened are now referred back to police at panel screen stage.</p>	When completed referral forms officers will pay attention to diversity and trauma and ensure that this is reflected in information provided.
5. Victims			



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
<p>5.1 Understanding of the specific concerns and need of victims and keeping them safe.</p>	<p>5.11 Staff training delivered to all staff to include RJ processes and requirements of staff to ensure victim work is individualised according to victims wishes.</p> <p>5.12 Children’s home training package to be developed to reduce criminalisation of CLAs.</p> <p>5.13 Where there is a direct victim, face to face consultation between RJ Worker and Case Manager to be mandatory with agreed output in line with victim wishes and voice of the child to ensure victim work prioritised and evidenced.</p>	<p>5.11 Jan 2025 - audit to be complete 3 months post to evidence impact.</p> <p>5.12 Feb 2025 - Training package for children’s homes to be developed in consultation with LAC colleagues. ESCC homes prioritised.</p> <p>5.13 Oct 2024 - Consultations to be in place from October 2024 in line with new P & D assessment tool and updated OOCR review panel process.</p>	<p>Audits will evidence that practitioners will understand the needs of victims and ensure that assessments, plans and interventions appropriately prioritise victim safety.</p>
<p>6.Resettlement</p>			
<p>6.1 Staff need access to specific resettlement training.</p>	<p>6.11 Workshop to be delivered to all relevant staff (including partnership staff) by lead PM to promote learning and understanding of Constructive settlement approaches as set out in YJS policy and guidance.</p>	<p>6.11 Dec 2024 - Auditing of impact to be included in audit schedule and reported to COG quarterly.</p>	<p>Case audits with evidence of custody cases will evidence delivery of effective resettlement in all cases -as well as adherence to YJS policy and procedures.</p>
<p>6.2 Better planning for ETE so that children are released with suitable provision.</p>	<p>6.21 Lead PM to meet with YJS education advisor and YES to agree pathway for custody cases – to include</p>	<p>6.21 Oct 2024</p>	<p>Children leaving custody will have ETE provision suitable to their needs.</p>



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
	<p>expectations regarding contact in custody and attendance at resettlement mtgs.</p> <p>6.22 Resettlement policy/guidance and education escalation procedures to be updated to reflect the above.</p> <p>6.23 Monthly multi-agency remand/custody risk panel to be established to review resettlement practice, including access to education.</p>	<p>6.22 Nov 2024</p> <p>6.23 Jan 2025 - JE to develop TOR and ensure this is embedded within Resettlement Policy and practice.</p>	<p>Children’s case records demonstrate robust planning for ETE to support access to suitable provision.</p> <p>Case audits will reflect effective planning for ETE within resettlement planning/process.</p>
<p>6.3 More consistent attention given to resettlement work at the COG.</p>	<p>6.31 COG to receive information on all custody cases, to support identification of any key themes and trends as well as any unmet needs to support service development.</p> <p>6.32 Annual multi-agency scrutiny panel (including COG members) to review custody cases.</p>	<p>6.31 Quarterly from now.</p> <p>6.32 March 2025</p>	<p>Quarterly reporting to the COG will provide assurance of the quality of resettlement work.</p>
<p>7. Governance & Leadership</p>			
<p>7.1 Staff are not always aware of the COG and its work.</p>	<p>7.11 All team meetings to include dedicated agenda item re: work undertaken by the COG.</p>	<p>7.11 Completed</p>	<p>Staff will have a better understanding of the role of the COG and how its work links to/impacts on practice.</p>



Area for Improvement	Actions identified	Target date/Progress	Success Measures/impact
7.2 Board attendance	7.21 Meeting dates sent out annually to support attendance - COG members are aware that, where they are unable to attend, a suitable representative should be identified.	7.21 Completed	Attendance by key partners will be consistent.

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Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 13 November 2024

By: Deputy Chief Executive

Title: Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing - Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Purpose: To provide an opportunity for the Cabinet to consider the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

To consider any comments the Cabinet wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

1 Background

1.1 The People Committee heard at its March 2024 meeting that a key priority for Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) was responding to the needs of an increasing older population in East Sussex and that the Department would welcome scrutiny input into how preventative approaches could support people to age well in the county.

1.2 The review focussed on the Council's role in supporting people to age well through physical activity; how more positive attitudes towards ageing can help people to age well; and how to maximise on the opportunities of having an older population in East Sussex.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The People Scrutiny Committee has completed its review of Healthy Ageing. A copy of the report is attached at appendix 1.

2.2 The Board considered that whilst an increasing older population can create service pressures, with multiple health conditions more prevalent as people age, this was not inevitable and preventative actions, as well as age inclusive principles, could enable people to age well and delay or reduce, if not prevent, the need for statutory services including social care. The Board also considered the benefits of an older population, including contributions to care, the workforce and volunteering.

2.3 The review considered a range of healthy ageing initiatives, including case studies from other local authorities. The review focussed on the benefits of physical activity and explored local engagement with physical activity programmes; barriers to participation; and opportunities to increase opportunities to inclusive activities.

2.4 The review considered how negative attitudes towards ageing, including internal ageism, could impact on people's ability to engage with healthy ageing initiatives and access support and found that inclusive communications and adopting a positive narrative of ageing locally could support people to age well in the county.

2.5 The Board found that the Department was progressing a number of projects and initiatives to support people to age well and work with partners was key to delivering these.

2.6 The Board recognised that there were many factors that contributed to a person's ability to age well, and although many of these were out of scope for this review, Public Health provided services and support across a number of these areas.

2.7 The Committee's report will be submitted to the County Council on 3 December 2024. The Cabinet has the opportunity to comment to the County Council on the recommendations in the Scrutiny Committee's report, although it cannot alter the report. Elsewhere on this Cabinet meeting agenda there is a separate report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health commenting on the Scrutiny Committee's report and recommendations.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

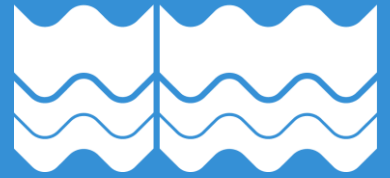
3.1 Cabinet is invited to consider any comments it wishes to make to the County Council on the report of the People Scrutiny Committee.

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Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing

Report by the Review Board:

Councillor John Ungar (Chair)

Councillor Nuala Geary

Councillor Peter Pragnell

Councillor Trevor Webb

People Scrutiny Committee - 24 September 2024

Cabinet - 13 November 2024

Full Council - 3 December 2024

The report of the Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing

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Recommendations

Recommendation		Page
1	The Department should use insights from this Review to strengthen content and promotion of the campaign, ‘Getting East Sussex Moving’; sharing messaging and imagery that particularly encourage and promote opportunities for older people to be active and addresses known barriers to participation.	15
2	<p>The Department should continue to work with Active Sussex to maximise opportunities to embed physical activity into Adult Social Care processes and pathways, to include but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Upskilling social care staff to confidently raise the issue of physical activity and signpost to physical activity opportunities; and b) Establishing sustainable Stronger for Life strength and balance sessions across clinical, community and care settings in East Sussex, particularly focusing on areas where falls are more prevalent. 	16
3	<p>Continue to support the establishment and the embedding of Active Partnerships across all districts and boroughs in East Sussex, including through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Ensuring that the physical activity workforce is able to offer activities that support a range of abilities and health conditions; and b) Consulting older people on the types of activity that they wish to take part in. 	17
4	The Department should explore opportunities, including with partners, for intergenerational activities to create social connections, and tackle ageism.	18
5	<p>The Department should work to support people in the workplace as they age, including by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Progressing work with HR to explore the principles within the Age Friendly Employment Pledge to understand how these apply to existing ESCC policies; and b) Promoting the benefits of and supporting local employers to become Age Friendly Employers through its Wellbeing at Work Programme. 	20
6	<p>The Department should seek to work across the Council to influence a more positive narrative of ageing in East Sussex including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) By promoting age friendly imagery and language that engage people at 	21

	<p>different life stages and ensures people of all ages are represented when promoting a range of services;</p> <p>b) That the benefits of an ageing population, including contributions to caring and volunteering, are included in communications about East Sussex; and</p> <p>c) Supporting the development of further training on positive ageing for staff and Members.</p>	
7	The Department should promote flexible volunteer opportunities that address barriers to volunteering and link people to opportunities based on their interests, ability and skills.	23
8	<p>The Department should continue to strengthen partnership work to enable further development of healthy ageing workstreams across East Sussex by:</p> <p>a) Establishing a new multi agency Healthy Ageing Partnership Group and sharing learning from this Review to inform future system priorities;</p> <p>b) Working with district and borough councils to pilot Age Friendly Communities in East Sussex to support people to age well; and</p> <p>c) Exploring the use of ageing well ambassador programmes.</p>	23

Introduction

1. The People Committee heard at its March 2024 meeting that a key priority for Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) was responding to the needs of an increasing older population in East Sussex and that the Department would welcome scrutiny input into how preventative approaches could support people to age well in the county.
2. A Scoping Board was held in May 2024 which considered key demographic data for East Sussex, implications of an increasing older population for local services, research on preventative actions which support people to age well, and work currently underway within Public Health, and with partners, to promote and deliver healthy ageing initiatives and programmes. The Board concluded that whilst it was encouraged by the work underway, there were issues that could benefit from closer examination by scrutiny through a review. A review would also be an opportunity to explore best practice in other parts of the UK.
3. The Board agreed to focus on the following lines of enquiry:
 - How can the Department/Council encourage people in midlife and older age to take preventative actions to age well, including activities to be stronger and more active?
 - What are the barriers to people ageing well with regard to physical activity?
 - What can the Department do to raise awareness of healthy ageing through physical activity?
 - Are there successful initiatives elsewhere that the Department could learn from to encourage people to be more active?
 - How can volunteering contribute to healthy ageing amongst older people in the development and delivery of local services?
 - Changing attitudes towards ageing - can more positive attitudes to healthy ageing help people to age well?
 - What can the Council/Department do locally to change attitudes about ageing, including workplace attitudes and work with partners?
 - What can the Council/Department do to celebrate the value, contributions and opportunities of an ageing population in East Sussex?
4. The Board carefully considered the remit of the Review and acknowledged that a wide range of factors impacted on people's ability to age well, including access to health services; individual behaviours around diet, smoking and alcohol; and local infrastructure, housing and travel. However, to undertake a focussed review, the Board agreed to concentrate on its key lines of enquiry whilst recognising the wider considerations needed within Public Health to develop this work.
5. The Board also considered relevant previous scrutiny work by the People Scrutiny Committee, including scrutiny reviews on digital inclusion and engaging with seldom

heard groups, and agreed that work arising from these should support ongoing learning on these issues, and ensure any potential recommendations were inclusive to a range of groups, including seldom heard groups.

6. The Review looked at a range of evidence including information provided by the ASCH Department, internal data, external reports and case studies, and heard from a range of internal and external witnesses.

7. During this Review the Board found that whilst an increasing older population can create service pressures, with multiple health conditions more prevalent as people age, this was not inevitable and that preventative actions, as well as age inclusive principles, could enable people to age well and delay or reduce, if not prevent, the need for statutory services including social care. Learning from this Review therefore reinforces the importance of investing in healthy ageing initiatives and tackling ageism to support residents to age well and thrive in East Sussex.

8. The Board, in developing its recommendations, was mindful of the significant financial challenges facing the Council and agreed that consideration of recommendations and subsequent action plans should be viewed within this context.

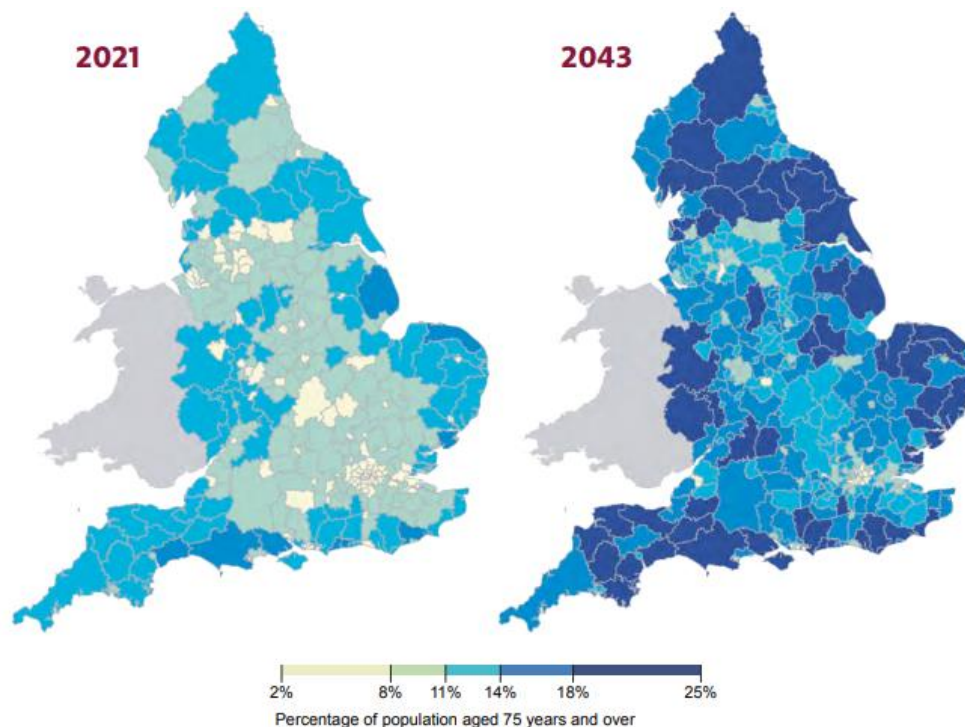
Background

Local and National Context

National Findings

9. The 2023 Chief Medical Officer’s (CMO) Annual Report *Health in an Ageing Society* outlines the implications, issues and opportunities of the changing demography in the UK and identifies factors which improve the quality of life for older people.

10. Whilst the population is ageing nationally, the report notes that ‘the great majority of people move out of cities and large towns before older age, concentrating geographically in coastal, semi-rural or peripheral areas, often with relatively sparse services and transport links’. A map of England provided by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows the projected rise in the percentage of the population aged 75 years and over. The proportion of older adults is greatest in rural and coastal areas, including in East Sussex.



Source data: Office for National Statistics (ONS), 2021 mid-year estimates by local authority,³ and 2018-based subnational population projections for 2043⁴

11. The CMO report argues that although people living longer presents increased demands on services, as diseases, long term conditions and disabilities are more prevalent as people age, these are not an inevitable part of ageing and can be prevented. People who age well can enjoy many benefits of older age and older people ‘have essential roles in society, including significant caring responsibilities for younger generations and their peers, and skills and knowledge accumulated over a lifetime’. The report celebrates achievements which have resulted in people living longer and focuses

on improving the quality of life in later years to allow people to live healthier lives, reducing the need for care and support. The report identifies ways local authorities across the UK are responding to demographic changes and preparing for increased demands, including through local healthy ageing campaigns, work with partners to promote and deliver programmes and services, and initiatives to increase awareness of the challenges and opportunities in their areas.

12. The Centre for Ageing Better *State of Ageing 2023-24* report highlights the growing divide in experiences of people ageing in UK, with ‘the poorest people living shorter lives and spending many more years in bad health’. It also argues that people from minority ethnic backgrounds experience some of the greatest inequalities. The report outlines how attitudes to ageing can impact on older people’s experiences, including in the workplace, in local communities and with access to services.

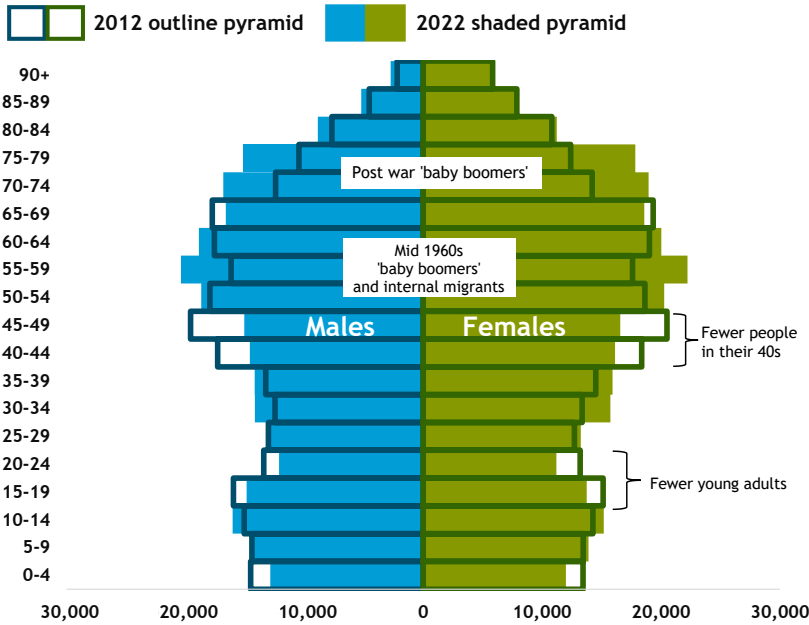
13. At the time of this Review, there were a number of strategies and policy drivers aimed at influencing healthy ageing developments globally, in the UK and at a local level, including the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing 2021-2030, a global collaboration to improve the lives of older people, their families, and their communities, and work by the World Health Organisation to improve people’s local experiences and surroundings as they age. The Centre for Ageing Better has provided a framework and support to areas across the UK adopting Age Friendly Communities.

14. The Association of Directors of Public Health in their *Policy Position Statement for Healthy Ageing* argue that, due to the projected increase in older adults in the UK, a whole system approach is needed to support older adults to remain independent and healthy; a renewed focus is also needed on prevention across the life course to support people to age healthily and to delay or prevent the onset of long-term conditions. The statement suggests that Public Health should promote the importance of ageing well and highlight the contribution and skills of older people.

15. AGE UK in its *Healthy Ageing Evidence Review* states that the spiralling health costs of an ageing population provide strong arguments for funding preventative approaches, which have proven to be effective and cost efficient. It suggests, ‘if we can design and execute effective interventions to prevent or delay the onset of chronic disease and increase healthy life expectancy, there will be social, economic and health dividends for us all.’

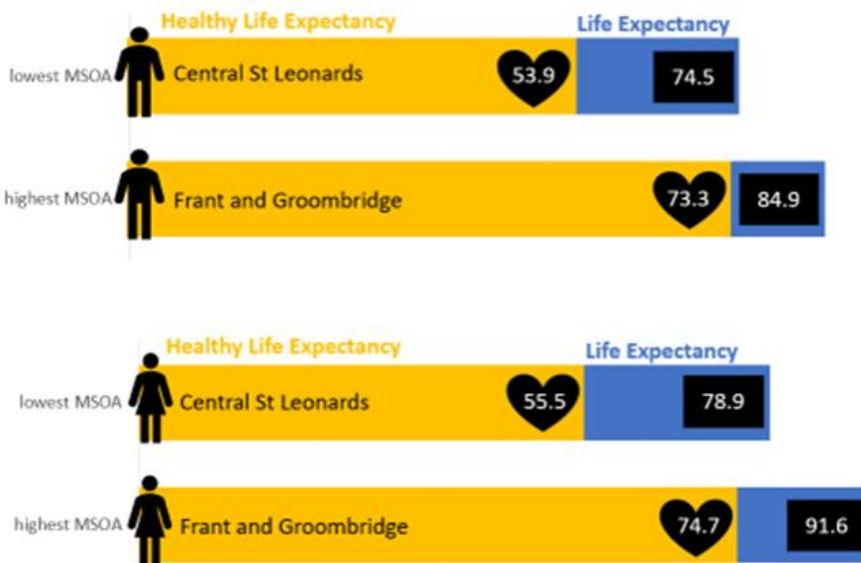
Context in East Sussex

16. East Sussex County Council’s (ESCC) *Focus on East Sussex 2024*, within the *State of the County* report, outlines that East Sussex, compared to England and the rest of the South East, has a higher proportion of older people; with Rother having the highest rate of people over the age of 85 in the country. In 2022, people aged 65 and over made up 26% of the East Sussex population and 3.9% of people in county were aged 85 and over; higher than nationally (2.5%), and the South East (2.8%). The graph below shows the changes to the demography in East Sussex from 2012 to 2022.



17. The report projects that the overall population in East Sussex will increase by 3.9% by 2028, with almost three in ten (29%) of the population aged 65 and over. In line with this projection, it estimates that the number of people with multiple long-term conditions in the county will increase, as will the number of adults living with long-term health conditions which limit day to day activities, with an expected increase in the latter of 15.4% in 2030 compared to 2023. The number of Adult Social Care clients receiving long term support increased by 8.8% in 2023/24 and this increase in demand is projected to continue.

18. East Sussex has consistently had a higher life and healthy life expectancy for both men and women than the national average, however there are significant inequalities between areas of the county as outlined in the image below.



19. The Sussex Health and Care Integrated Care System's 2023-2028 Shared Delivery Plan *Improving Lives Together* sets out plans to improve people's health and care services in Sussex, including to support more people to 'manage their own health and wellbeing so they can stay healthier for longer'. ESCC has a key role in implementing this plan and the aims of this strategy are embedded across ASCH through its local 2023 -2028 Adult Social Care Strategy *What Matters to You*, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of adults in East Sussex, particularly for those more likely to have health and care needs requiring ASCH services.

20. The 2022-2027 East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy also supports ageing well through its priorities for health and care services, as well as addressing wider determinants of health. It specifically aims to empower people to stay healthy and well for as long as possible and reduce health inequalities and the gap in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy in the county.

Public Health

21. The ESCC Public Health Department works to improve population health and reduce health inequalities across East Sussex by working with system partners to influence policy and strategy to improve health outcomes; providing specialist advice on promoting health and protection from threats to health; providing data and intelligence; and commissioning a range of services aimed at improving health and wellbeing. Public Health aims to influence factors of health and wellbeing, including wider determinants of health such as housing, healthy places, work and employment.

22. At the time of this Review, Public Health was involved in a number of projects to support healthy ageing, including through its core work of delivering NHS Health Checks, an Integrated Lifestyle Service, projects to increase community connections, smoking cessation, and an alcohol strategy. Public Health had also produced a data pack to understand how the local population was ageing and to identify inequalities.

23. As part of the Health Outcomes Improvement Oversight Board priorities, Public Health was establishing a new multi agency group to bring together those working on issues related to healthy ageing across the county; planned initial priorities were falls and frailty.

24. Public Health was also planning work with partners on healthy ageing initiatives, including with Emergency Departments and the ambulance service to understand high rates of admission for falls in the over 65s; with Integrated Care Systems to map the falls prevention pathways in East Sussex; and with Active Sussex to provide strength and balance activities to prevent falls. Work with Hastings Borough Council and Rother District Council on becoming Age Friendly Communities was also being considered.

25. Public Health was also collaborating with Adult Social Care more widely on the development of a prevention strategy that would explore how to help people be more proactive about their health and wellbeing and to improve or maintain their quality of life and independence.

Review Board Findings

1. *Healthy Ageing through physical activity*

Benefits of physical activity

26. The Board heard that a range of factors affect people’s ability to age well, however physical activity was identified as significant to both preventing and managing ill health as people aged. The Board explored both the benefits of physical activity and local opportunities available, as well as barriers that may prevent people of all ages taking part in physical activity.

27. The Board considered a range of evidence that showed physical activity was key to ageing well. The 2023 CMO Report states that ‘tackling low physical activity and sedentary behaviour can...increase the number of years spent in good health.’ AGE UK’s *Healthy Ageing Evidence Review* emphasises a range of benefits from physical activity as people age, including mobility, muscle strength, reduced likelihood of falls, bone health, emotional wellbeing, cognitive and social functioning.

“If physical activity were a drug, we would refer to it as a miracle cure, due to the great many illnesses it can prevent and help treat”

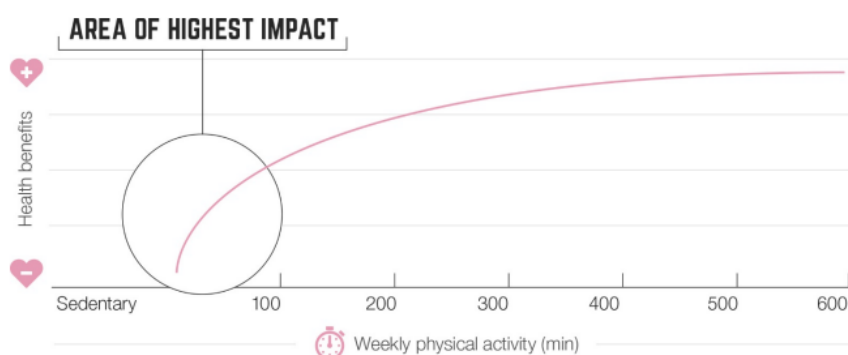
Sir Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer

28. UK Chief Medical Officers recommend that older adults aim to undertake 150 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity per week and do strength and balance activities twice a week. However, the CMO 2023 report notes that ‘despite the evidence on health benefits, physical activity is decreasing in England in all age groups including older citizens’. People tend to become less active as they get older and activity levels are lowest among the oldest age groups. The Public Health Outcomes Framework showed that, although in 2021/22 over 70% of all people in East Sussex said they did 150 or more minutes of physical activity per week, almost 20% said they did fewer than 30 minutes per week, with the remaining 10% falling in between these categories.

29. Local Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon Professor McNally, in her report *A focus on physical activity can help avoid unnecessary social care*, argues that the need for social care is not an inevitable outcome of an ageing population. The need for care arises when ‘someone is no longer able to manage vital activities of daily living, such as washing, dressing and feeding themselves’. However, this loss of ability can be prevented by undertaking the recommended levels of physical activity per week, including strength and balance exercises, which enable people to retain their independence. It notes, ‘older people who embark on an exercise programme can reverse their physical decline by up to a decade’. When speaking to the Board, Professor McNally stated that exercise had proven to significantly reduce ill health, including conditions such as dementia, stroke, cancer, type 2 Diabetes, high blood pressure, osteoporosis and depression, all of which

are more likely to occur as people age. At the time of this Review over half of over 65s in the UK had two or more medical conditions requiring care.

30. The CMO Report identifies that healthcare professionals have an important role in promoting physical activity to prevent and manage health conditions by ‘highlighting the benefits for health and providing reassurance about potential risks’. This includes promoting ways of incorporating physical activity into daily routines, and the importance of building up activity gradually, and emphasising the message that any amount of physical activity is better than no activity. The chart below¹ illustrates that the greatest health gains are seen in people moving from a physically inactive or very low active status to a more physically active status.



31. The Board reflected on the significant benefits of physical activity, including evidence that it can delay, or event prevent, the need for social care and agreed that work to support adults to engage in physical activity should be targeted to those most in need, including adults with the lowest levels of activity and those at risk of, as well as those with, health conditions.

Barriers to healthy ageing through physical activity

32. Whilst the benefits of physical activity were clear, the Board explored some of barriers to engaging in physical activity, including for older people.

33. The Board heard from the Active and Healthy Communities Specialist for Active Rother and the Active Hastings Coordinator about the role of Active Hastings and Active Rother in unblocking barriers to participation, improving health and reducing health inequalities. They observed that the cost of activities was a barrier for some people, and they were continuing to provide activities at low cost. This was reiterated by the Chairs of the East Sussex Seniors Association (ESSA) and HOPE G, organisations that advocate for and support older people in East Sussex, including minority ethnic older people. The Chair of Hope G told the Board that despite work to subsidise activities, many people were still unable to meet the costs, including those incurred on transport to attend the activity; the Chair of ESSA noted that this was a particular concern for people living in

¹ CMO Physical Activity Guidelines

rural areas. They also noted that another significant barrier to engaging in activities was caring responsibilities, including looking after grandchildren. In response to these barriers, Centre for Ageing Better research suggests promoting self guided strength and balance exercises through campaigns to encourage people to undertake low cost activities that suit a range of lifestyles and commitments.

34. The Board also heard that a key barrier to people engaging with physical activity is long-term health conditions, with concerns that activities can cause pain or injury. The Strategic Relationship Manager for Active Sussex noted that people over the age of 75 are more likely to be sedentary due to the increased likelihood of long-term health conditions at this age. The Lancet Healthy Longevity article *Physical activity knows no age limit* evidenced that ‘older people with multimorbidity and frailty perceived resistance training as more suitable for younger people and expressed concerns about injury or exacerbating poor physical functioning’. However, evidence also showed that if people were physically active, they were more likely to improve their health than suffer pain or injury; a national medical consensus statement on physical activity states that the ‘benefits outweigh the risks’.

35. The Board heard from the Strategic Development Manager who, through work on the Healthy Ageing through Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) project, found that people who were less active also reported a lack of knowledge and confidence in exercising in later life. This was reiterated by the Health Manager at Energise Me, who told the Board that communities in Hampshire had fed back that they were not aware of the benefits of strength and balance exercises in relation to healthy ageing. The Strategic Relationship Manager also noted additional challenges when engaging with some groups in the community and informed the Board of work with Diversity Resource International to raise awareness and provide activities for a range of ethnically diverse communities.

36. National evidence suggested there was a perceived lack of exercise programmes tailored to older age groups. *Raising the Bar on Strength and Balance* states that ‘offering choice to meet a range of preferences is fundamental to increasing the number of people who participate’ in activity programmes. The Board heard from the Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) Age Community Development Worker who said that older people did not feel consulted when programmes were being developed and reported wanting to engage in a wider variety of activities. This was reiterated by the Age-friendly Communities Network Manager who told the Board it was important not to make assumptions about which activities older people wanted to take part in and that there should be opportunities for people of all ages to design healthy ageing initiatives.

37. The Board heard that another key barrier to physical activity was internal ageism; with some people believing they were ‘too old’ to exercise as they aged and developed health conditions. The impact of and work to tackle ageism is covered in section 2 of the report.

Raising awareness of Healthy Ageing through physical activity

38. The Board heard that more sedentary lifestyles were linked to increasing pressure on local health and care resources and that messaging needed to highlight the dangers of being sedentary and the positive impact of even minimal activity, including how it could delay or even prevent the need for care.

39. The Strategic Relationship Manager for Active Sussex informed the Board that to promote the benefits, and encourage people to be more active, there needed to be a change in mindset from ‘care’ to ‘enablement’, to support people to be active and increase their independence. He also noted that physical activity should be promoted as ‘movement’, rather than exercise to encourage people who were less confident. Professor McNally agreed that there was a need to empower people with the benefits of physical activity, including by reinforcing the message that it can prevent people from needing care. *Physical activity knows no age limit* recommends that ‘older people must be supported in increasing physical activity through tailored interventions and age-specific messaging and must feel empowered in achieving personal exercise goals by dismantling notions that exercise is reserved for the young and healthy’. The Strategic Development Manager suggested that different types of messages are needed to reach different people, noting differences in ways individuals are motivated to change their behaviour. *Raising the Bar on Strength and Balance* evidenced that ‘a desire to reduce risk of falling is not a key motivation for older people to uptake strength and balance exercises...behaviour change strategies are required, in order to encourage meaningful conversations to support uptake’.

40. The Board heard from the Health Manager at Energise Me, one of the programmes from Hampshire County Council’s Live Long Better project focussed on supporting people to age well. The Health Manager evidenced a range of successful campaigns run by the Council to deliver messages on healthy ageing, including progressing attitudes amongst family and friends from ‘caring to coaching’ in order to support people to take part in physical activities that would enable them to remain independent for longer.

41. The Chair of ESSA noted the importance of representing older people in communications in a way people could relate to; this was particularly relevant when promoting physical activity programmes as images of older people doing activities that many felt were unrealistic often resulted in people feeling disengaged.

42. The Board learned of the work of Active Rother and Active Hastings to promote the benefits of physical activity through a range of mediums, including amplifying national campaigns by using local people and images to break down the misconception that people with long term health conditions are not able to exercise. Work was targeted to people with the greatest need, including people currently not undertaking any physical activity. They also noted the importance of signposting through key, trusted partners, including NHS partners, who were able to send targeted messages to people with health conditions.

43. The Board explored with witnesses that access to information, and subsequent awareness of healthy ageing could be impacted by people's access to online services. The Board reflected that these insights were also heard during their work on the Digital and Inclusion in ASCH Scrutiny Review and agreed that learning from that review should continue to be considered.

44. The Board agreed there were a range of opportunities available for people of all ages and abilities to engage with physical activity, however the Department should work on addressing barriers to accessing and engaging with these, by raising awareness of the benefits of physical activity, and the opportunities available, with residents and healthcare partners to increase referrals to and engagement with existing opportunities.

Recommendation 1

The Department should use insights from this Review to strengthen content and promotion of the campaign, 'Getting East Sussex Moving'; sharing messaging and imagery that particularly encourage and promote opportunities for older people to be active and addresses known barriers to participation.

45. Witnesses informed the Board of ways local areas could increase knowledge within communities, including through the use of age friendly ambassador programmes that, with volunteers, shared messaging on healthy ageing and aimed to tackle ageism through positive messaging.

46. The use of age friendly ambassadors, or similar volunteer roles, was explored through case studies of other local authorities, including the Ageing Well Ambassador programme at Sunderland City Council which had created a network of volunteers aged 50 and older to promote age friendly initiatives within their workplace, community and local businesses. In its one year report, outputs included ambassadors contributing to several consultations, as well as work led by older people, and developed with partners, to raise awareness of ageism, and develop local age friendly priorities.

47. North Yorkshire Council, in partnership with local VCSE organisations, had supported people through living well co-ordinators who aimed to improve the health, wellbeing and independence of adults, including those who may soon require health or social care services. Living well co-ordinators supported people to make lifestyle changes to prevent the need for services, including signposting to social activities, volunteer opportunities, physical activities, as well as other health services. The CMO report states that 'on average 60% of people referred to Living Well are diverted away from requiring Adult Social Care services'.

48. The Board concluded that awareness of healthy ageing initiatives could empower people to make changes to their lifestyle that could prevent or delay them from needing services. However, evidence showed that knowledge of these issues and initiatives was not widespread across the county, particularly across minority communities, and the Department could develop its messaging on healthy ageing, as well explore ways to

further engage and consult with communities. Work with partners and exploring the role of age friendly ambassadors is further addressed in recommendation 8b.

Physical activity programmes

49. The Board considered work underway by Public Health and Active Sussex who were collaborating with a range of partners including the NHS to understand current levels of activity and seeking ways to embed physical activity into adult social care. This included developing knowledge amongst staff and increasing referrals, and considering how local providers could better support people to be more active. The Board also heard about work at Hampshire County Council to embed physical activity into adult social care by supporting practitioners to promote healthy ageing messages and activities and a Live Longer Better webpage which provided information and resources to professionals and residents.

50. There were also plans in East Sussex to roll out a ‘Stronger for Life’ programme over the next two years aimed at increasing the provision of strength and balance activity for adults at high risk of falling. *Raising the Bar on Strength and Balance* supports the need to provide these activities within the community which it argues are a cost effective way to achieve good outcomes locally in reducing falls and improving health. The report notes that although there are NHS services, these are often limited, ‘making it essential that there are effective community-based strength and balance programmes in...local areas’. To ensure that programmes are delivered to people most in need, the report recommends raising awareness of activities, including through targeted campaigns; challenging negative beliefs around exercise; developing referral pathways with partners; tailoring programmes to individuals; and successfully monitoring outcomes.

Recommendation 2

The Department should continue to work with Active Sussex to maximise opportunities to embed physical activity into Adult Social Care processes and pathways, to include but not limited to:

- a) Upskilling social care staff to confidently raise the issue of physical activity and signpost to physical activity opportunities; and**
- b) Establishing sustainable Stronger for Life strength and balance sessions across clinical, community and care settings in East Sussex, particularly focusing on areas where falls are more prevalent.**

51. In order to address concerns of people with long-term conditions about engaging in physical activity, the Board heard that Active Hastings and Active Rother were upskilling trained activity instructors to adapt their activities to be accessible to people with a range of conditions, including cancer, Parkinson’s and back pain, as well as disabled people and older people with limited mobility. The Board heard that work was underway to develop Active Partnerships in Wealden, Lewes and Eastbourne and agreed that Public

Health had a key role in supporting and shaping these to maximise local opportunities that would support people to age well through physical activity. To address concerns that some older people wanted to see a wider range of activities on offer, the Board also agreed it was important that new healthy ageing initiatives, including physical activities, should be developed in consultation, including through older people's forums and groups.

Recommendation 3

Continue to support the establishment and the embedding of Active Partnerships across all districts and boroughs in East Sussex, including through:

- a) Ensuring that the physical activity workforce is able to offer activities that support a range of abilities and health conditions; and
- b) Consulting older people on the types of activity that they wish to take part in.

2. Changing attitudes towards ageing

Ageism

52. The Board considered evidence that showed ageism (the stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people based on their age) was manifested through widespread and often accepted negative attitudes and messaging, including through media and advertising. The WHO *Global Report on Ageism* states that whilst ageism can affect people at all life stages, for older people:

'Ageism is associated with a shorter lifespan, poorer physical and mental health, slower recovery from disability and cognitive decline. Ageism reduces older people's quality of life [and] increases their social isolation and loneliness (both of which are associated with serious health problems).'

53. The Age-friendly Communities Network Manager informed the Board that ageism impacted people at work and in the community and could affect access to housing and health services; with some older people being told that certain health problems were just part of ageing. All of these could negatively impact on people's ability to age well.

54. The Board heard that as well as negative attitudes to ageing from other people, internal ageism (where people reflect society's narrative onto themselves) had a significant impact on people's behaviour which could affect their ability to age well. For example, witnesses noted that internalised ageing often resulted in people limiting their own behaviours, including a reluctance to exercise. National evidence suggested that challenging negative beliefs could be achieved by promoting the health benefits of exercise to people across the life course, as well as by developing a more positive narrative on ageing.

Globally, one in two people are ageist against older people.

World Health Organisation

55. The Board heard about the national *Age Without Limits* campaign which aims to change the way people think about ageing by considering language and imagery used when representing older people. The Centre of Ageing Better Campaign Manager noted the campaign aimed to ensure older people were appropriately represented and cited that current imagery often either portrayed older people as frail, or as ‘super agers’ (taking part in extreme sports for example); neither of these represented the majority of older people. The Strategic Development Manager for the HAIRE project reiterated that these representations received negative feedback from older people. The Centre of Ageing Better image library aimed to embed realistic and positive images of older people into mainstream media. The Board heard that inclusive communication needed a commitment from staff across the organisation to tackle ageism, moreover, including older people in images to promote a range of services, rather than just services targeted at older people, would support a more inclusive narrative of ageing.

56. The Board also explored how intergenerational initiatives could reduce ageism; the Age Friendly Communities Network Manager cited creating opportunities for increasing intergenerational connection as a key way to tackle ageism locally. The Board also heard that intergenerational projects explored through the HAIRE project had positive impacts on both older and younger people, by increasing understanding and creating social connections. A Centre for Ageing Better blog highlighted intergenerational initiatives across the UK, including campaigns, work with partners to facilitate events, and intergenerational projects. All these initiatives demonstrated positive outcomes for older and younger people, including improved relationships across generations. The Board further explored this through the outcomes from an Active Across the Ages project by the Youth Sports Trust; an action-based research project focussed on intergenerational activity through play and sport. The pilot saw pupils from schools across the country trained as ‘Activity Buddies’ to work with people in local older care settings to deliver physical activities that they could enjoy together. In its evaluation report young people reported improved skills and confidence, including in communication and leadership, they also reported a more positive view of older people. Older people reported improved feelings of companionship and social wellbeing as well as an increase in confidence to engage in physical activity.

57. Officers informed the Board that work was underway to consider findings from intergenerational projects across the UK and noted initial positive outcomes, and that the Department was keen to understand how this learning could inform work locally. The Board reflected on the importance of intergenerational relationships, including that of children and grandparents, and agreed that opportunities to both reduce ageism and support healthy ageing through intergenerational connections should continue to be explored.

Recommendation 4

The Department should explore opportunities, including with partners, for intergenerational activities to create social connections, and tackle ageism.

Ageing well in the workplace

58. At the time of this Review a third of the workforce in England were aged 50 and over² and the Board explored how work could both benefit and negatively impact people as they aged. The *State of Ageing 2023-24* report showed that in the previous year in the UK, 44% of men and 32% of women said they had experienced ageism, most commonly in their workplace. The Board heard that workers aged 50 and over were more likely to face practical barriers to work, such as having caring responsibilities and health conditions. However, evidence also suggested that staying in work could not only support people to age well through maintaining social connections and with their physical and mental wellbeing, but there were also significant benefits to the employer, with multi-generational workforces driving productivity and innovation.

59. To gain a greater understanding of the challenges and benefits of supporting people in the workplace as they age, a representative of the Board attended a Wellbeing at Work Network meeting and met with employers across 14 organisations in East Sussex. Attendees received a presentation from Public Health on ageism in the workplace and engaged in discussion and provided written answers to focus group questions. Attendees were able to cite a range of benefits that people aged 50 and over bring to the workplace which are represented in the word cloud below:

Benefits that people aged 50 and over bring to the workplace



60. Attendees did, however, also note challenges that sometimes occur when supporting older workers, including ill health, managing symptoms of menopause, the need for flexible employment due to caring responsibilities, and a lack of confidence in learning new skills. Attendees suggested a number of ways organisations could support people, including ensuring opportunities are available to everyone, mentoring opportunities, and ensuring older workers' voices are heard and considered. Attendees

² Centre for Ageing Better

also noted their interest in receiving information and support to increase awareness of ageism across their organisation, as well as practical tools to support older workers.

61. The Board explored the work of East Riding of Yorkshire Council which had taken steps to be more age inclusive through its communication, with health ‘MOTs’, and ensuring that career development opportunities were available and promoted to all staff.

62. The Board also heard from the Age Friendly Communities Network Manager that the contributions of older people in the workplace should be celebrated and informed the Board of the Age Friendly Employer Pledge which promotes age inclusive practices such as flexible working opportunities, age inclusive recruitment, supporting health needs and encouraging career development at all ages.

63. The Board reflected that although work could be very positive for some people as they aged, and steps should be taken to encourage older people to enjoy work for longer, for some older people employment was financially necessary and their choice to stay in work was dependent upon their life circumstances. The Board concluded that age friendly employer principles should be embedded across relevant ESCC policies to ensure older people are encouraged and supported to not only stay in work but continue to develop and thrive. The Council has a role as an anchor institution in East Sussex to lead by example with age inclusive practices, as well as supporting local organisations to become age friendly employers.

Recommendation 5

The Department should work to support people in the workplace as they age, including by:

- a) Progressing work with HR to explore the principles within the Age Friendly Employment Pledge to understand how these apply to existing ESCC policies; and**
- b) Promoting the benefits of and supporting local employers to become Age Friendly Employers through its Wellbeing at Work Programme.**

Celebrating the benefits of an older population in East Sussex

64. The Board agreed that, as well as understanding the impacts of an increasing older population on services, a key component of this Review should be to recognise, celebrate and maximise the value, contributions and opportunities of an ageing population in East Sussex. The Board heard that, nationally, older age groups provide the highest hours of unpaid care per week, with people living in areas of deprivation more likely to be carers, and that the highest rates of volunteering are amongst 65-74 year olds³. Both carers and volunteers bring significant benefits to the county and Council, including financially through providing care and support to residents. The Board heard that the Council celebrates the contributions of older people in a number of ways, including with senior

³ Volunteering in England by age 2022 | Statista

forums through the East Sussex Seniors Association, which supports approximately 3000 members; an annual Full of Life Festival which celebrates the United Nations Day of Older people with social and information events; and by offering and promoting a range of volunteer opportunities.

65. The Board discussed how the Department and Council could build on this to develop a more positive narrative of ageing in East Sussex, in particular in communications and conversations about the financial impacts of an ageing population. The Centre for Ageing Better Campaign Manager and the Age-friendly Communities Network Manager informed the Board that to drive a more positive narrative of ageing, age friendly communication principles should be embedded across council communications, and that this should include the contributions older people make across the county. Communications should also ensure older people are represented across a range of services, rather than only focussed on services targeted at older people.

66. The Board looked at the work of Derbyshire County Council where Public Health was using a strengths-based model for interventions and ensuring that older adults were not 'incorrectly portrayed as disempowered and vulnerable' by ensuring the narrative about older people included the contributions they made to unpaid care, the VCSE sector, supporting social cohesion, as well as the skills and expertise they brought to the workforce.

67. The Board reflected that, whilst communicating the impacts of an increasing older population was crucial to raise awareness of pressures on Council services and the need for additional resources, this narrative could portray older people negatively. It was, therefore, important to develop the inclusion of the contributions of older people in this narrative.

Recommendation 6

The Department should seek to work across the Council to influence a more positive narrative of ageing in East Sussex, including:

- a) By promoting age friendly imagery and language that engage people at different life stages and ensures people of all ages are represented when promoting a range of services;**
- b) That the benefits of an ageing population, including contributions to caring and volunteering, are included in communications about East Sussex; and**
- c) Supporting the development of further training on positive ageing to staff and Members.**

Supporting access to volunteering

68. The Board further explored the contributions older people made locally through volunteering.

69. *Focus on East Sussex 2024* reports that a quarter of the population in East Sussex volunteer at least once a month, with over 3,000 not for profit groups and organisations providing activities and support to residents and communities. The Board heard that, not

only does volunteering support a range of vital services, including key preventative services, there are also significant health benefits. The ESCC Policy Manager (Third Sector) told the Board that volunteering was an effective way for people to stay active and socially engaged; the Strategic Development Manager also noted that people with good social connections and relationships tend to have better health outcomes and are likely to be more physically active.

70. The Board heard from the Senior Manager of the Making it Happen Project, an asset based community development project which supports community projects in East Sussex, who told the Board that community activities, including voluntary work, had many benefits, including to people's health. In its evaluation, respondents noted increased confidence and self-esteem, positive lifestyle changes and improvements to health and wellbeing, and some even reported feeling less of a need to engage with statutory services.

71. The Board also heard about the positive outcomes from volunteer opportunities within the Council, including within the Library and Information Service. The service Team Manager told the Board that intergenerational opportunities, such as rhyme and story times, often showed the highest impact for both volunteers and children.

72. The Board agreed that volunteering could both support people to age well and enable older people to make positive contributions to the county, although also agreed that if older people were not able, or chose not to volunteer, this did not mean that they did not contribute to the community in other ways.

73. The Board explored barriers which may prevent people from volunteering as they age and heard from witnesses that the main barrier to volunteering as people aged was pressures on people's time, mainly due to caring responsibilities. However, volunteering opportunities were changing; national research showed that the Covid-19 pandemic had seen an increase in volunteer work with 30% of 50-70 year olds volunteering informally during lockdown, and many organisations now making efforts to take a more flexible approach to volunteering.

74. Through the HAIRE project, relational and person-centred approaches to opportunities had been explored, which enabled people to be part of their communities based on shared interests, rather than age. For example, matching an older person in a care home to a volunteer opportunity based on her skills and the positive effect this had had on her physical and mental health.

75. The Policy Manager noted that work was underway locally to develop and offer more flexible volunteer roles, including task based roles, which did not always require regular time commitments, to help overcome these barriers and offer people of all ages and circumstances a wider variety of roles that linked to people's interests, ability and skills. However, there was more work to be done to ensure that these roles were promoted in an accessible way, including to people with protected characteristics who may not be aware of opportunities available to them.

Recommendation 7

The Department should promote flexible volunteer opportunities that address barriers to volunteering and link people to opportunities based on their interests, ability and skills.

3. Work with Partners

76. The Board agreed that work to support people to age well in East Sussex needs to be in collaboration with local partners who know the health and needs of their communities. This had been demonstrated with Public Health's work with Active Sussex and Active Partnerships to provide physical activity support across the county. The Department was working with partners across various workstreams and was keen to build and strengthen these relationships. The Board heard that in Hampshire, work with local partners had been vital to sharing messaging on healthy ageing with community groups, particularly for those who were digitally excluded, as well as for delivering a range of healthy ageing initiatives and activities.

77. Public Health was exploring working with Rother District Council and Hastings Borough Council on pilots to become Age Friendly Communities to create a system wide change to improve older people's experiences in their local areas. The benefits of Age Friendly Communities were highlighted by the Age-friendly Communities Network Manager who told the Board these initiatives were supporting people to continue to live in their homes, participate in activities, and contribute to their communities for longer.

78. The Board also heard about plans to establish a multi-agency Healthy Ageing Partnership Group which would bring system leads together to develop partnership plans and strengthen work in this area.

79. The Board agreed that the findings of this Review should be shared with a range of partners, including the Healthy Ageing Partnership Group, to help shape and drive local priorities on healthy ageing. The Board concluded that relationships with partners would be key to implementing a number of the Review's recommendations and recognised the vital role that partners including the VCSE sector played in supporting people to age well.

Recommendation 8

The Department should continue to strengthen partnership work to enable further development of healthy ageing workstreams across East Sussex by:

- a) Establishing a new multi agency Healthy Ageing Partnership Group and sharing learning from this Review to inform future system priorities;**
- b) Working with district and borough councils to pilot Age Friendly Communities in East Sussex to support people to age well; and**
- c) Exploring the use of ageing well ambassador programmes.**

Conclusions

80. The Review has considered a broad range of evidence and Members concluded that supporting adults to age well remains a strong focus of Public Health and that work is driven by strong national and local data and evidence. Although the Review focussed on particular aspects of healthy ageing, Members recognised that there were many factors that contributed to a person's ability to age well, and Public Health provided services and support across a number of these areas.

81. The Board scrutinised a number of ongoing and planned healthy ageing initiatives and concluded that, although it was difficult to measure the long term impacts of these, both for individuals and on service demand, evidence strongly showed that preventative approaches, such as physical activity, could significantly delay, reduce or event prevent people's need for care and therefore should remain a priority for the Department. The Board considered projects and initiatives supported by and facilitated with partners and concluded that maintaining and developing these partnerships should remain a focus and that in light of the significant financial challenges facing the Council, successful partnerships could maximise resources and help provide key preventative services to residents.

82. The Board considered that how people viewed themselves, as well as negative attitudes towards ageing, could impact on how they engaged with healthy ageing behaviours and that many people targeted by healthy ageing initiatives did not identify with some of the language, images and messages being used. For example, older people or seniors' forums and support services are often advertised to people aged 50 and over and many people at this age do not relate to the terms 'older' or 'senior' when seeking services or support. This dissonance with age and ageing, as well as negative attitudes towards ageing, could influence some people's willingness to engage with initiatives and access services or physical aides, which in turn could increase risk of ill health and falls. The Board concluded therefore that there was a need for an ongoing conversation about how older people are defined, communicated to and engaged with in order to tackle ageism and support people to participate in healthy ageing initiatives and behaviours across the life course.

Appendix

Scope and terms of reference of the review

Terms of Reference

On the recommendation of the Scoping Board, the People Scrutiny Committee agreed that this review should explore how the Department can encourage people to age well through physical activity; how more positive attitudes towards ageing can help people to age well; and how the Council can maximise on the opportunities of having an older population

Members agreed that this would be explored through the following **key lines of enquiry**:

1. How can the Department/Council encourage people in midlife and older age to take preventative actions to age well, including activities to be stronger and more active?

- a) What are the barriers to people ageing well with regard to physical activity?
- b) What can the Department do to raise awareness of healthy ageing through physical activity?
- c) Are there successful initiatives elsewhere that the Department could learn from to encourage people to be more active?
- d) How can volunteering contribute to healthy ageing amongst older people in the development and delivery of local services?

2. Changing attitudes towards ageing - can more positive attitudes to healthy ageing help people to age well?

- a) What can the Council/Department do locally to change attitudes about ageing, including workplace attitudes and work with partners?
- b) What can the Council/Department do to celebrate the value, contributions and opportunities of an ageing population in East Sussex?

Board Membership and project support

Review Board Members: Councillors John Ungar (Chair), Nuala Geary, Peter Pragnell, and Trevor Webb.

The Project Manager was Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser with additional support provided by Emma King, Consultant in Public Health and Hayley Martin, Health Improvement Principal

Darrell Gale, Director of Public Health, Ben Brown, Consultant in Public Health, and Samantha McManus, Team Manager, Library and Information Service provided ongoing support to the Board throughout the review.

Review Board meeting dates

Scoping Board meeting - 3 May 2024

First Review Board meeting - 15 May 2024

Second Review Board meeting - 3 June 2024

Third Review Board meeting - 24 June 2024

Fourth Review Board meeting - 11 July 2024

Final Review Board meeting - 20 August 2024

Witnesses providing evidence

The Board would like to thank all the witnesses who provided evidence:

ESCC officers

Steve Broom, Strategic Development Manager

Ross Joannides, Strategic Relationship Manager, Active Sussex

Paul Rideout, Policy Manager (Third Sector)

External Witnesses

Debby Anderson, Hastings Voluntary Action

Emily Khural, Health Manager, Energise Me

Charlotte Lewis, Age-friendly Communities Network Manager, Centre for Ageing Better

Professor Scarlett McNally, BSc MB BChir FRCS(Tr&Orth) MA MBA FAcadMED, Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

Lin Neeve, Chair of East Sussex Seniors Association

Stuart Ramsbottom, Active and Healthy Communities Specialist, Active Rother

Cath Smee, Active Hastings Coordinator

Niall Ryan, Campaign Manager, Centre for Ageing Better

Julia Wells, Chair of HOPE G

Employers represented at the Wellbeing at Work Network meeting

Community Engagement Officer, Care for the Carers

HR Coordinator, Boutique Modern

Clerk, Heathfield & Waldron PC

Practice Manager, Dawson Hart Solicitors Limited

Centre Development Manager, Hastings Advice and Representation

NHS Trust Wellbeing Lead, East Sussex Healthcare

PCN Transformation Manager, Seaford PCN

DSL / Support Worker Eastbourne Foodbank

HR coordinator, Rathfinny Wine Estate

ESG Lead, Gradient Consultants Ltd
 CEO, Community Supporters
 HR Advisor, Age UK East Sussex
 HR & Office Manager, APAC LTD
 HR Manager, Focus-SB LTD

Evidence papers

Item	Date considered
Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2023 <i>Health in an Ageing Society</i>	03/05/2024
AGE UK <i>Healthy Ageing Evidence Review</i>	03/05/2024
Public Health <i>Healthy Ageing related policy and strategies</i>	03/05/2024
ESCC Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy: <i>Healthy lives, healthy people</i>	03/06/2024
Sussex Health & Care Shared Delivery Plan: <i>Improving Lives Together</i>	03/06/2024
Centre for Ageing Better <i>Raising the bar on strength and balance</i>	03/06/2024
Big Talk <i>We Are Undefeatable Report on Bridging the Gap: Understanding how to support people with long term health conditions to become more physically active</i>	03/06/2024
Professor Scarlett McNally, BMJ Report, <i>Focus on physical activity can help avoid unnecessary social care</i>	12/06/24
Centre for Ageing Better <i>Five ways Age-friendly Communities are taking intergenerational approaches</i>	24/06/24
Centre for Ageing Better <i>The enormous contributions older people make to society - and the barriers holding them back</i>	24/06/24
Making it Happen <i>Interim Evaluation Report</i>	24/06/24
World Health Organisation <i>Global Report on Ageism</i>	24/06/24
Centre of Ageing Better Society: <i>The State of Ageing 2023-24</i>	24/06/24
HAIRE project video: <i>We all have something to offer: are older people included in our communities?</i>	24/06/24
Wellbeing at Work Network meeting minutes	22/07/2024
The Lancet Healthy Longevity, <i>Physical activity knows no age limit</i>	26/07/2024

Contact officer: Rachel Sweeney, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Adviser

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Report to:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	13 November 2024
By:	Director of Adult Social Care and Health
Title:	People Scrutiny Committee Review of Healthy Ageing – Observations on the Scrutiny Committee’s report
Purpose:	To provide the Cabinet with the opportunity to comment on the response of the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1. Note and welcome the report of the People Scrutiny Committee; and**
 - 2. Advise the County Council that, in considering the report of the Scrutiny Committee, the Council be recommended to welcome the report and to agree the response of the Director of Adult Social Care and Health to the recommendations and their implementation as set out in the action plan attached as appendix 1 to this report.**
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1. Background

1.1 In March 2024 the People Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish a Review Board to undertake a Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing work in Public Health, Adult Social Care and Health.

1.2 The Scoping Board agreed to focus on the following areas of Healthy Ageing:

- Supporting people to age well through physical activity; and
- How more positive attitudes towards ageing can help people to age well

1.3 The Board also agreed that a key component of the Review should be to recognise, celebrate and maximise the value, contributions and opportunities of an ageing population in East Sussex.

2. Supporting information

2.1 The Scrutiny Review of Healthy Ageing is welcomed by the Department. Public Health will support the Department in responding to the recommendations and implementing the proposed action plan.

2.2 The Board recognised that the scope of the review was not able to focus on all aspects of healthy ageing, but the key lines of enquiry selected were important areas of development that could support healthy ageing in East Sussex.

2.3 The Review acknowledged the value of existing collaborative working with stakeholders across the East Sussex health and care system to support healthy ageing, and the potential of continuing to strengthen these partnerships.

2.4 Partnership working is vital to supporting our residents to age well and make best use of finite resources across the system. We are progressing work to establish the new Healthy Ageing Partnership Group to help take this forward. The learning from this review will be shared to help shape new priorities for this new group.

2.5 The feedback received and the positive response to the work both planned and underway was welcomed. Officers involved in the review process found this to be an interesting, insightful and positive experience and would like to thank the Review Board members for their input, engagement and enthusiasm.

2.6 The Adult Social Care and Health response to the Review Board's recommendations is set out in the action plan attached at Appendix 1.

3. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The Scrutiny Review has highlighted a range of recommendations, many of which recognise the work already underway and the need to continue to build on that.

3.2 The recommendations support the good partnership work already underway, and the learning from this Review will help enhance some of this work. For example, in continuing to strengthen our place based physical activity partnerships and opportunities to support adults to be active into older age and working with Active Sussex to embed physical activity across ASCH pathways.

3.3 The Review Board recommendations acknowledge the key role of the Council as an anchor institution to lead by example and adopt and utilise age friendly approaches in our core work. It also recognises the role of Public Health in working with others across the Council to influence good practice on using age friendly language, images and approaches to supporting staff as they age, so that all council employees can continue to thrive at work as they age.

3.4 All of these recommendations are considered realistic and achievable and reflective of the direction of travel for the council.

3.5 It is recommended that the Cabinet agrees to the implementation of the action plan as detailed in appendix 1.

MARK STANTON

Director of Adult Social Care and Health

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PEOPLE SCRUTINY REVIEW OF HEALTHY AGEING			
SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE AND ACTION PLAN	TIMESCALE	
R1.	<p>The Department should use insights from this Review to strengthen content and promotion of the campaign, 'Getting East Sussex Moving'; sharing messaging and imagery that particularly encourage and promote opportunities for older people to be active and addresses known barriers to participation.</p>	<p>The Department introduced the Getting East Sussex Moving Campaign Toolkit in 2023. The campaign aims to celebrate the places we can be active across the county #GettingEastSussexMoving. It is linked to Active Sussex's strategy 'Getting Sussex Moving'</p> <p>To strengthen the campaign using insights from this review, we will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Invite healthy ageing partners into the campaign steering group to ensure messaging is optimised and linked to other projects or activities (e.g. Stronger for Life funded activities). 2) Tailor the campaign themes for 2024/25 to address issues within ageing, for example messaging for people with a long-term condition, people that have had a fall etc. 3) Tailor the campaign messaging to address known physical activity barriers for this population and to rebut social norms (e.g. tendency for older people to feel a need to 'slow down' or undertake less activity) as well as to impart knowledge (e.g. reasons for doing strength and balance exercise). 4) Seek to build capacity to evaluate the campaign through exploring student placement opportunities. 	<p>October 2024 to August 2025</p> <p>September 2024 to August 2025</p> <p>September 2024 to August 2025</p> <p>By August 2025</p>
R2.	<p>The Department should continue to work with Active Sussex to maximise opportunities to embed physical activity into Adult Social</p>	<p>There is a commitment from the Council and Active Sussex to continue to work collaboratively and co-design interventions that support the healthy ageing agenda up to and beyond the end of the current agreement.</p> <p>To support this recommendation, the ongoing work will include:</p>	<p>By December 2025</p>

	<p>Care processes and pathways, to include but not limited to:</p> <p>a) Upskilling social care staff to confidently raise the issue of physical activity and signpost to physical activity opportunities; and</p> <p>b) Establishing sustainable Stronger for Life strength and balance sessions across clinical, community and care settings in East Sussex, particularly focusing on areas where falls are more prevalent.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Setting out explicitly in the East Sussex Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy, the need for all Departmental services to ensure that its is a basic right for those engaging with services to have the opportunity to move or exercise in a way that works for them, making this the norm. 2) Working with colleagues across the Council to embed movement and activity as an essential offer within agreements with providers. 3) Explore implementation of mandatory training for key job roles to support the workforce to speak more confidently about the importance of movement and activity and how residents can access local support. to achieve this. 4) Utilise an opportunity through the Active Medicine Programme for staff to be trained and then deliver the training for colleagues and services within the Department. 5) Use local insight to target Stronger for Life activities to those most at risk of falling (due to inactivity and lack of strength training, and deconditioning). 6) Work collaboratively with delivery partners to provide and evaluate the Stronger for Life activities. 	
R3.	<p>Continue to support the establishment and the embedding of Active Partnerships across all districts and boroughs in East Sussex, including through:</p> <p>a) Ensuring that the physical activity workforce is able to offer activities that support a range of abilities and health conditions; and</p>	<p>The Active Partnership model aims to increase access and participation in physical activity, and to improve the health of people living and working in the county. They have been commissioned for all districts and boroughs in the county. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Active Rother - Active Hastings - Healthy Wealden - Active Eastbourne and Lewes (partnership due to launch in October 2024) <p>To support this recommendation we will:</p>	

	b) Consulting older people on the types of activity that they wish to take part in.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Establish an Active Partnership for Eastbourne and Lewes. 2) Consult with older people in East Sussex and collect their views (including barriers and enablers) on physical activity through the East Sussex Healthy Weight Plan Community Engagement project. 3) Ensure that insights from the East Sussex Healthy Weight Plan Community Engagement are available at district and borough level and shared with the active partnerships to inform future planning. 4) Share learning about engaging and working with older people at the bi-monthly Active Partnerships networking meeting, and to host a meeting focussed on the topic of healthy ageing. 5) Ensure the Active Partnerships continue to support the physical activity workforce to access development opportunities allowing them to build knowledge and confidence in working with older people. 	<p>Initiated and ongoing</p> <p>Initiated, by March 2025</p> <p>By May 2025</p> <p>By June 2025</p> <p>Initiated and ongoing.</p>
R4.	The Department should explore opportunities, including with partners, for intergenerational activities to create social connections, and tackle ageism.	<p>ASC&H has begun a review to understand the evidence on intergenerational activities, and initial mapping has identified a small number of intergenerational projects in East Sussex. These are mainly led by early years organisations and schools.</p> <p>The learning from this will be shared with the East Sussex Healthy Ageing Partnership Group, to discuss and explore opportunities to encourage intergenerational activities across the health and care system</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>By April 2025</p>
R5.	<p>The Department should work to support people in the workplace as they age, including by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Progressing work with HR to explore the principles within the Age Friendly Employment Pledge to understand how 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Work is ongoing to explore the feasibility of the Council signing up to the Age Friendly Employer Pledge (AFE), to demonstrate commitment, as a large anchor institution, to supporting adults to age well in work. This will include a review of current work on all protected characteristics, not just age, before considering whether to join the AFE pledge. 	2024 and ongoing

	<p>all ages are represented when promoting a range of services;</p> <p>b) That the benefits of an ageing population, including contributions to caring and volunteering, are included in communications about East Sussex; and</p> <p>c) Supporting the development of further training on positive ageing to staff and Members.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) examples of good practice training to help raise awareness of ageism, and encourage more age positive practice 2) opportunities both within the Council, and with partners through the Healthy Ageing Partnership Group, to implement future training opportunities. 	<p>May – Sept 2025</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
R 7	<p>The Department should promote flexible volunteer opportunities that address barriers to volunteering and link people to opportunities based on their interests, ability and skills.</p>	<p>Work is underway with public and strategic VCSE sector partners to develop support for volunteer involving organisations that will enable them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Understand the barriers to volunteering - Learn how to mitigate against these barriers through designing and developing flexible volunteering opportunities. - Have access to communication channels that promote flexible volunteering opportunities to the residents of East Sussex - Have access to platforms to list volunteering opportunities, recruit volunteers, and manage volunteers. <p>This will include ensuring that this activity is applied to volunteering opportunities for young people, people living with disabilities, working age adults, and older people.</p> <p>The Council and partners will work to ensure the information and learning is shared widely with external partners, both strategic and hyper-local partners.</p> <p>Work will be undertaken across the Council to ensure we collectively understand the barriers, mitigations and tools that can be used to address the barriers to volunteering.</p>	<p>This activity is ongoing through VCSE Infrastructure Support, and Tribe contracts, and will be included in new programmes that will come on line in 2025/26.</p>

R 8	<p>The Department should continue to strengthen partnership work to enable further development of healthy ageing workstreams across East Sussex by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Establishing a new multi-agency Healthy Ageing Partnership Group and sharing learning from this Review to inform future system priorities; b) Working with district and borough Councils to pilot Age Friendly Communities in East Sussex to support people to age well; and c) Exploring the use of ageing well ambassador programmes. 	<p>a) It has been agreed with the Integrated Care Board (ICB) Health Outcomes Improvement Oversight Board (HOIOB), to establish a new 'Healthy Ageing Partnership Group' subgroup. This will bring together stakeholders across the health and care system to develop a strategic vision for healthy ageing, and improve joint working and outcomes for healthy ageing related workstreams.</p> <p>The learning from this review will be shared with the new group, to help inform priorities for the group. In particular we will encourage a focus on action to support adults to remain active into older age, tackling ageism and encouraging a more positive narrative on ageing.</p> <p>b&c) The Council will engage with district and borough local authorities to explore potential to pilot Age Friendly Communities in their areas. This will include exploring opportunities to introduce ageing well ambassador programmes.</p>	<p>October 2024 - ongoing</p> <p>October 2024 onwards</p>
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