CABINET

THURSDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 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 16 July 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. Council Monitoring Quarter 1 *(Pages 7 - 74)*
   Report by the Chief Executive.

6. Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR): Update on planning for 2025/26 *(Pages 75 - 90)*
   Report by the Chief Executive.

7. East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy 2024 - 2050 *(Pages 91 - 150)*
   Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

8. Local Transport Plan 4 - adoption *(Pages 151 - 324)*
   Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport.

9. Annual progress report on becoming a carbon neutral Council *(Pages 325 - 340)*
   Report by the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport and the Chief Operating Officer.

10. Any other items considered urgent by the Chair

11. To agree which items are to be reported to the County Council

PHILIP BAKER
Deputy Chief Executive

County Hall, St Anne's Crescent
LEWES BN7 1UE

18 September 2024

Contact Georgina Seligmann, Governance and Democracy Manager
01273 481955
Email: georgina.seligmann@eastsussex.gov.uk

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 16 July 2024.

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

Members spoke on the items indicated:

Councillor Cross	- item 6 (minute 12)
Councillor Claire Dowling	- item 5 (minute 11)
Councillor Field	- item 5 (minute 11)
Councillor Scott	- items 5 and 6 (minute 11 and 12)
Councillor Stephen Shing	- item 5 (minute 11)
Councillor Tutt	- items 5 and 6 (minute 11 and 12)
Councillor Ungar	- item 6 (minute 12)
Councillor Webb	- item 6 (minute 12)
Councillor Wright	- item 5 (minute 11)

8. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JUNE 2024

8.1 The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on the 25 June 2025 were agreed as a correct record.

9. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

9.1 An apology was received from Councillor Carl Maynard.

10. REPORTS

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

11. CARRIAGEWAY PATCHING REPORT

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

11.2 It was RESOLVED to agree to increase the carriageway patching funding allocation by a further £1m for 2024/25, to be focussed on the A and B road network, with this additional expenditure to be funded through the unallocated element of the climate change capital budget.

Reasons

11.3 The winter of 2023/24 had a significant impact on the condition of the highway. The number of potholes increased significantly as a result of the prolonged wet weather combined with periods of freezing temperatures. During the winter period the road condition declined resulting in a large number of defect reports.

11.4 The A and B road network are the most heavily used sections of the overall road network and therefore should be the focus of any additional expenditure. Work on the unclassified

network will continue with our jet patching work which is proving successful in dealing with defects on these roads. The condition of our A and B roads would be improved by an increase in the patching budget. A £1m increase in the patching budget would provide for approximately 11,000 square metres of improved road surface on these sections of the network.

12. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION (LGA) PEER CHALLENGE OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE

12.1 The Cabinet considered a report by the Director of Adult Social Care and Health.

12.2 It was RESOLVED to:

1) Note the findings from the LGA Peer Challenge of Adult Social Care (ASCH);

2) Approve the ASCH Priority Development Plan in response to the LGA challenge and note how the plan aligns with and contributes to existing Council priorities; and

3) Agree arrangements for monitoring progress against the Development Plan through a sub-group of the People Scrutiny Committee.

Reasons

12.3 The process of, and product from, the LGA Peer Challenge has proven immensely beneficial in terms of our preparation for the CQC Assurance process by confirming the current priority areas for development as part of our journey of continuous improvement.

12.4 External assurance of Local Authority Adult Social Care duties has recently been reintroduced after an absence of 14 years. The LGA Peer Review has provided the opportunity to refresh our skills in clearly and concisely identifying and articulating our strengths and also our areas for development. It has been an invaluable ‘dress rehearsal’ for organising and managing a multi-faceted, on-site inspection, in order to ensure an accurate and fair outcome for the Council.

12.5 The product of the Peer Challenge has confirmed that we know our strengths and areas for improvement and has provided us with validation of the priority areas for development to improve our service and support to our residents, contribute to the delivery of Council Plan and ASC Strategy priorities as well as better prepare for the new assurance process.

13. INTERNAL AUDIT ANNUAL REPORT AND OPINION 2023/24

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

13.2 It was RESOLVED to note the internal audit service’s opinion on the Council’s control environment.

Reason

13.3 The report is to give an opinion on the adequacy of East Sussex County Council’s control environment as a contribution to the proper, economic, efficient and effective use of resources. The report covers the audit work completed in the year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 in accordance with the Internal Audit Strategy for 2023/24.

14. ASHDOWN FOREST TRUST FUND 2023/24

14.1 The Cabinet received a report by the Chief Operating Officer.

14.2 It was RESOLVED to note the report and the Ashdown Forest's Trust Income and Expenditure Account for 2023/24 and Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024.

Reason

14.3 The trust made an operating surplus of £7,196 during 2023/24. The General Reserve as at 31 March 2024 amounts to £179,284. This fund is available to finance expenditure which meets the Trust's objectives.

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

15.1 It was agreed that item 8 should be reported to the County Council.
[Note: the item being reported to the County Council refers to minute number 14]

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Title: **Council Monitoring Report – Q1 2024/25**

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **26 September 2024**

Report by: **Chief Executive**

Purpose: **To report Council monitoring for Q1 2024/25**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended 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 para 3.2 and Appendix 8 of the report

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Savings Plan, together with Risks at the end of June 2024.

1.2 Broad progress against the Council's four strategic priority outcomes is summarised in paragraph 5 and an overview of finance and performance data is provided in the Corporate Summary at Appendix 1. Strategic risks are reported at Appendix 8.

2. Carry over report for Council Plan 2023/24

2.1 Outturns are now available for the 7 Council Plan measures for 2023/24, which were carried over from quarter 4. Measures are carried over when action has been completed but outturn data is not available for reporting at year-end. Outturns for these measures are provided in Appendix 3 Adult Social Care and Health and Appendix 4 Business Services Department. Overall, 71% of targets (41 of the 58 Council Plan measures) for 2023/24 were met or exceeded.

3. Council Plan 2024/25 amendments and variations

3.1 The Council Plan 2024/25 and the Portfolio Plans 2024/25 – 2026/27 have been updated with available 2023/24 outturns and final performance measure targets. All plans are published on the Council's website. The Corporate Summary (Appendix 1) contains a forecast of performance against targets.

3.2 The Strategic Risk Register, Appendix 8, was reviewed and updated to reflect the Council's risk profile. The 'Care Act reviews and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments' risk has been included as a new risk to the Strategic Risk Register. Risk 1 (Roads) and Risk 4 (Health) have updated risk definition and risk controls. Risk 5 (Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources) and Risk 8 (Capital Programme) have updated risk definitions. Risk 6 (Local Economic Growth), Risk 9 (Workforce), Risk 12 (Cyber Attack), Risk 15 (Climate) and Risk 20 (Placements for Children and Young People in Our Care) have updated risk controls.

4 Budget Outturn

4.1 The detailed revenue projections for each department are set out in the relevant appendices which show an aggregate total overspend of £23.4m. All departments are overspending, reflecting the difficult financial situation that the Council, along with many others, face. The main headlines are:

- Children's Services (CSD) is forecast to overspend by £12.5m; the main areas of projected overspend being Early Help and Social Care and Home to School Transport. The Early Help and Social Care overspend of £7.4m is due in the main to pressures around agency placements and Children's Homes within Looked After Children, and staffing costs within Localities. Home to School Transport has a forecast overspend of £4.8m due to growth in

numbers of pupils and unit costs for transport that have far outstripped what was estimated during the budget setting process. Proposals for cost avoidance are being developed by Communities, Economy and Transport and CSD.

- The forecast overspend for Adult Social Care is £9.8m which largely relates to the Independent Sector, where the overspend is forecast to be £10.3m. This is due to a combination of factors, primarily being increasing complexity of need and pressures arising from demand and demographic growth returning to pre-pandemic levels. Mitigations to manage the overspend down include improving income collection and reviewing high-cost packages to ensure care is at the appropriate level for clients. There is a forecast underspend in Directly Provided Services of £0.5m due to staffing vacancies which reflects the difficulties in recruitment.
- Communities, Economy and Transport is showing a forecast overspend of £0.2m. The largest overspend is in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted.
- There is a forecast overspend of £0.7m for Business Services, mainly in Property Services, as a result of increased accommodation and reactive maintenance costs.
- Governance Services is expected to overspend by £0.2m; mostly in Legal Services due to the cost of locum cover for staff vacancies and maternity leave.

4.2 Within Centrally Held Budgets (CHB), including Treasury Management (TM), and corporate funding there is an underspend of £14.0m, which includes the general contingency:

- There is currently an estimated £1.6m underspend on TM, based on a robust investment strategy approach and slippage on the capital programme reducing the need to borrow in 2024/25. It should be noted that there has been a fall in cash investment balances; whilst above benchmark returns are being achieved, the level of balances has fallen by 29% in one year to £213.7m at the end of June 2024.
- Within CHB the forecast underspend of £6.5m is due to the General Contingency of £5.3m, and £1.3m available from not transferring this contribution to the Capital Programme.
- Corporate Funding budgets are underspending by £5.9m, due to the additional allocations of Social Care Services Grants totalling £5.4m, approved by Cabinet on 25 June 2024, plus an additional £0.5m received for business rates 2023/24 pooling and reliefs.

4.3 The net impact of the above is an unplanned draw from the financial management reserve of £9.4m in 2024/25. This is in addition to the planned £14.3m draw to present a balanced position in setting the 2024/25 budget. The Council's projected level of strategic reserves was last assessed to be £16.7m as of March 2029. Making this additional draw would reduce this to £7.3m. For comparison, the latest published budget gap after likely funding scenarios for 2025/26 is £26.6m. Any reduction in unallocated reserves reduces the flexibility available in dealing with the challenge of addressing next year's projected deficit and setting a balanced budget, without having to seek further savings. In this context, to address the projected in-year overspend and reduce the required draw from reserves, the Council is taking a number of actions to reduce spending in 2024/25, including:

- Additional controls on purchase orders, including the requirement for orders above £1,000 to be supported by a business case and approved by a reviewing board.
- An updated recruitment protocol, including CMT approval of non-core role recruitment.
- A review of P-Card expenditure and reset of card spend limits.
- Reviewing proposed savings for 2025/26 to identify whether actions can be brought forward into 2024/25.
- Asking departments to identify any further actions to reduce in-year spend across all budgets.

4.4 Capital Programme net expenditure for the year is projected to be £84.7m (gross £104.7m) against a budget of £84.2m (gross £108.5m), a net variation of £0.5m (gross £3.8m). The main headlines are:

- A slippage risk factor has been applied to the capital programme to reflect likely slippage based on a risk assessment of historic levels of actual expenditure and slippage at a project/programme level. The risk factor will be 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.
- Total slippage of £10.7m across a number of projects relating to various project specific factors. The largest areas of slippage include Bridge Assessment and Strengthening (£4.4m), Exceat Bridge Replacement (£2.4m), Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2a (£1.2m) and the IT&D Strategy Implementation programme (£0.8m).
- Total spend in advance of £6.4m, mainly relating to integrated transport projects that are planned based on a revised programme agreed by Lead Member.
- A net overspend of £0.5m, relating to house adaptations at disabled children's homes where demand is managed through the capital reserve (£0.3m) and Bexhill and Hastings Link Road (£0.2) where project costs remain for post excavation archaeology, landscaping, and compensation.

5 Progress against Council Priorities

Driving sustainable economic growth

5.1 The Council has spent £349m with 904 local suppliers over the past 12 months. This was 63% of our total spend exceeding our target of 60%. During quarter 1, we have continued to work with suppliers to maximise the social value delivered by our contracts. The benefits seen from these contracts were equal to 13% of the applicable contract values achieved, against a target of 10%. The social value commitments made by suppliers during quarter 1 included apprenticeships, creating jobs for local people and initiatives to reduce carbon emissions (Appendix 4).

5.2 Work on our highways has continued in quarter 1, using the extra funding approved by the Council in recognition of the deterioration of the network following the last prolonged, wet and cold winter. We completed 40 patch repairs across 26 sites in quarter 1. This has had an impact on the condition of the network and has enabled us to carry out works above and beyond our usual programmes. We also delivered 196 drainage schemes. These included replacing gully covers and clearing significant blockages. We completed 68 road improvement schemes in quarter 1, and repaired 7,450 potholes (Appendix 6).

5.3 165 pupils attended Open Doors visits during quarter 1, giving them experience of a workplace. The Careers Hub ran training for schools and colleges in June 2024, with over 50 people attending. The training focused on future skills, the visitor economy, health and social care, construction and the green industries (Appendix 6).

5.4 Council delivered business support programmes have helped to create a number of jobs. The Newhaven Business Grants Programme created 10 full-time equivalent jobs in quarter 1. We expect that the programme will create over 20 full-time equivalent roles (Appendix 6).

Keeping vulnerable people safe

5.5 The rate of Looked After Children has increased in quarter 1 from 655 (61.5 per 10,000) at the end of March 2024, to 684 (66.6 per 10,000) at the end of June 2024. There has been a continued focus on returning children to their families in quarter 1. However, there has also been a significant increase in admissions to care. 67 children were admitted to care in quarter 1, with 38 discharged from care. There was a 6.7% reduction in the number of children with a Child Protection Plan in quarter 1. The figure fell from 688 (64.6 per 10,000) at the end of March 2024, to 642 (62.5 per 10,000) at the end of June 2024 (Appendix 5).

5.6 The Council's Connected Families Intervention Practitioners (CFIP) have continued to provide dedicated support to parents, support families to stay together and improve the wellbeing and life chances of children. In quarter 1, CFIP delivered specialist interventions with 160 Children in Need or Child Protection cases. Since the launch of CFIP in January 2024 there have been a 14% reduction in the number of children with a Child Protection Plan. The average number of Children in Need case closures has also increased by 91%, from 60 per month in early 2024, to 115 per month in May 2024 (Appendix 5).

5.7 In February 2024, the Council agreed to invest an extra £1.7m in our inhouse foster care programme. During quarter 1, the Council introduced a new payment structure for foster carers. The new structure included a commitment for payments to keep pace with the National Minimum Allowance. We are also working with 19 other local authorities in the South East to launch a new regional fostering hub. During quarter 1, there has been a 47% increase in the number of enquiries about becoming a foster carer, when compared to quarter 1 2023/24. 8 new households also became a foster carer, providing 11 new places for vulnerable children (Appendix 5).

5.8 The Lansdowne secure children's home reopened in February 2024. The number of children in the home has increased as staffing numbers have grown, with 4 children resident at the end of quarter 1. The education provision at the home is operating well and delivering a creative and comprehensive curriculum. Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust is commissioned to provide health services at Lansdowne. The Trust has experienced delays in recruitment which has had some impact on which children we have been able to place in Lansdowne. The Trust has recently recruited to critical roles which will support us to meet the needs of a more diverse group from September 2024 (Appendix 5).

5.9 The Supporting Families transformation programme has continued to be a key part of the drive to develop a joined-up whole family, whole system approach to Early Intervention. The number of families Children's Services are working with has continued to increase as they broaden the programme. In quarter 1,560 families received a family support intervention. There were also 184 successful payments by results claims (Appendix 5).

5.10 During quarter 1 the Safer East Sussex Team, in partnership with colleagues from Trading Standards and Get Safe Online, attended the 999 Event in Eastbourne. The teams helped raise awareness of fraud and scams with hundreds of members of the public, to try and keep vulnerable people safe (Appendix 3).

Helping people help themselves

5.11 We supported 57 carers by short-term crisis intervention in quarter 1. The service relies on receiving referrals either directly from carers or via other organisations. However, we received fewer referrals than usual in quarter 1. The provider is continuing to promote the service, while a review is undertaken to understand whether the level of demand and need has changed (Appendix 3).

5.12 The Tribe app and website, which makes it easier for people to volunteer across the county, has continued to grow. There were over 2,500 listings for volunteer opportunities and activities and 23,000 views by users during quarter 1. The Council and Tribe led a social media campaign during Volunteers Week in June 2024. This campaign led to over 6,000 views of the Youth Justice Services opportunities and the recruitment of 16 new volunteers (Appendix 3).

5.13 During 2023/24 (reported a quarter in arrears) 2,066 NHS Health Checks were delivered to people in the most deprived communities in East Sussex, against a target of 2,300. We did see the expected increase in Health Checks in a number of areas during 2023/24. However, this didn't occur in the Hasting & St Leonards Primary Care Network area. This area has the highest number of patients from areas ranked among the most deprived in the country (Appendix 3).

Making best use of resources now and for the future

5.14 During quarter 1 the Leader and Chief Executive continued to raise issues and priorities for the county with our local MPs. In June, Cabinet agreed the Council's productivity plan. The plan

provided an opportunity to put forward a range of financial, legislative and policy burdens and barriers that Government could reduce or remove. We submitted the plan to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. We also submitted the plan to the Local Government Association to support it in its sector wide lobbying (Appendix 7).

5.15 We completed 6 energy efficiency schemes in quarter 1. These schemes included 1 LED lighting project, 4 Solar PV energy generation projects and 1 heat decarbonisation scheme. The Council is reviewing its capital programme as part of the RPPR process. This review may result in some projects planned for 2024/25 being deferred into later years. Total carbon emissions for 2023/24 (reported a quarter in arrears) saw a 36% reduction compared to the baseline year 2019/20, against a target of 43%. Calculated carbon emissions from the Council's electricity consumption increased during 2023/24. This was despite a fall in the amount of electricity being used. This was due to changes in the carbon emission factor. This is the figure used to convert electricity consumption from the national grid into equivalent carbon emissions. The carbon emission factor for electricity fell by over 24% between 2019/20 and 2022/23 as renewables increasingly replaced coal in the generation mix. However, for 2023/24, this trend reversed, and the carbon emissions factor increased (Appendix 4).

5.16 The Council has continued to work with a range of partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work in quarter 1. This included completing an assessment of county-wide risks and vulnerabilities to climate change. We will use this assessment to inform how adaptation can be integrated into service plans. A salary sacrifice scheme was also implemented to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles by staff. The Council worked with a local farming partnership to secure funding from the Environment Agency's Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund to enable the partnership to begin to develop local carbon offsets (Appendix 6).

5.17 The quarter 1 sickness absence figure is 2.17 days per Full Time Equivalent employee, an 11.9% increase on the same period in 2023/24. The predominant reason for the increase in absence rates is a rise in days lost due to cold/flu absences (Appendix 4).

Becky Shaw, Chief Executive

How to read this report

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

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

Cover report, Appendix 1 and Appendix 2

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

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

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

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

Departmental Appendices 3-7

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

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

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

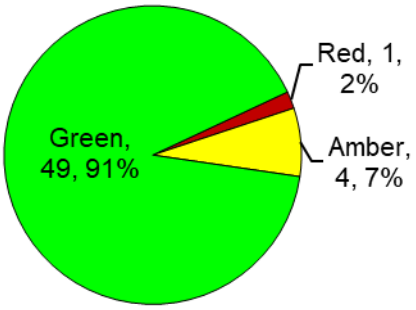
Strategic Risk Register Appendix 8

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

Council Monitoring Corporate Summary – Q1 2024/25

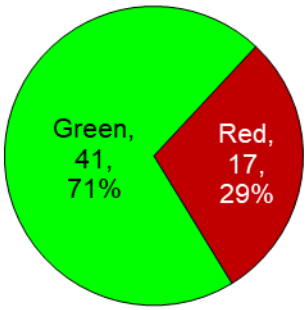
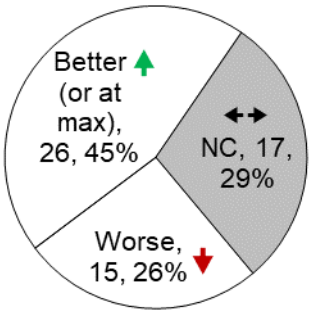
Council Plan performance targets

Priority	Red	Amber	Green
Driving sustainable economic growth	0	0	25
Keeping vulnerable people safe	0	1	9
Helping people help themselves	0	1	11
Making best use of resources now and for the future	1	2	4
Total	**1**	**4**	**49**

Performance overview Q1 2024/25	Measures off target by department
	There are 54 measures in the Council Plan. In Q1, 3 departments had measures that were off target. ASCH – 1 Amber measure BSD – 1 Red measure, 2 Amber measures CSD – 1 Amber measure

Final Council Plan outturn summary for year ending 2023/24

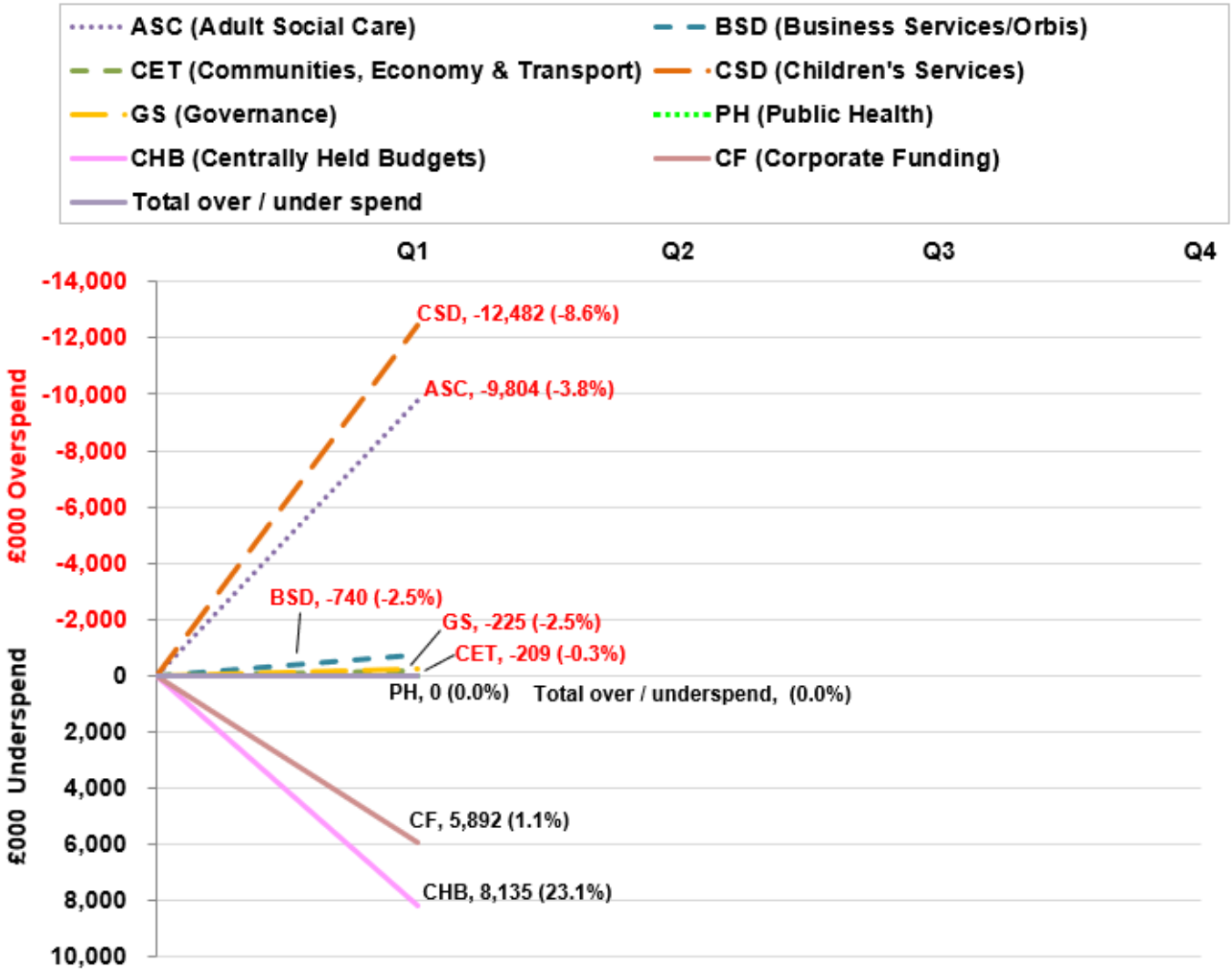
7 measures were reported as carry overs at the end of Q4 2023/24. Outturns for these measures are now available and the charts below summarise the final year end position for the 58 council plan targets in 2023/24. Where available, performance improvement relative to 2022/23 is summarised under Direction of travel.

2023/24 – Final	Direction of travel since 2022/23
	

Direction of Travel key:

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

Revenue budget outturn (net £000)



Revenue budget summary (£000) 2024/25

Services:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Adult Social Care	386,574	(126,617)	259,957	423,500	(153,739)	269,761	(36,926)	27,122	(9,804)
Public Health	38,265	(38,265)	-	37,227	(37,227)	-	1,038	(1,038)	-
Business Services / Orbis	59,467	(29,752)	29,715	60,044	(29,589)	30,455	(577)	(163)	(740)
Children's Services	445,462	(300,569)	144,893	463,541	(306,166)	157,375	(18,079)	5,597	(12,482)
Communities, Economy & Transport	164,456	(91,953)	72,503	165,679	(92,967)	72,712	(1,223)	1,014	(209)
Governance Services	9,660	(614)	9,046	9,872	(601)	9,271	(212)	(13)	(225)
Total Services	**1,103,884**	**(587,770)**	**516,114**	**1,159,863**	**(620,289)**	**539,574**	**(55,979)**	**32,519**	**(23,460)**

APPENDIX 1

Centrally Held Budgets (CHB):

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Treasury Management	19,980	(8,900)	11,080	17,504	(8,029)	9,475	2,476	(871)	1,605
Capital Programme	1,300	-	1,300	-	-	-	1,300	-	1,300
Unfunded Pensions	4,702	-	4,702	4,702	-	4,702	-	-	-
General Contingency	5,270	-	5,270	-	-	-	5,270	-	5,270
Provision for Budgetary Risks	6,217	-	6,217	6,217	-	6,217	-	-	-
Apprenticeship Levy	772	-	772	826	-	826	(54)	-	(54)
Levies, Grants & Other	7,154	(1,270)	5,884	7,063	(1,464)	5,599	91	194	285
Debt Impairment	-	-	-	271	-	271	(271)	-	(271)
Total Centrally Held Budgets	**45,395**	**(10,170)**	**35,225**	**36,583**	**(9,493)**	**27,090**	**8,812**	**(677)**	**8,135**

Corporate Funding:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Business Rates	-	(101,362)	(101,362)	-	(101,821)	(101,821)	-	459	459
Revenue Support Grant	-	(4,346)	(4,346)	-	(4,346)	(4,346)	-	-	-
Service Grant	-	(478)	(478)	-	(524)	(524)	-	46	46
Council Tax	-	(373,550)	(373,550)	-	(373,550)	(373,550)	-	-	-
Social Care Grant	-	(56,705)	(56,705)	-	(62,092)	(62,092)	-	5,387	5,387
New Homes Bonus	-	(554)	(554)	-	(554)	(554)	-	-	-
Total Corporate Funding	**0**	**(536,995)**	**(536,995)**	**0**	**(542,887)**	**(542,887)**	**0**	**5,892**	**5,892**

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
TOTAL	**1,149,279**	**(1,134,935)**	**14,344**	**1,196,446**	**(1,172,669)**	**23,777**	**(47,167)**	**37,734**	**(9,433)**
One-off Use of Financial Management Reserve 2024/25	-	(14,344)	(14,344)	-	(14,344)	(14,344)	-	-	-
Use of FM Reserve to cover overspend	-	-	-	-	(9,433)	(9,433)	-	9,433	9,433
FINAL TOTAL	**1,149,279**	**(1,149,279)**	**0**	**1,196,446**	**(1,196,446)**	**0**	**(47,167)**	**47,167**	**0**

APPENDIX 1

Revenue Savings Summary 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target for 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved
ASC	-	-	-	-	-
BSD/Orbis	693	1,003	679	324	0
CS	-	-	-	-	-
CET	0	805	374	371	60
GS	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	**693**	**1,808**	**1,053**	**695**	**60**
ASC			-	-	-
BSD / Orbis			-	-	-
CS			-	-	-
CET			-	-	-
GS			-	-	-
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**
Total Savings & Permanent Changes	**693**	**1,808**	**1,053**	**695**	**60**

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding [2]	Part of reported variance [3]	Total
ASC	-	-	**0**
BSD / Orbis	-	324	**324**
CS	-	-	**0**
CET	-	431	**431**
GS	-	-	**0**
Total	**0**	**755**	**755**

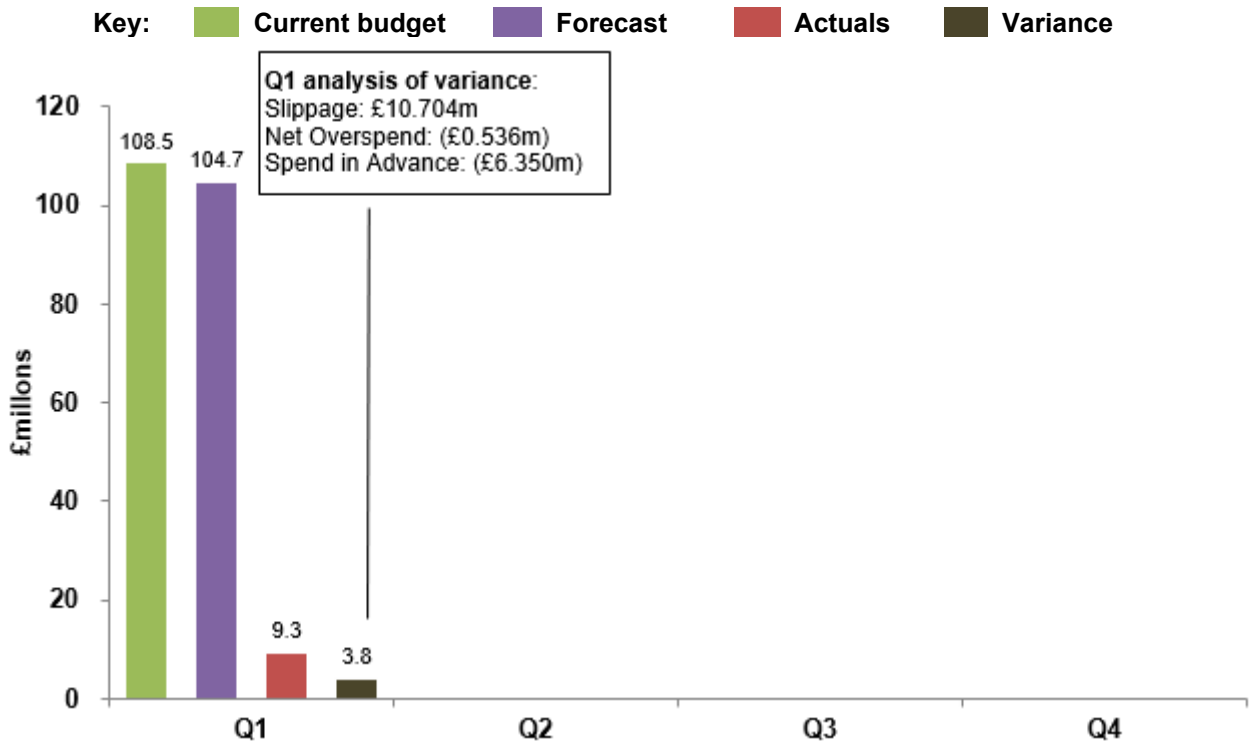
[1] Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

Capital Programme (gross £ millions) – approved projects



Capital Programme Summary 2024/25 (£'000)

	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance
Adult Social Care	3,820	904	3,820	0	0	0	0
Business Services	36,015	2,493	35,186	829	0	829	0
Children's Services	1,936	7	2,085	(149)	(290)	141	0
Communities, Economy & Transport	66,699	5,884	63,561	3,138	(246)	9,734	(6,350)
Gross Expenditure (Planned Programme)	**108,470**	**9,288**	**104,652**	**3,818**	**(536)**	**10,704**	**(6,350)**
Corporate Slippage Risk Factor	*(24,281)*		*(19,927)*	*(4,354)*		*(10,704)*	*6,350*
Net Expenditure	***84,189***	***9,288***	***84,725***	***(536)***	***(536)***	***0***	***0***
Developer Contributions	2,780	-	-	-	-	-	-
Other Specific Funding	29,912	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	4,802	-	-	-	-	-	-
Formula Grants	25,772	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reserves and Revenue Set Aside	12,846	-	-	-	-	-	-
Borrowing	8,077	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total Funding	**84,189**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**

Treasury Management

The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), which provides the framework for managing the Council's cash balances and borrowing requirement, continues to reflect a policy of ensuring minimum risk, whilst aiming to deliver secure realistic investment income on the Council's cash balances. Cash investment balances as at 30 June 2024 have fallen by 29% in one year, from £299.9m at Q1 2023/24 to £213.7m at Q1 2024/25.

The average level of Council funds available for investment purposes during Q1 was £217.354m. The total amount received in short term interest for Q1 was £2.972m at an average rate of 5.48%, compared to £2.999m at an average rate of 5.39% for Q4 2023/24.

The Bank of England Base Rate was maintained in Q1 at 5.25%. The investment return outlook had improved during previous quarters of 2023/24 however, the potential for increased interest rates into the future has ended, 5.25% is expected to be the peak and the latest forecasts suggest marginal decreases in the bank rate into 2024/25. Where possible a number of fixed term deposits with local authorities and banks were placed for periods up to 1 year in Q1, this will help secure investment returns into 2024/25. The investment strategy approach in the previous quarters to 'ladder' deposits has created a steady maturity profile, this will ensure the Council's cashflow and liquidity requirements are covered into 2024/25.

No short-term borrowing was required in Q1. The majority of the Council's external debt, totalling £211.6m at Q1, is held as long-term loans. No long-term borrowing was undertaken in Q1, and no further cost-effective opportunities have arisen during Q1 to restructure the existing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or wider debt portfolio.

The Treasury Management budget is currently forecasting to underspend by £1.6m. This is based on the position outlined above with regard to balances held and investment returns and slippage on the capital programme removing the need to borrow externally in 2024/25.The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council on 6 February 2024, are set out at Appendix 2.

Reserves and Balances 2024/25 (£000)

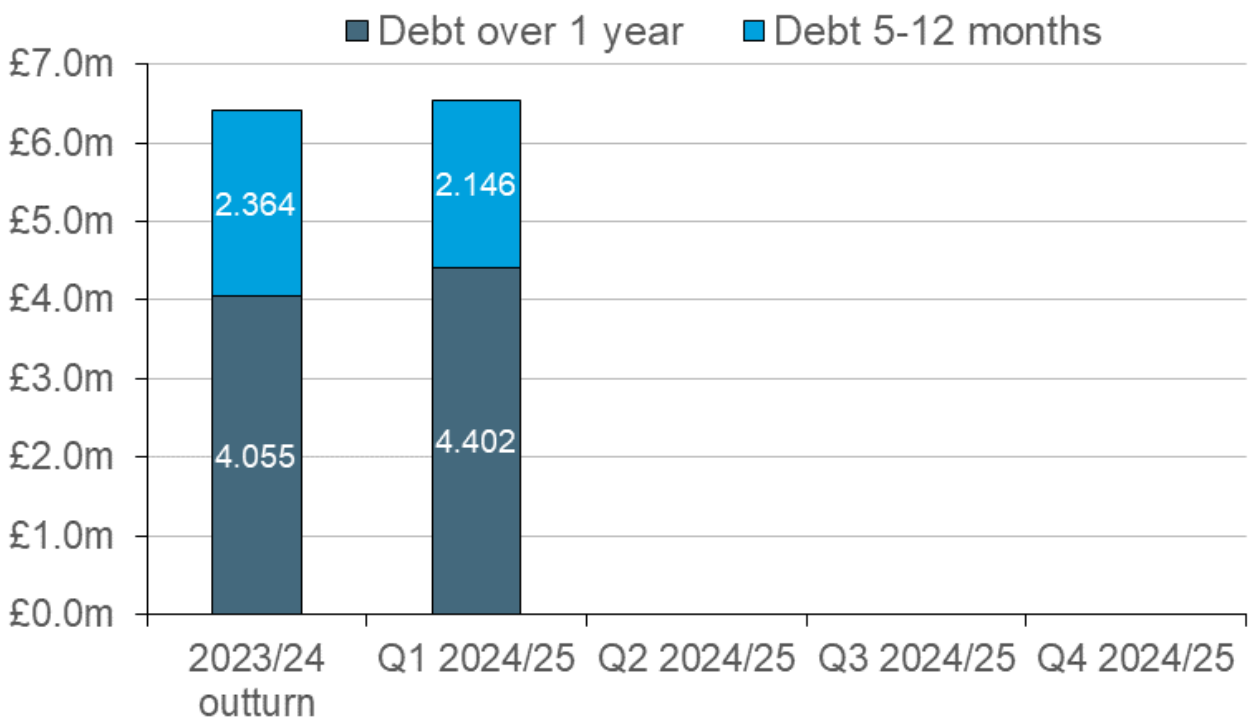
Reserve / Balance	Balance at 1 Apr 2024	Planned net use	Forecast net use at Q1	Movement	Estimated balance at 31 Mar 2025
Statutorily ringfenced or held on behalf of others:					
Balances held by schools	18,258	-	-	-	18,258
Public Health	6,294	(2,168)	(2,168)	-	4,126
Other	6,752	(1,342)	(1,342)	-	5,410
Subtotal	**31,304**	**(3,510)**	**(3,510)**	**0**	**27,794**
Service Reserves:					
Corporate Waste	19,486	(501)	(501)	-	18,985
Capital Programme	9,851	(1,444)	(1,444)	-	8,407
Insurance	7,358	-	-	-	7,358
Adult Social Care	3,034	(55)	(55)*	-	2,979
Subtotal	**39,729**	**(2,000)**	**(2,000)**	**0**	**37,729**
Strategic Reserves:					
Priority / Transformation	7,314	(4,641)	(4,641)	-	2,673
Financial Management	35,806	(18,135)	(18,135)*	-	17,671
Subtotal	**43,120**	**(22,776)**	**(22,776)**	**0**	**20,344**
Total Reserves	**114,153**	**(28,286)**	**(28,286)**	**0**	**85,867**
General Fund	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
Total Reserves and Balances	**124,153**	**(28,286)**	**(28,286)**	**0**	**95,867**

*NB: currently excludes any transfers relating to Q1 variances.

Changes to Fees & Charges

No changes during quarter 1.

Outstanding debt analysis (£ millions)



The value of debt aged over 5 months at Q1 has increased by £0.129m to £6.548m compared to the 2023/24 outturn position of £6.419m.

The majority, £6.332m (96.7%), of all debt over 5 months old relates to Adult Social Care (ASC), which has increased by £0.348m compared with the 2023/24 outturn position of £5.984m.

The debt over 5 months related to income due to other departments has decreased by £0.219m, to £0.216m, compared with the 2023/24 outturn position of £0.435m.

Debt recovery related to ASC client contributions can often take a long time due to circumstance of the debtors. For example, an ASC client may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves and an appointee, deputy or power of attorney therefore needs to be established, or the debt forms part of the administration of an estate.

Recovery of debt continues to be a high priority. As part of ongoing improvement work a project to review and improve the ASC debt recovery model is progressing. The ASC Debt case panel continues to meet monthly to review complex and high value debt cases, ensuring the most appropriate next steps are taken to recover debt with sensitivity and consideration of the clients or families concerned and in accordance with the Care Act.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – Q1 2024/25

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy published the revised Treasury and Prudential codes in 2021, which now requires quarterly reporting of performance against forward looking prudential indicators. The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council at its meeting of 7 February 2024, are set out below.

Investments

Cash investment balances as at 30 June 2024 have fallen by 29% in one year, from £299.9m at Q1 2023/24 to £213.7m. The average investment return over Q1 was 5.48% performing above the benchmark rate by 29 basis points (or 0.29 percentage points). Performance has improved as a result of reinvesting maturing investments in a duration matched to a peak in the forecast Bank of England (BoE) bank interest rate.

Quarter	Average Investment Balance £m	Average Investment return	Average Benchmark Rate*	Difference
Q1	217.354	5.48%	5.19%	0.29%

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

During Q1 we have monitored the security of the Council's investment, to assess the risk of those investments losing their value. These risks were assessed using the financial standing of the groups invested in, the length of each investment, and the historic default rates. Our investment strategy sets an allowable risk level of 0.050% (i.e. that there is a 99.95% probability that the Council will get its investments back). The actual indicator ranged between 0.006% and 0.009%, reflecting the high proportion of investments held in highly secure and/or very liquid investments.

Investment Risk benchmark	0.050%
Maximum investment risk experienced Q1	0.009%

Borrowing

The table below shows the Council's total external borrowing and average rate as at 30 June 2024:

	Balance as at 30 June 2024 £m	Average Rate
PWLB	205.142	4.45%
Market Loans	6.450	4.25%
Total borrowing	**211.592**	**4.44%**

The table below shows the Q1 Forecast of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) compared to the estimate within the 2024/25 strategy approved in February 2024. The CFR is expected to give rise to new borrowing required of £63.307m by the end of the year, compared to the original estimate of £75.000m. The strategy currently forecasts that the level of reserves and balances in the medium term allows for internal borrowing (using internal resources such as useable reserves or temporary working capital) of up to £75.000m, and therefore it is expected no external borrowing is required to support the capital programme during 2024/25.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (Underlying Borrowing Need)	Original Estimate 2024/25 £m	Revised forecast as at 30 June 2024 £m
Opening CFR	280.571	275.676
Borrowing Need	32.143	6.983
Minimum Revenue Provision	(7.406)	(7.760)

Closing CFR	**304.684**	**274.899**
External Borrowing as at 30 June 2024		**211.592**
Forecast Under-borrowing (if no action taken)		**63.307**

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

Borrowing Limits	**Operational Boundary £m**	**Authorised Borrowing Limit £m**
Limit set for 2024/25	393.000	413.000
Less: PFI & Leases	58.000	58.000
Limit for Underlying Borrowing	335.000	355.000
Actual External Borrowing at 30 June	211.592	211.592
Headroom*	123.408	143.408

**Authorised Borrowing headroom cannot be less than zero*

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

Maturity Structure of borrowing	**Lower Limit set**	**Upper Limit set**	**Actual as at 30 June 2024**
Under 12 Months	0%	25%	0%
12 months to 2 years	0%	40%	3%
2 years to 5 years	0%	60%	6%
5 years to 10 years	0%	70%	24%
Over 10 years	0%	90%	67%

Adult Social Care and Health – Q1 2024/25
Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Adult Social Care (ASC)

Demand for support services

Adult Social Care commission and provide a range of services and support to working age adults and older people across East Sussex, in accordance with Care Act 2014 requirements. We are seeing an increasing complexity of need among our clients and demand for services has now returned to pre-pandemic levels. We are continuing to maintain a good level of performance against most of our measures, however the additional pressures facing the service are having a significant impact on our financial position. Details of the work being undertaken to address these issues are provided in the Revenue Budget Summary section.

Health and Social Care integration

The five-year Shared Delivery Plan has been refreshed for year two to continue delivery of the Sussex Integrated Care Strategy, 'Improving Lives Together', and the East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board Strategy. Key shared priorities are the development of Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) aligned to our five district and borough footprints in East Sussex, improving population health, and a neighbourhood delivery model for integrated care. The leadership infrastructure has been identified and initial development sessions held for all 5 ICTs which included exploring data and insight packs. The second Hastings 'frontrunner' ICT session took place in May 2024 with 29 attendees from across health and care with a focus on Multi-disciplinary Team (MDT) working, opportunities to strengthen relationships across the care and support network, and identifying what could be further developed at pace. Similar follow up sessions for the remaining four ICTs are planned for Q2 and a broader exercise of mapping services and assets is also underway. East Sussex plans align with the broader approach across Sussex.

Adults are able to take control of the support they receive

At the end of Q1, 27.6% of adults and older people were receiving Direct Payments, a total of 1,493 people. This number has slightly decreased since March 2024 and the number of people receiving community based long term support (the denominator) has continued to increase, resulting in a small drop in performance, however the target is being met. Practice continues to be that Direct Payments are always considered when deciding how to meet an adult's care needs and identified outcomes and are offered as an option where appropriate.

Reabling people to maximise their level of independence

Reablement services help people regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. The two measures below are used to look at how effective reablement services:

- Between 1 April 2023 and 31 March 2024, 92.5% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement / rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after their discharge from hospital **(ref vi)**.
- No further request was made for ongoing support for 95.5% people who received short-term services between April and June 2024.

Homes for Ukraine

As of 30 June 2024, since the start of the war, a total of 1,874 guests had arrived in East Sussex under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, sponsored and hosted by 849 sponsors. A significant number (732) have successfully moved from hosted accommodation into independent private sector accommodation.

Third Sector support

Co-development results for the Community Network Support Programme were shared with cross-sector Community Network Leads in Q1. The results were framed as themes, factors, and conditions for success, with local partners identifying existing support and areas for development. The conditions for success will be further discussed during Q2.

Tribe promotes a number of Council volunteering opportunities as well as opportunities in the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. This continues to grow, with over 2,500 listings for volunteer opportunities and activities and 23,000 views during Q1.

The Council and Tribe led a social media campaign in partnership with HVA (Hastings Voluntary Action), RVA (Rother Voluntary Action), and 3VA (Voluntary Action in Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes District) during Volunteers Week in June. Following this, the Youth Justice Services fed back that they had 'an amazing response', with their opportunities viewed over 6,000 times on Tribe, and the successful recruitment of 16 new volunteers.

Tribe has also worked with East Sussex Libraries to list 80 volunteer opportunities that are on offer across all Council libraries.

Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention

The number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention **(ref i)** in Q1 was 57, against a target of 390 for 2024/25. The service relies on receiving referrals either direct from carers or via other organisations and it has received fewer referrals for carer support than usual. The provider will continue to promote their service to other carer organisations to raise their profile, whilst a review is undertaken to understand whether the level of demand for this service has reduced and the need has changed.

Safer Communities

Substance Misuse

During Q1, the focus has been on remodelling the drug and alcohol treatment service in light of additional funding relating to Project ADDER in 2024/25 and the outcome of the Dame Carol Black review. Funding for Project Adder is due to end in April 2025.

The Harm to Hope Partnership continues to deliver on its strategic objectives in order to reduce substance misuse-related harm and mortality, crime, and anti-social behaviour. A specialist pathway for those with liver conditions is now underway and the treatment service continues to work towards the ambitious aim of 100% micro-elimination of Hepatitis C. Micro-elimination tackles Hepatitis C in local areas, using a series of targets to make sure that people are being diagnosed and getting the treatment they need. The Continuity of Care (between prison and community treatment services) audit continues to progress, with the majority of actions now complete.

Treatment for opiate misuse

At the end of Q4 (reported a quarter in arrears), there were 1,071 individuals in treatment for opiate use, an increase on Q3 **(ref v)**. Of those in treatment for opiate use, 58% in East Sussex are showing substantial treatment progress, compared to 46% in England.

Drug and alcohol related deaths

The latest retrospective figures for deaths resulting from drug or alcohol misuse show 77 people died in 2022. This is fewer than the previous year. Every death is a tragedy. We continue to work hard to reduce the number of deaths every year, including working with partners to ensure people receive support as early as possible and to support treatment. The Harm to Hope Board will sign up to the East Sussex Partnership Protocol 2024-2026, to better align the processes for reviewing unexpected deaths.

Domestic Violence and Abuse, Sexual Violence and Abuse Services

The Safer Communities Partnership Board published four Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) of deaths that occurred in 2019 and 2020. These highlight system-wide learning to try to prevent future deaths as far as possible. The Council also responded to the Home Office's consultation on updated statutory guidance on conducting DHRs.

The Safer Communities Team continued developing the White Ribbon action plan and recruited six new Champions and three new Ambassadors.

In 2023/24, our support services also exceeded their targets in three key areas (reported a quarter in arrears). Firstly, 96.1% of people affected by domestic violence and abuse had improved safety/support measures in place upon leaving the support service **(ref ii)**. Secondly, 90.2% of people affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse had improved coping strategies when they left the support service **(ref iii)**. Finally, 3.9% of people who accessed additional support from our specialist commissioned domestic abuse service were older **(ref iv)**.

Fraud and Scams

The Safer East Sussex Team, in partnership with colleagues from Trading Standards, and Get Safe Online attended the 999 Event on Eastbourne lawns, raising awareness about fraud and scams with hundreds of members of the public.

Preventing Violent Extremism

34 community safety awareness raising sessions and Prevent-themed educational support sessions were delivered to organisations within the county. This includes schools, colleges, partners, and the wider community. In total approximately 1,695 students and staff interacted with the sessions in Q1.

Serious Violence

The Safer Communities Team worked with voluntary, community and social enterprise partners in each district and borough area to conduct research and engagement with seldom heard voices about public place violence. The findings of this engagement will help develop action plans to tackle and reduce the causes of antisocial behaviour and crime.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

The Safer Communities Team hosted the Sussex Anti-Slavery Network in June 2024, bringing together voluntary sector, community, faith, and statutory agencies to share information about training, resources, and identification of risk.

Public Health

NHS Health Checks

The NHS Health Checks programme is intended to be accessible to those living in the most deprived areas. The year end outturn for 2023/24 was 2,066 / 2,300 NHS Health Checks delivered - 90% of the annual target was met **(ref vii)**. Whilst we did see the expected uptick in NHS Health Checks due to NHS Sussex Locally Commissioned Services being decommissioned across two thirds of GP practices, we did not see this in Hastings & St Leonards Primary Care Network (PCN) which has the highest number of IMD1 patients. Hastings & St Leonards PCN had very high activity across the first 9 months of last year and so were less reliant on income from performing NHS Health Checks than other GP practices. The target for 2024/25 has been amended to increase coverage of NHS Health Checks in the most deprived areas with the goal to reach a 5-year coverage of IMD1 NHS Health Checks of 50% by end of 2026/27. Indices of multiple deprivation (IMD) is a measure of relative deprivation for small, fixed geographic areas of the UK. IMD classifies these areas into five quintiles based on relative disadvantage, with quintile 1 (IMD1) being the most deprived and quintile 5 being the least deprived.

Healthy Schools programme

Over the past year, schools in East Sussex have been invited to apply for a grant of £3,000 as an incentive to register and progress through the Healthy Schools programme and support their pupils to participate in the annual pupil wellbeing survey 'My Health, My School'. Schools can also go on to achieve an 'Excellence Award' and have been able to apply for an additional £2,000 in grant funds.

To date, 152 schools have registered for and started the programme. Since May 2023, 55 schools signed up with 23 more schools achieving 'Healthy Schools Status'. The grant has been applied for by 128 schools with many choosing to spend their grants to improve children and young people's social and emotional health, levels of physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

Council Research Symposium

In response to pre-election restrictions the planned Creative Health and Research Symposium on 11 and 12 June was rapidly reworked and refocused to enable a closed session for academic research teams associated with the Coastal Communities workstream to go ahead. The session, focusing on inequalities in coastal communities, will help support both national work streams and the local support for health inequalities in the Hastings and St Leonard's areas.

The Prototype Pottery Project

A collaboration between Recovery and Renewal and East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust (ESHT) was launched on the 29 June. The project seeks to support people with cancer through the inclusion of a peer supported pottery project as an element of the support pathway as an alternative or an addition to counselling.

Revenue Budget Summary

ASC and Safer Communities

The net ASC and Safer Communities budget of £259.957m for 2024/25 includes a 7% inflationary uplift of £18.607m to support the care market across the Independent Sector. This uplift is in addition to £3.917m to fund growth and demographic pressures, with the costs of the increases being partially funded by £7.060m raised through the 2% ASC Care Precept.

The net ASC forecast outturn for 2024/25 is £269.761m, which is a forecast overspend of £9.804m. The overspend largely relates to the Independent Sector, where the overspend is forecast to be £10.337m. This is due to a combination of factors with the most material being increasing complexity of need and pressures arising from demand and demographic growth returning to pre-pandemic levels.

The financial challenges facing the Council are echoed nationally. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) are one of 16 Local Authorities to sign-up to the County Council Network (CCN) project on Working Age Adults. CCN analysis of the Adult Social Care Finance Return (ASC-FR) shows that Working Age Adults and Whole Life Disability Spend now makes up 57% of all adult social care spend nationally – this is the same size as all of Children's Social Care. National spend on Learning Disability and Mental Health have both risen by over a third between 2020 and 2023. The CCN forecast that total adult social care spend on 18-24-year-olds (inflation assumed at 2% per annum) will reach 63% by 2036; 138% more than now.

Locally, a review of the current forecast and trends is underway to better understand the specifics of the overspend drivers. A full review of the forecast model will be undertaken with a view to modelling various future scenarios. A group of staff from across ASCH and finance will meet each month to ensure that issues arising from the forecast analysis are addressed collectively.

The Council show as a high outlier amongst local authority comparators for the number of working age adults supported by the service relative to population size. Work to review high-cost placements continues on a regular basis and the cost of individual packages are benchmarked against other packages of care. The ASCH brokerage service recently re-negotiated a number of

existing high-cost care packages of care which are all with the same provider, releasing over £100k per annum. The Council is also working to ensure that clients get the most appropriate support in cases where health needs may dictate that NHS-led care is more appropriate than social care.

A project is also ongoing to improve debt collection. Five priority actions have been identified that will improve the current debt process and ensure that Council liabilities are reported and managed effectively to best offset the wider economic factors that may cause debt to rise.

Client care needs are reviewed as part of ASCH duties under the Care Act. Particular attention is being paid to clients receiving care from more than one practitioner at a time (double handed care or 2:1 care), using Occupational Health support workers to ensure that individuals receive the appropriate care for their particular situation.

There is a forecast underspend in Directly Provided Services of £0.533m due to staffing vacancies which reflects the difficulties in recruitment.

Public Health

The Public Health (PH) budget of £38.265m comprises of the PH grant allocation of £30.389m, additional income and grants of £3.044m, a planned draw from reserves £1.596m for reserve projects, £2.500m released funding and £0.736m drawn to support in year spending.

At the end of Q1, PH expenditure is projected to be less than expected by £1.038m.

Public Health Reserves: At the end of Q1, general PH Reserves of £5.101m are projected to reduce to £1.577m. The Health Visiting reserves of £1.193m are projected to reduce to £0.923m.

COVID-19 related funding streams

ASC will incur the final expenditure of £0.413m relating to schemes initiated during the national COVID-19 response in 2024/25. This will be funded in full by the brought forward amount and will be spent before the grant deadline of 30 September 2024 on corporately approved schemes.

Grant	Funding brought forward £'000	Planned Usage £'000	Balance Remaining £'000
Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF)	413	413	-
Total	**413**	**413**	**0**

Homes for Ukraine

ASC continues to lead on the programme of services to support Ukrainian guests to settle in East Sussex. Actual expenditure in 2024/25 is forecast to be £4.704m against funding of £8.048m, with the remaining budget allocated for the subsequent years of support required under statutory guidance. In addition, ASC is forecasting to pass £1.343m to districts and boroughs to fund payments to hosts, in line with guidance.

HFU Grant Funding	Funding b/fwd £'000	Expected Funding £'000	Total Funding £'000	Planned Usage £'000	Funding c/fwd £'000
Tariff Funding	7,210	838	8,048	4,704	3,343
Thank you Payments	-	1,343	1,343	1,343	-
Total	**7,210**	**2,181**	**9,391**	**6,047**	**3,343**

<u>Capital Programme Summary</u>

The ASC Capital programme budget for 2024/25 is £3.820m and the forecast is for full spend by the end of 2024/25. Phase 1 (Beckley Close and Cregg Na Ba) of the Supported Living project is

on track to complete and handover by mid-September 2024, and costs are expected to be within budget. Phase 2 is due to start in Autumn 2024.

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

Priority – Helping people help themselves

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q1 24/25 outturn	Note ref
Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention	333	390	A				57 / 390 14.6% of target	i

Council Plan measures marked carry over at year end 2023/24 – Final Outturn

Priority – Keeping vulnerable people safe

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	2023/24 outturn	Note ref
The % of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have improved safety/support measures in place upon leaving the service	91.4% (360/394)	90%	G	G	G	G	96.1% (512 / 533)	ii

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	2023/24 outturn	Note ref
When they leave the service the % of those affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse who have improved coping strategies	92.7% (544/ 587)	88%	G	G	G	G	90.2% (449 / 498)	iii
The percentage of people who access additional support from our specialist commissioned domestic abuse service who are older*	New measure 2023/24	3%	G	G	G	G	3.90% (74 / 1,899)	iv
The number of people accessing treatment for opiate misuse**	New measure 2023/24	1,247	G	G	A	R	1,071	v

*Not included in 24/25 Council Plan – Stepped down to Portfolio Plan

**Not included in 24/25 Council Plan – Measure deleted

Helping people help themselves

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	2023/24 outturn	Note ref
National outcome measure: Achieve independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care	90.5% (801/885)	>90%	G	G	G	G	92.5% (1,056 / 1,142)	vi
Improved targeting of NHS Heath Checks	Cumulative uptake: 29.5% (5 year period 2018/19 – 2022/23 Q4)	10% of the eligible population in the 20% most deprived areas (IMD1) have received a health check	R	A	G	R	9%	vii

APPENDIX 3

Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX 3

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Adult Social Care – Independent Sector:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Physical, Sensory and Memory and Cognition Support	161,808	(81,409)	80,399	177,632	(91,344)	86,288	(15,824)	9,935	(5,889)	
Learning Disability Support	92,659	(6,152)	86,507	97,490	(9,285)	88,205	(4,831)	3,133	(1,698)	
Mental Health Support	26,971	(10,251)	16,720	40,742	(21,272)	19,470	(13,771)	11,021	(2,750)	
Subtotal	**281,438**	**(97,812)**	**183,626**	**315,864**	**(121,901)**	**193,963**	**(34,426)**	**24,089**	**(10,337)**	

Adult Social Care – Adult Operations

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Assessment and Care Management	32,968	(2,459)	30,509	35,010	(3,083)	31,927	(2,042)	624	(1,418)	
Directly Provided Services - Older People	17,537	(5,811)	11,726	16,429	(6,060)	10,369	1,108	249	1,357	
Directly Provided Services - Learning Disability	9,336	(605)	8,731	8,879	(640)	8,239	457	35	492	
Subtotal	**59,841**	**(8,875)**	**50,966**	**60,318**	**(9,783)**	**50,535**	**(477)**	**908**	**431**	

Adult Social Care- Strategy, Commissioning and Supply Management

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Commissioners, Commissioned Services and Supply Management	10,419	(4,320)	6,099	9,983	(4,321)	5,662	436	1	437	
Supporting People	6,214	(380)	5,834	6,214	(380)	5,834	-	-	-	
Equipment and Assistive Technology	8,352	(4,238)	4,114	9,042	(4,583)	4,459	(690)	345	(345)	
Carers	2,429	(1,736)	693	2,601	(1,907)	694	(172)	171	(1)	
Subtotal	**27,414**	**(10,674)**	**16,740**	**27,840**	**(11,191)**	**16,649**	**(426)**	**517**	**91**	

Adult Social Care- Planning, Performance and Engagement and Other:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Planning, Performance and Engagement	7,705	(1,025)	6,680	7,525	(1,090)	6,435	180	65	245	
Service Strategy	8,061	(7,322)	739	8,295	(7,322)	973	(234)	-	(234)	
Safer Communities	2,115	(909)	1,206	3,658	(2,452)	1,206	(1,543)	1,543	-	
Subtotal	**17,881**	**(9,256)**	**8,625**	**19,478**	**(10,864)**	**8,614**	**(1,597)**	**1,608**	**11**	

APPENDIX 3

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Total Adult Social Care	**386,574**	**(126,617)**	**259,957**	**423,500**	**(153,739)**	**269,761**	**(36,926)**	**27,122**	**(9,804)**	

Public Health – Core Services:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note Ref
Mental Health & Best Start	11,760	-	11,760	11,646	-	11,646	114	-	114	
Risky Behaviours and Threats to Health	13,604	-	13,604	13,461	-	13,461	143	-	143	
Health Systems	3,637	-	3,637	3,478	-	3,478	159	-	159	
Communities	1,054	-	1,054	1,050	-	1,050	4	-	4	
Central Support	3,869	-	3,869	3,251	-	3,251	618	-	618	
Recovery & Renewal	245	-	245	245	-	245	-	-	-	
Funding to be released	2,500	-	2,500	2,500	-	2,500	-	-	-	
Public Health Grant Income	-	(30,389)	(30,389)	-	(30,389)	(30,389)	-	-	-	
Other Grants and Income	-	(3,044)	(3,044)	-	(3,044)	(3,044)	-	-	-	
Draw from General Reserves	-	(3,236)	(3,236)	-	(1,928)	(1,928)	-	(1,308)	(1,308)	
Draw from Health Visiting Reserves	-	-	-	-	(270)	(270)	-	270	270	
Project Board Reserves	1,596	(1,596)	-	1,596	(1,596)	-	-	-	-	
Total Public Health	**38,265**	**(38,265)**	**0**	**37,227**	**(37,227)**	**0**	**1,038**	**(1,038)**	**0**	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Supported Living Projects	6,421	6,421	3,700	915	3,700	-	-	-	-	
Greenacres	2,598	2,598	70	-	70	-	-	-	-	
House Adaptations for People with Disabilities	2,769	2,769	50	(11)	50	-	-	-	-	
Total ASC Gross	**11,788**	**11,788**	**3,820**	**904**	**3,820**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	

Business Services – Q1 2024/25
Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Key cross cutting programmes

Carbon

In line with our current Climate Action Plan 2023-2025, progress was made in Q1 on the delivery of energy efficiency projects. A total of 6 projects were completed in Q1:

- 4 Solar PV energy generation projects: Bibliographic House (Former Polegate Library), Beckley Close (care home), Rotherfield Primary School and Hellingly Primary School
- 1 LED lighting energy saving project: Rotherfield Primary School
- 1 Heat Decarbonisation Project: Greenwood (respite care home)

The target for 2024/25 is 23 energy efficiency projects and this includes building insulation schemes which can reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions. The Council is reviewing its capital programme as part of the RPPR process, and this may result in some projects planned for 2024/25 being deferred to later years. The current estimated outturn for 2024/25 is 20 energy efficiency projects **(ref i)**. However, following the successful pilot of the Site Heating Control Interventions Initiative in Q4 2023/24, a consultant summary report was completed in Q1. This included a detailed spreadsheet of the anticipated costs and savings that could potentially be achieved from energy saving actions identified at 10 sites targeted for their low heating efficiency. These actions are being reviewed and an implementation plan will follow. If successful, it will be possible to identify further poor performing sites which could then be targeted for further energy efficiency projects. Total energy consumption (buildings, streetlighting and servers) in Q4 2023/24 (reported a quarter in arrears) was down 9% compared with the same period last year and down 27% on the baseline year 2019/20. The Council continues to see the benefit of efficiency projects helping to reduce our overall consumption, which has mitigated against missing our carbon targets by a greater margin.

Total Council carbon emissions for 2023/24 (reported a quarter in arrears) saw a 36% reduction **(ref iii)**, compared to the baseline year 2019/20, against a target of 43%. Improvements are still being made as there was a 6% reduction in emissions compared to 2022/23 (set against a target of 16% to stay within the carbon budget).

Calculated carbon emissions from the Council's electricity consumption increased during 2023/24, despite a fall in the amount of electricity consumed by the Council. This was due to changes in the carbon emission factor, which is the figure used to convert electricity consumption from the national grid into equivalent carbon emissions. Carbon emission factors are produced by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. They are updated every year and applied widely in the UK. The UK grid carbon emission factor changes from year to year as the fuel mix consumed in UK power stations changes (i.e. between renewables, nuclear, natural gas, oil and coal) and as the proportion of imported electricity also changes. The carbon emission factors used for reporting in 2023/24 are based on the fuel mix used in 2021, due to the time it takes to collate and analyse the data (more information can be found on the gov.uk conversion factors 2023 website).

The carbon emission factors for electricity fell by over 24% between 2019/20 and 2022/23 as renewables increasingly replaced coal in the generation mix. However, for 2023/24, this trend reversed, and the carbon emissions factor increased. This was due to a post-covid increase in national electricity demand and a relatively poor year for wind generation in 2021 (see above on timing delay).

The Council's annual spend on electricity has significantly reduced since 2019/20. The spend figures below have been estimated using the consumption figures from 2019/20 and 2023/24, and price-corrected against the average unit rates from 2023/24. The spend figures are based on consumption only (i.e. not including standing charges or any other non-commodity costs).

Year	Spend
2019/20	£7,148,566
2023/24	£5,422,112

These spend figures demonstrate that the introduction of renewable energy creation (e.g. solar PV), portfolio changes, energy efficiency measures and initiatives resulted in an estimated financial reduction of £1,726,454 (24% reduction) when comparing 2023/24 directly to 2019/20.

Modernising Systems

The Modernising Back Office Systems (MBOS) Programme is being re-branded to recognise the shift in the implementation to include more than just updates to the back-office software suite, to include self-service processing for items such as absence, timesheets and expenses. Moving forward the programme will simply be known as the 'Oracle Programme'.

Following the independent assurance review in late 2023, which confirmed that Oracle remains a suitable product for the Council, programme activity and governance have been re-established with a view to implementing a phased delivery of Oracle. The reasons for a phased delivery include the ability to noticeably 'bank' progress and build from there rather than resetting, lower complexity, easier user adoption and easier transition into support. Work is in progress for the first phase of delivery and a detailed timeline is being produced for the later phases. The programme engagement team will work with Council colleagues and the external organisations that use our services such as schools, academies, the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority and East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, to support the implementation.

Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD)

Learning Management System

The new Learning Management System (LMS) has now gone live and excellent feedback has been received, particularly in relation to its accessibility and usability. Alongside the new LMS, we have also recently launched an electric vehicle scheme in partnership with Tusker. The scheme enables employees to access a brand new electric car via a salary sacrifice arrangement.

Occupations Health and Employee Assistance

As a large employer, the Council has in place comprehensive arrangements for the provision of Occupational Health services and an Employee Assistance (Counselling) programme. Through robust negotiations we have secured the minimal price increase allowed for to ensure the seamless continuation of these essential services.

Attendance Management and Wellbeing

The Q1 2024/25 sickness absence figure for the whole authority (excluding schools) is 2.17 days lost per Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employee, an increase of 11.9% since last year. The year end estimate for 2024/25 is 10.21 days lost/FTE, so the target of 9.10 days/FTE is predicted to be missed **(ref ii)**. The predominant reason for the increase in absence rates is a rise in days lost due to cold/flu absences during Q1.

We have, however, seen a decrease in days lost due to musculoskeletal conditions within ASCH. We have been collaborating with Brighton University on a pilot project in ASCH to improve musculoskeletal (MSK) support. As part of the project three pilots have been successfully delivered and the correlation between the improvement in MSK absences and the pilots, indicates that the project has had a positive impact in reducing MSK-related absences.

However, mental health absence has increased by 160 days, compared to the same period last year. Benchmarking data from our absence management provider, 'GoodShape', suggests this is a common theme across local authorities and our absence rates are below the average for other local authorities. Set against this background, we are continuing to provide support to staff by:

- Hosting National Men's Health Week (June), showcasing a range of support measures and workshops to support men in the workplace, raising awareness of strategies to improve mental health.
- Migraine awareness workshops were held in June, led by a clinician from GoodShape, highlighting the links between stress and how this can be positively managed.
- Hosting "Mental Fitness Fortnight" (April-May) across the Council, offering a variety of interactive staff webinars and individual sessions from the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), Occupational Health, GoodShape and partners 'able futures' to help support staff resilience. Due to staff demand further sessions are scheduled for July.
- With the close link between menopause and mental health, we continue to hold menopause cafes for employees to share experiences and coping strategies.
- In addition to the automated reminders from GoodShape, the HR Attendance Management Team now contact the line manager during the first week an employee reports a stress related absence. The aim of this is to provide timely and practical guidance about how to support the employee back to work. This began in January and the results so far have indicated a decrease in absence. This is being reviewed as part of a six-month pilot to understand impact.
- Improving the Wellness Plan and Stress Risk Assessment, which was successfully launched in Q3 2023/24 and is being promoted in line with key awareness days and in team meetings and employee sessions.
- Our growing Mental Health First Aid network continues to pro-actively support staff and promote wellbeing resources within teams.

Procurement

Procurement, contract and supplier management activities

The Council has spent £349m with local suppliers over the past 12 months. This equates to 63% of our total procurement spend, compared to a target of 60%. 904 local suppliers were used. The Procurement team continues to promote our contract opportunities to local suppliers, as well as building local supply chain opportunities into our tenders where possible.

Social Value

In Q1, a total of 13 contracts commenced, of which 7 were out of scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter, which quantifies the economic, social and environmental benefits of the procurement, as they accessed an existing pre-approved list of suppliers (Frameworks) with predefined contractual terms. 3 contracts were also out of scope as they are included in the Adult Social Care Social Value pilot, which uses a qualitative rather than quantitative approach to Social Value, so financial proxy figures are not used to calculate the social value commitment. The 3 in-scope contracts had a total contract value of £13.14m and secured £1.77m in Social Value commitments, which equates to an outturn of 13% against a target of 10%.

The Social Value commitments for Q1 included a wide range of benefits, such as:

- apprenticeships
- the creation of local jobs, plus job opportunities for local people in priority groups including long term unemployed and young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- career awareness programmes
- initiatives to reduce operational carbon emissions
- volunteering for the local community.

Procurement Policy

The Procurement Policy Team has been focussed on the following key activities during Q1:

- Continuing to build carbon reduction requirements into key projects on the annual procurement forward plan and reducing our Scope 3 emissions. 51% of the Council's spend now has an associated Carbon Reduction Plan.
- Preparing for the implementation of the Procurement Act 2023 which comes into force on 28 October 2024. The team has attended Departmental Management Team meetings across the Council throughout Q1 to provide an overview of the changes and address any initial questions being raised.
- Completing a redraft of the Supplier Code of Conduct which went live in our procurements from the beginning of July. This provides suppliers and officers with a practical approach to delivering positive activities and behaviours related to ethical and sustainable outcomes and aligns with our social value, net zero and modern slavery priorities.
- In April, the team delivered training sessions on modern slavery and responsible contract management to commissioners and contract managers across the Council.

Internal Audit

Through the work of Internal Audit, the Chief Internal Auditor continues to be able to provide assurance over the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control for the Council. Internal Audit have continued to focus on delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Plan. At the end of Q1, we have completed 36.9% of the plan to draft report stage against a Q1 target of 22.5%. This was due to a number of audits carried forward which were almost at draft report stage at the end of Q4 and were then completed in Q1.

All high priority actions agreed with management as part of individual audit reviews are subject to action tracking, whereby we seek written confirmation from services that these have been implemented. It was confirmed that 9/9 (100%) of the high-risk actions due to be implemented on a 12-month rolling basis have been actioned.

Property

Key outcomes for Property in Q1 include:

- The main office moves to consolidate into one Eastbourne office hub were completed. Building works are taking place at St Marys House in Q2 to allow the children and family hub to be operational.
- Following the re-procurement of facilities management services for the corporate and schools' estate in 2023/24, full service implementation was completed, including an extension of the schools' meals contract.
- The Council has reviewed its service need for office space in Hastings and a decision was made to consolidate into one office hub at Cavendish House, with staff moving from Muriel Matters House.
- Work on two new youth facilities (at Heathfield and The Joff, Peacehaven) started on site. Both projects are funded through the Youth Investment Fund.
- 3 business cases were undertaken. This included identifying two assets for disposal which were subject to Lead Member approval.
- Activity has been underway to increase County Hall utilisation in the shorter term, with discussions underway with some teams about moving to County Hall from elsewhere. We had previously marketed via a local property agent to lease the space on West F floor but this was unsuccessful. A number of possibilities are now being explored, including a low-cost creation of a larger meeting area to reduce the need (and cost) for external venue hire, and consolidated use of space. Additionally, a range of options are being considered for the longer-term use of County Hall, with consideration by Place Scrutiny Committee in Q2 and Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change in Q3.

IT & Digital

Interest in artificial intelligence (AI) has continued during Q1. The Corporate Management Team (CMT) agreed that the Data Protection and Information Security Policy, supported by practical guidance, will provide the overarching guardrails and clear standards of practice to govern the use of AI in the Council. CMT has agreed that Microsoft Copilot can be used for some pilot projects to explore how AI can be used safely and responsibly to enhance productivity and enable efficiencies. Work has begun across the Council to bring together and assess ideas for a broad range of pilots. The project proposals will go to CMT in October for selection of those to take forward.

Work to replace the core telephony solution paired with a dedicated contact centre solution entered the planning phase in Q1. The change from landline-based telephony builds on existing technology investment and provides a sustainable solution, reducing the carbon footprint (removing handsets and on-premises equipment) and removing building dependency, thereby supporting a reduction in office space.

Work to move all Council SharePoint sites into the Microsoft 365 cloud service was completed during Q1. This will enable increased functionality that will help people to collaborate effectively.

Following successful procurement activity, a supplier for the Device Refresh Project has been appointed. Periodically refreshing our IT equipment is vital so that it stays up to date and safe to use to best support and enable a digital workforce. Devices are now refreshed every 5 years to extend the value of the assets. The scale at which this is done (across three councils through the Orbis Partnership) has many benefits and in this case, a saving of 18% per device has been achieved through this joint procurement. New devices will be rolled out with a new operating system as Windows 10 reaches the end of its supportable life. A Windows 11 Readiness Project has been underway in parallel to ensure that all Council business applications continue to work in the updated environment.

External Funding

During Q1, the External Funding Team:

- Responded to 51 enquiries from charities, social enterprises, schools and internal colleagues engaged with the Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise sector. Areas of work included Communities, Health and Wellbeing, Economy, and Climate Change/Environment. Funding needs ranged from sustaining activities to adapting/expanding services. Organisations the team engaged with included heritage railways (tourism, skills and employability), A Band of Brothers (criminal justice), Befriending (loneliness) and interest in the Lottery's Climate Fund.
- Attended 18 meetings to discuss specific needs - identifying funding, developing a case for support, contacts/ referrals internally and externally aligned with the Council's priorities and commitment to cross sector working.
- Quality-checked 2 external applications and delivered a twilight funding training session for School Governors.
- Helped secure £168,905 of funding.

The team continues to provide advice around the Council's Corporate Funding Protocol and continues to participate in wider strategic and cross sector work such as Partnership Plus, Tackling Loneliness and Financial Inclusion. There are currently 11,394 not for profit subscribers to Funding News, our monthly electronic publication about forthcoming funding opportunities.

Revenue Budget Summary

The 2024/25 Business Services net revenue budget is £29.715m. There are £0.693m planned savings in BSD this financial year and £0.100m of unachieved savings brought forward from 2023/24 (ref iv). In Procurement only £0.016m of the £0.100m additional income target is forecast to be achieved leaving a shortfall of £0.084m (ref v). The impact of any unachieved savings are

included within the current outturn forecast which is a £0.740m overspend (ref vii).. In Property there is a forecast overspend of £0.655m (ref vi). This is predominantly due to incurring rental costs at St Mark's House, Eastbourne, for longer than anticipated due to the time taken to meet service needs in space planning arrangements for the planned move out of St Mark's and into St Mary's House, Eastbourne. Other pressures have arisen from increases in franking costs and from unanticipated rates, utility and service charge uplifts. . The reactive maintenance budget is overspending by £0.335m but the overspend is being mitigated down to £0.080m by holding planned maintenance projects. Steps are being taken to mitigate other in year pressures, including lower spend on cleaning costs, holding vacancies open where possible, reducing subscription costs, reducing the number of planned internal audit days, as well as a service review of Procurement.

Capital Programme Summary

The 2024/25 capital budget is £36.015m. The ICT Strategy Implementation is projected to see a slippage of £0.829m **(ref viii)**, primarily due to £0.780m slippage on the Device Refresh Upgrade project. This slippage does not affect the Council's existing systems or security.

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

Priority – Making best use of resources now and for the future

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q1 24/25 outturn	Note ref
Progress on implementation of Carbon reduction scheme	25 energy saving schemes implemented	23 energy saving schemes implemented	A				Q1: 6 schemes 2024/25 estimate: 20 schemes	i
Number of working days lost per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employee due to sickness absence in non-school services	9.13	9.10	A				Q1: 2.17 days lost per FTE 2024/25 estimate: 10.21 days lost per FTE	ii

Council Plan measures marked carry over at year end 2023/24 – Final Outturn

Priority – Making best use of resources in the short and long term

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	2023/24 final outturn	Note ref
Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations	32% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions	43% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 7,139 tonnes CO2e)	R	R	R	R	36% reduction on baseline year emissions	iii

Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Planned savings – BSD Property	100	100	100	-	-	
Planned savings – BSD IT&D	0	100	16	84	-	
Planned savings – Orbis Procurement	593	803	563	240	-	
Total Savings	**693**	**1,003**	**679**	**324**	**0**	**iv**
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	**693**	**1,003**	**679**	**324**	**0**	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding [2]	Part of reported variance [3]	Total	Note Ref
Planned savings – BSD Property	-	240	240	
Planned savings – Orbis Procurement	-	84	84	
Total	**0**	**324**	**324**	

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

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

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

APPENDIX 4

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Finance & Bus Admin	12,882	(6,517)	6,365	12,881	(6,516)	6,365	1	(1)	-	
HR & OD	3,300	(1,108)	2,192	3,300	(1,108)	2,192	-	-	-	
IT & Digital	12,921	(4,132)	8,789	12,800	(4,010)	8,790	121	(122)	(1)	
Procurement	-	(100)	(100)	-	(16)	(16)	-	(84)	(84)	**v**
Property	26,738	(17,895)	8,843	27,437	(17,939)	9,498	(699)	44	(655)	**vi**
Contribution to Orbis Partnership	3,626	-	3,626	3,626	-	3,626	-	-	-	
Total BSD	**59,467**	**(29,752)**	**29,715**	**60,044**	**(29,589)**	**30,455**	**(577)**	**(163)**	**(740)**	**vii**

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
SALIX Contract	350	350	350	30	350	-	-	-	-	
Lansdowne Unit (CSD)	39	39	39	-	39	-	-	-	-	
Youth Investment Fund	7,003	7,003	7,003	88	7,003	-	-	-	-	
Special Educational Needs	2,510	2,510	525	16	525	-	-	-	-	
Special Provision in Secondary School (Priory and Robertsbridge)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Special Educational Needs - Grove Park	17,120	17,120	1,300	62	1,300	-	-	-	-	
Disabled Children's Homes	24	24	24	-	24	-	-	-	-	
14 Westfield Lane	17	17	17	-	17	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Schools Basic Need	61,874	61,874	518	-	518	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Corporate	45,482	45,482	5,781	1,718	5,781	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools	40,401	40,401	4,401	-	4,401	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation	71,234	71,234	6,399	87	5,570	829	-	829	-	**viii**
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation Oracle	26,513	26,513	9,634	478	9,634	-	-	-	-	
IT & Digital - Utilising Automation	24	24	24	-	24	-	-	-	-	
Total BSD Gross	**272,591**	**272,591**	**36,015**	**2,479**	**35,186**	**829**	**-**	**829**	**-**	

Children's Services – Q1 2024/25
Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Early Help and Social Care

HM Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) inspection of Youth Justice Service delivered in East Sussex

HMIP undertook an inspection of our youth justice services week commencing 10 June 2024, and we await the report and recommendations which will inform future service development. The report will be published on Monday 16 September. The inspection covers three domains:

- Domain one, organisational delivery and how well the youth justice service is led and governed
- Domain two, the quality of post-court supervision
- Domain three, the quality of out-of-court disposals

Valuing Care

We continue to embed Valuing Care, developed between May 2023 and January 2024, with support from IMPOWER. The work with IMPOWER focused on placement sufficiency and enhancing our ability to secure the right care for the right child for the right length of time. Valuing Care was developed as a process to help social workers to track the needs, strengths and outcomes of children in their care. The multi-agency Valuing Care panel meets bi-weekly. The panel develops high level plans and directs resources to improve outcomes for children and to reduce costs.

- To date, 54 children have been reviewed through the multi-agency panel. Nine children have been supported to move to a placement better suited to their strengths and profile of needs. A further 20 children have active plans on track to enable them to move to more appropriate placements that will support improved outcomes.
- Following the progress made at the Valuing Care panels, estimated savings totalling £2.3m have been identified between 2024/25 (£1.4m) and 2025/26 (£0.9m). In additional to this a further £1.5m of savings have been achieved (£0.3m in 2023/24 and £1.2m in 2024/25).

Enhancing our in house foster carer offer

One of our areas of focus is to enhance our inhouse foster carer offer. In February, the Council agreed an additional investment of £1.7m in our inhouse foster carers as part of the 2024/25 budget setting.

- In April 2024, the Council introduced a new payment structure and revision of maintenance payments to foster carers. This included a commitment for payments to keep pace in line with the National Minimum Allowance.
- In June 2024 we relaunched our fostering website.
- We are working with 19 other local authorities in the South East, as part of a Department for Education programme to launch a new regional fostering hub. The shared goal is to recruit and support more foster carers for our communities' children. The virtual hub will complement existing recruitment activity across the region from July 2024 onwards.
- Through the South East Fostering Regional Hub, we have secured funding to develop Mockingbird in 2024/25. The Mockingbird model brings foster carers together as part of 'satellite foster homes'. This includes a central hub home which provides resources and support to the satellite homes. This model has been effective in retaining foster carers and supporting them to provide care for children with more complex needs.
- As part of the Valuing Care approach, we have created a Valuing Care profile for each of our fostering households including an up to date skills review.

In 2023/24 the service saw 26 new Council foster homes (providing 38 new placements). The impact of the enhanced recruitment campaign and new foster carer rates has been seen in Q1:

- an increase of 47% in the number of enquiries compared to Q1 2023/24
- 8 new households were recruited providing 11 places in Q1

Regional Commissioning Co-operative

The Government's 'Stable Homes Built on Love' strategy for Children's Social Care, recognises the challenges of placement sufficiency and the dysfunctional market currently in place in England. The Department for Education is running two regional pathfinders to pilot Regional Commissioning Co-operatives. In Q1 the South East region was successful in bidding for one of the pathfinder projects. The region has been awarded a grant of £1.95m of revenue funding and up to £5m of capital funding for the 19 authorities in the region. The Council is part of the South East project and will play a key role in shaping future delivery of this key development in Children's Services.

Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000 children) and children on a Child Protection plan

Q1 has seen an increase in the overall number of Looked After Children (LAC) **(ref i)** from 655 (61.5 per 10,000) on the last day of March 2024, to 684 (66.6 per 10,000) on the last day of June 2024. This is an overall increase of 29 children. Whilst there has been a continued focus on returning children to the care of their families during this period, there has been a significant increase in admissions to care during Q1. There were 67 children admitted to care and 38 children discharged from care. Of the children who became looked after:

- 11% were not open to Children's Services prior to needing to become looked after, their entry to care was unplanned for example due to bereavement, a significant parental mental ill health episode and unexplained injuries to children.
- 23% entered care with parental consent as a short-term legal measure to safeguard them at the same time that care proceedings were agreed. These children were quickly provided with an 'interim care order' legal status through the Family Court.
- A further 33% became looked after as a result of care proceedings, part of a planned process whereby parents had been supported through a pre proceedings however the necessary progress had not been achieved.
- 8% became looked after with parental consent as part a pre proceedings process.
- 5% became looked after via a Section 20 Children Act 1989 'Southwark Judgement' pathway, which obliges the local authority to support homeless 16–17-year-olds in need of accommodation and support.
- 8% became looked after via a Section 20 Children Act 1989 legal status following an unplanned admission pathway. The profile of these children includes neurodiversity and disability of the child or the caring adult.
- 11% were unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) who were supported via the national transfer scheme that requires all local authorities to support UASC.

Of the above, 24% of cases had received, or are in receipt of, Connected Families support.

There has been a 6.7% reduction in children with a child protection plan between Q4 2023/24 and Q1 from 64.6 (688 children) per 10,000 to 62.5 (642 children).

Connected Families Service

We continue to see an impact from our Connected Families Intervention Practitioners (CFIP). The aim of the CFIP service is to:

- provide dedicated support for parents to address the barriers that impact on them safely and consistently caring for their children

- support families to stay together
- improve the wellbeing and life chances of children

The service provides access to specialist support at the start of a social care assessment and intervention process. From Q1 the CFIP service is working alongside Locality social workers in the three areas of focus: problematic parental drug and alcohol use; parental mental health issues, and parental domestic abuse. This allows the social workers to have a greater focus on the children and the impact of this harm on them, whilst CFIP work directly with the parents to reduce their harmful behaviour.

Feedback from families, social work teams and specialist services continues to be positive. In Q1:

- CFIP were delivering specialist interventions with 160 open Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) cases
- 11 cases have stepped down from CP plan to CIN
- 2 cases have stepped down from the Public Law Outline (PLO) process, where the Council was considering care proceedings
- the estimated CFIP savings are £325,409 from stepping cases down and closing cases, with a forecast £1.5m saving by the end of the financial year

Since the launch of CFIP in January 2024 there has been a 14% reduction in children with a CP plan (from 744 in January to 643 in June). CFIP interventions have been the main contributory factor in this reduction. In addition, the average number of CIN case closures has increased, from 60 per month in early 2024 to 115 per month by May 2024 (91% increase), due to the progress families achieved through social work support and CFIP interventions. It is anticipated that this rate of closure will be maintained due to CFIP, although referrals into the service remain high.

Lansdowne Secure Children's Home

Following on from our successful reopening in February we have now recruited a full staff complement (for the initial 7 beds). We have been incrementally increasing the number of children as staff join the team. At the end of Q1 we had 4 children in Lansdowne, with plans to have 6 children resident by the end of August. We are now looking to increase capacity, particularly amongst support staff to enable us to amend our registration and open the remaining beds. Ensuring occupancy of at least 6 children is critical in terms of the home being financially sustainable.

Children are placed by other local authorities, as well as East Sussex (recognising that it is better for our own children to be placed locally if they need secure accommodation as this supports maintenance of family and support networks and aids transition back into the community). Due to the dynamic cost of placements, staffing and the profile of children's needs, the charging policy at Lansdowne is subject to regular review and change and a wider scale review is planned as part of the Council's budget setting process.

The education provision within the secure unit is operating well and delivering a creative, comprehensive curriculum. Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, commissioned to provide health services at Lansdowne, has experienced delays in recruitment which has had some impact on which children we have been able to place in Lansdowne. The Trust has recently recruited to critical roles which will support us to meet the needs of a more diverse group from September.

Care leavers celebration event

In May we held our Care Leavers Celebration Event at De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill on Sea. The evening celebrated our wonderful, hardworking young people. The event included:

- showcasing the young people's talents, for example, artwork, music, baking and clothing designs

- celebrating young people finishing university and young people moving into employment

The event also provided an opportunity to see the enduring relationships that our young people have with members of the Care Leavers Team and the difference those relationships make.

Supporting Families Programme

The Supporting Families transformation programme is a key part of the drive to develop a joined-up whole family, whole system approach to Early Intervention. For over 10 years, the programme has worked to develop the Early Intervention system and has proven that a whole family approach successfully improves outcomes for families with multiple needs and prevents high-cost statutory intervention.

Prevention of the need for statutory intervention by the children's social care system has been a long-standing objective of the Supporting Families programme, and an important part of care system transformation. Locally the Early Intervention Partnership Board leads this work and it is reflected in our Early Intervention Strategy.

The number of families we are working with continues to increase as we broaden the programme. There has been an increase in teams working as part of the programme over the last 12 months.

In Q1:

- 560 families received a family support intervention
- there were 184 successful payment by results claims

<u>Education</u>

Excellence for All 2024-30

Our ambitious, new 2024-30 'Excellence for All' vision will launch in September 2024. It will represent a shared vision for education in East Sussex, with shared responsibility for improving the outcomes of our children and young people.

In May, as part of the engagement process, we held a successful consultation meeting with education representatives from Early Years through to Post 16. This provided us with detailed feedback on the key themes, which we have embedded into the vision.

The vision will set out our shared ambition for an excellent, inclusive, and equitable education system in East Sussex by 2030. Our schools, colleges and settings will foster a strong sense of belonging for all children and young people.

Delivering our vision across East Sussex

Our Excellence for All vision will be delivered through our partnerships with schools, colleges, and settings. In Q1, we met with school leaders across primary and secondary to talk about excellence and inclusion, as well as agreeing priorities for the year ahead. The primary and secondary boards will work through their locality groups to deliver our shared ambitions for children and young people's learning.

Underpinning this work, is a series of key, countywide strategies that we have developed with our school leaders. This includes:

- Small schools strategy: a shared approach to develop strong partnerships across schools in hard federations and multi-academy trusts so that we can ensure that small schools are sustainable and remain at the heart of their communities.
- Flexi-schooling policy: setting out a clear framework for headteachers to ensure that children attend school full-time.
- Attendance delivery plan: clarifying responsibilities across services and schools so that we are working together effectively to increase attendance and deliver our new, statutory duties from September.

- Alternative Provision strategy: developing our offer so that we are making a broader range of provision that can meet the needs of pupils who are unable to access full-time mainstream education. We have agreed an Alternative Provision Sub-Group to oversee this work; it will begin in September and report to the Joint Board and the Special Educational needs and Disabilities (SEND) Governance Board.
- Statement of Intent: setting out clear aspirations and activities for schools and the Council, working in partnership to improve the experience of pupils with SEND, and their families transitioning between primary and secondary schools.

SEND Governance Board

Our SEND Governance Board has been reviewing the way it works and its priorities for the new academic year during Q1. This includes:

- Redesigning the Terms of Reference in line with the recommendations within the SEND and Alternative Provision Change Programme. This includes broadening membership to provide a more comprehensive representation of all stakeholders across the SEND landscape.
- Developing a Local Area Inclusion Plan which draws together detailed information in relation to the SEND population in East Sussex and views of stakeholders on where there are gaps in existing provision.
- Improving parent/carer involvement and further enhancing co-production.

The education division has also been reviewing its services and operational priorities for the new academic year, to ensure that they remain relevant and effective.

Revenue Budget Summary

The department has a total net budget of £144.893m in 2024-25, and the Q1 forecast spend is £157.375m. This is an overspend of £12.482m **(ref viii)**.

The main area of projected overspend is within Early Help and Social Care, but due to additional investment in the Looked After Children budget this year, the Council is not anticipating the level of overspend we had last year.

The biggest service pressure the Council has now is within Home to School Transport.

Central Resources overspend of £0.078m (ref ii)

Central Resources has a budget of £1.045m and forecast expenditure of £1.123m. This pressure is partially offset by £0.022m reduction in staffing within the Personal Assistant function.

There is also a planned drawdown from the Academisation reserve of £0.1m this year to offset departmental pressures.

Early Help and Social Care overspend of £7.384m (ref iii)

Early Help and Social Care has a budget of £107.42m and forecast expenditure of £114.804m.

The budget was increased by £23.857m this year, across LAC placements, foster carers, staffing and commissioning. £3.972m of its Early Help service budget is funded by the Public Health grant.

There is £0.084m overspend within the Management team due to staffing and the purchase of safety devices for staff.

There is a £0.193m forecast overspend within the Asylum Seekers service. There was a change in legislation effective from March 2023 which means that when children turn 18, they have no recourse to public funds, and they are solely dependent on the Council. The Council currently has 29 children turning 18 this financial year, which creates this £0.193m pressure.

The Social Work and Education service currently forecasts a £0.184m staffing overspend within their Recruitment and Connected Practice teams.

Youth Justice forecasts a £0.124m overspend due to staffing pressures within the Youth Offending Team, Secure Remand, and MACE Keywork teams.

The Looked After Children service has a forecast £3.746m overspend:

- £0.665m of this is within the 18+ Care Leavers budget
- £1.394m pressure is due to spend on agency placements. Contributing to this overspend are 3 children costing above £25k per week and 7 children costing above £15k per week. Assumptions have been calculated for growth and churn within the placements, and the service will be receiving £1.758m COVID funding and £0.4m Supported Accommodation Reform grant funding as mitigation
- there is £0.836m forecast overspend within the Children's Homes, if we recruit to currently vacant posts
- additional pressures within Fostering Services, Respite Units, and LAC Management are offset by a small forecast underspend within Adoption Services

The Localities service forecasts an overspend of £2.702m:

- £1.786m of this is on staffing, including 21 newly qualified social workers starting in September. All agency social workers contracts will end in September. There are no plans to recruit further social workers in locality at this stage.
- there is an additional £0.54m pressure within placements for SEND children and Intentionally Homeless

Finally, there is £0.351m overspend within the Specialist Services. This includes £0.204m within Foundations, £0.13m on Under 25 Substance Misuse, and £0.281m on other teams. All pressures are on staffing. £0.264m mitigation is due to underspending on staffing within the Management & Support team.

Education overspend of £0.186m (ref iv)

Education has a budget of £9.72m and forecast expenditure of £9.906m.

There is forecast overspend of £0.186m within the SEND service. £0.075m is on staffing for Elective Home Education posts and £0.111m is on the required use of agency staffing for the Educational Psychology team.

Communication, Planning and Performance (including Home to School Transport) overspend of £4.834m (ref v)

Communication, Planning and Performance has a budget of £28.323m and forecast expenditure of £33.157m.

£0.055m overspend is due to under-achievement of income within Outdoor Education, where poor weather has meant a fall in demand for services and memberships.

£0.037m underspend is due to management of vacancies and non-essential expenditure within Planning & Performance Improvement, Safeguarding, and Organisational Development.

Home to School Transport has a forecast overspend of £4.816m. This service did receive £0.379m growth in their budget this year for inflationary pressures, but growth in numbers of pupils and unit costs for transport have far outstripped what was agreed.

SEN client numbers have increased by 22% above 2023/24 levels and SEN clients who travel solo have increased by 14%. Unit and contract costs for the transport itself has also increased by a further 3.5% from 2023/24.

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 review the personal transport budget (PTB) strategy with the aim of increasing the number of more cost effective PTBs being taken up by families.

Other areas being explored include; route optimisation (increase average occupancy rates in taxis); double running, and exploring alternative transport options such as group pick up points and public transport; integrating transport needs assessment into annual education, health and care plan reviews to ensure appropriate type of transport assistance; reviewing the commissioning policy and practice, to better understand current pressures and future needs; supplier management and independent travel training.

Capital Programme Summary (ref xi)

CSD has a capital budget in 2024/25 of £1.936m and forecast expenditure of £2.085m. This is an overspend of £0.149m.

£0.29m overspend is forecast on the Housing Adaptations for Disabled Children's Carers' Homes project **(ref ix)**. A backlog of adaptations have been agreed and will require funding this year. However, adaptations are likely to slip throughout the year as obtaining legal charges against properties can delay works.

£0.141m underspend is forecast within the Essential System Development Projects **(ref x)**. This is due to timing of recruitment of staff to work on the project.

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

Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q1 24/25 outturn	Note ref
Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000 children)	61.5 (655 children)	61.8 (635 children)	**A**				66.6 (684 children)	**i**

Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX 5

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Central Resources	2,367	(1,322)	1,045	2,410	(1,287)	1,123	(43)	(35)	(78)	ii
Early Help and Social Care	123,213	(15,793)	107,420	133,470	(18,666)	114,804	(10,257)	2,873	(7,384)	iii
Education	132,662	(7,059)	125,603	133,632	(7,843)	125,789	(970)	784	(186)	iv
Communication, Planning and Performance	32,519	(4,196)	28,323	39,328	(6,171)	33,157	(6,809)	1,975	(4,834)	v
Schools	154,701	(154,701)	-	154,701	(154,701)	-	-	-	-	vi
DSG Non Schools	-	(117,498)	(117,498)	-	(117,498)	(117,498)	-	-	-	vii
Total CSD	**445,462**	**(300,569)**	**144,893**	**463,541**	**(306,166)**	**157,375**	**(18,079)**	**5,597**	**(12,482)**	**viii**

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Housing Adaptations for Disabled Children's Carers' Homes	1,090	1,443	50	-	340	(290)	(290)	-	-	ix
Schools Delegated Capital	29,673	29,673	1,150	(26)	1,150	-	-	-	-	
Children's Services Essential System Developments	736	736	736	33	595	141	-	141	-	x
Total CSD	**31,499**	**31,852**	**1,936**	**7**	**2,085**	**(149)**	**(290)**	**141**	**0**	**xi**

Communities, Economy & Transport – Q1 2024/25
Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Economy and environment

Employability and Skills

The Council aims to support young people in the county by giving them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers. 185 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q1. This is lower than the figure at the end of 2023/24, due to a review of the champions which found that some had left their roles and some unable to commit to engaging with young people on a regular enough basis. Recruitment of new champions has begun, and the number will begin to rise during 2024/25.

165 pupils attended Open Doors visits during Q1, giving them experience of a workplace. The Careers Hub ran training for schools and colleges in June, with over 50 people attending. The training focused on future skills, the visitor economy, health and social care, construction and the green industries.

The Council also helps adults improve their numeracy skills through Multiply, a government-funded programme. Six numeracy interventions started in Q1 as part of the Multiply programme. These interventions have included math for money management courses and libraries offering functional skills maths training.

Apprenticeships

Q1 has seen a significant uptake of apprenticeships, most notably within Children's Services both for frontline roles and bespoke management apprenticeships for managers. Management apprenticeships continue to grow across all departments, with degree level management apprenticeships proving particularly popular. Following feedback from staff, a new apprenticeship for staff who are currently not in a management role but have an ambition to progress into one has been developed and will be launched in Q2.

Whilst the numbers of apprenticeships are evenly spread across all levels of qualifications, the majority of level 3 apprenticeships, which is traditionally the route into employment for younger people, are mostly located within schools. This raises the potential concern about younger applicants coming through from entry level and progressing their career in corporate services within the Council. We have worked with a number of teams to use level 3 apprenticeships as a means of bringing in entry level staff and now offer roles such as accounts assistant, digital marketing assistant, and pensions apprentice. The new Government is bringing in changes to the apprentice levy which is likely to make entry level qualifications a lot more flexible, shorter in length and not have the requirement to also obtain a functional skills qualification if needed, which has been a barrier to enrolments in the past.

In addition to our internal apprenticeships offer, we can now pass on up to 50% of our annual apprenticeship levy spend onto small and medium businesses within the county to encourage them to take on new apprenticeships. Previously we were able to pass on 25% of the levy in this way and had already allocated the full amount (approximately £300k) for 2024/25. Given the new higher amount, we are working to ensure we maximise this opportunity.

Cultural investment and recovery

The Local Visitor Economy Partnership was established in Q1, and an interim Board appointed. A consultation has been completed on the draft Strategic Plan for the Local Visitor Economy Partnership. The Strategic Plan is expected to be approved by VisitEngland and published in Q2.

Broadband

The Broadband Project has completed its final build and is moving into formal contract closure which will take up to a year due to the data that needs verifying. The Broadband Team is continuing to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its centrally run Project Gigabit programme and attends virtual meetings with BDUK and the supplier. The contract for East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove has been let by BDUK to CityFibre. We understand that the Gigabit Voucher scheme run by BDUK is currently closed in East Sussex and we have no indication of future plans. The Broadband Team is continuing to push BDUK for details of how they plan to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county.

Job creation

The Newhaven Business Grants Programme (Round 1) has created 10 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs in Q1. It is expected that 21.5 FTE roles will be created by the programme. The Rural Business Grants programme has begun, and the number of jobs created will be reported later in 2024/25.

Environment and climate change

We have continued to reduce the Council's carbon footprint and to work with partners to develop and deliver county-wide carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. In Q1 this included:

- completing an assessment of county-wide risks and vulnerabilities to climate change, which will be used to inform how adaptation can be integrated into relevant service plans
- implementing a new salary sacrifice scheme to encourage the adoption of electric vehicles by staff
- working with a local farming partnership to secure funding from the Environment Agency's Natural Environment Investment Readiness Fund to enable the partnership to begin to develop local carbon offsets

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined with the statutory determination period in Q1. 100% of County Council development applications were also determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time during Q1.

<u>Highways, transport and waste</u>

Highways improvements and road condition

40 patch repairs were completed across 26 sites in Q1. This is out of 119 patches identified so far across 74 sites for 2024/25. This has had an impact on the condition of the network and has enabled us to carry out works above and beyond our usual programmes.

The original programme of 472 sign repairs has been reviewed and a number of issues were identified with the data e.g. the sign identified for replacement had not reached 'end of life'. This programme has been re-evaluated and there are now around 120 signs scheduled for replacement or repair. Unfortunately, due to the issues with the data there has been slow progress made with commencing the programme. This programme will commence at pace in Q2 and as further signs are identified they will be added to the programme. We are also investigating the option of a 'find and fix' gang to speed up the identification and replacement of further damaged or missing signs.

In Q1 196 minor drainage schemes have been delivered, including replacing gully covers and clearing significant blockages. 53 larger schemes were identified for delivery in 2024/25. These schemes will progress in Q2 and Q3.

The remaining budget for the refresh of road markings has now been fully allocated in 2024/25 and around 200 jobs have been completed in Q1.

7,450 potholes were repaired in Q1, with 6,157 of these being carriageway potholes, the remainder were primarily footway potholes. Amongst the carriageway potholes, 73% of these were completed within the required timescales and we are working with our contractor to improve the timeliness of repairs. 68 road improvement schemes were completed in Q1 to improve the condition of the roads.

Our Highways Contractor, Balfour Beatty Living Places, achieved a number of social value commitments during Q1. These included providing work experience opportunities for local people, offering jobs to local long term unemployed people, people with disabilities and ex-offenders, and offering business support and advice to local businesses.

Road safety

24 road safety infrastructure schemes have been prioritised based on analysis of crash information, and initial design works have been completed. We are now working to programme these in for implementation during 2024/25. The Council runs courses aimed at giving children and adults the skills they need for riding their bikes on the road. 193 Bikeability courses were delivered to 1,657 individuals. 132 'Wheels for All' sessions were delivered to 1,642 attendees.

Transport and parking

£18m of capital funds were allocated to bus priority measures as part of the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan. 5 bus priority schemes in Eastbourne, Newhaven and Peacehaven were identified, and consultation on all schemes took place in summer 2023. During Q1 the Council has progressed the design of 4 of the 5 schemes. Following feedback from the consultation on the proposed Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue scheme in Eastbourne it was decided to re-consult on revised proposals. This consultation will take place in Q2 and the results will be reported in Q3. Construction of all schemes is scheduled to be completed by September 2025.

A review of parking restrictions in Lewes was considered by the Planning Committee in April 2024 and the approved changes to restrictions were implemented in May and June. The formal consultation for the review of parking restrictions in Rother closed in June 2024.

The Council has received 90% of the £4.441m allocated to East Sussex from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund, to support the delivery of on street electric vehicle charge points in the county. The remaining 10% will be paid once a draft contract has been approved by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles. In June 2024 Cabinet approved the plan to proceed with the procurement of a contract to deliver the charge points, and this is scheduled to begin in Q2 2024/25. Initial works are then expected to begin in Q4 2024/25.

Waste

The 2023/24 outturn (report a quarter in arrears) for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially was 55%. There was a 3.45% increase in total household waste in 2023/24, compared to 2022/23. This is in part due to an increase of 7.5% in waste collected at household waste sites, where residents have been able to dispose of small amounts of chargeable materials for free since the beginning of 2024. Only 0.01% of waste went to landfill in 2023/24.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

We completed 95% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q1. Rangers have concentrated on planned and proactive vegetation clearance during Q1. The relatively dry weather during May and June has also enabled core bridge work to stay on target.

Communities

Trading Standards

Trading Standards made 123 active interventions in Q1, to protect vulnerable people. These interventions included installing call blockers in the homes of vulnerable people who had been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse. 56 interventions were to new victims identified through support sessions. These victims were offered advice and support. 67 interventions were for people who contacted the service to request assistance after falling victim to financial fraud or rogue trading. 87 businesses received training or advice from Trading Standards in Q1.

Libraries

Promotion work commenced in Q1 to prepare for the Summer Reading Challenge 2024. Promotional materials have been distributed to all libraries and 27 promotional assemblies have been delivered in schools to around 5,900 children. 82 further assemblies are planned in July.

As part of the preparations for the Summer Reading Challenge, the library team have continued to support young people to gain experience in the workplace. During Q1 the team recruited volunteers for the challenge. These volunteers help deliver the reading challenge in libraries between July and September. 69 volunteers have been signed up, of these, 34 were aged under 18 and 13 had previously volunteered with the service.

434 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q1. 177 of these were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes. 257 were in Wider Family Learning programmes.

30 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q1.

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget is £72.503m and is forecast to overspent by £209k. The largest overspend is in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted **(ref iv)**. The overspend in Economy reflects the potential cost of closing Adult College for Rural East Sussex that is over and above the current reserve balance **(ref v)**. The main underspend is in Waste in Transport and Operational Services. This is because of higher than budgeted recycling income and lower contract prices due to lower inflation. However, this is partly offset by reduced electricity income. The waste risk reserve draw down requirement is reduced to £0.4m from £1.6m, mainly due to slippage in required improvements at transfer stations **(ref iii)**. £371k of the planned Parking saving will not be achieved this year due to lower levels of income than was forecast and delays in removing parking machines and therefore the need to continue to pay the costs **(ref i)**. The £60k Environmental Services saving will not be achieved and will be addressed going forward **(ref ii)**.

Capital Programme Summary

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £66.699m and there is slippage of £9.734m, spend in advance of £6.35m, and overspend of £246k. The largest slippage is in the Bridge Assessment programme where works have been delayed. Work on Shinewater Bridge and Cross Levels is expected to commence in 2024/25, however work on Langley Rise Bridges is not expected to start until 2025/26 **(ref xi)**. Exceat Bridge will slip due to objections to compulsory purchase orders **(ref x)**. There has been a realignment of works between the phases of the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package resulting in a net spend in advance of £1.627m. Phase 2b detailed design will be completed by October and so works can start in January 2025 **(ref viii and ix)**. There is a large spend in advance on the Hasting and Bexhill Movement and Access scheme. Road Safety reports have now been completed and so works can progress **(ref vii)**. The overspend on the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road is due to remaining archaeology costs and some outstanding part 1 claims **(ref vi)**. There are a number of smaller variances mainly on transport schemes and reflect the current

programme of works approved by Lead Member in March 2024. Highways Structural Maintenance includes £1m transferred from Climate Emergency Works for patching.

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

Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q1 24/25 outturn	Note ref
No exceptions								

Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Parking	-	745	374	371	-	i
Environmental Services	-	60	-	-	60	ii
Total Savings	**0**	**805**	**374**	**371**	**60**	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	**0**	**805**	**374**	**371**	**60**	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding [2]	Part of reported variance [3]	Total	Note Ref
	-	371	371	
	-	60	60	
Total	**0**	**431**	**431**	

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

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

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

APPENDIX 6

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	6,027	(4,255)	1,772	7,496	(5,807)	1,689	(1,469)	1,552	83	
Customer and Library Services	9,542	(4,050)	5,492	9,560	(4,100)	5,460	(18)	50	32	
Communities	3,339	(926)	2,413	3,231	(884)	2,347	108	(42)	66	
Transport & Operational Services	114,186	(71,358)	42,828	112,655	(70,154)	42,501	1,531	(1,204)	327	iii
Highways	21,546	(4,941)	16,605	21,856	(4,941)	16,915	(310)	-	(310)	iv
Economy	3,994	(1,829)	2,165	4,697	(2,282)	2,415	(703)	453	(250)	v
Planning and Environment	5,822	(4,594)	1,228	6,184	(4,799)	1,385	(362)	205	(157)	
Total CET	**164,456**	**(91,953)**	**72,503**	**165,679**	**(92,967)**	**72,712**	**(1,223)**	**1,014**	**(209)**	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
The Keep	1,096	1,096	172	-	172	-	-	-	-	
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	700	700	70	-	70	-	-	-	-	
Peacehaven Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	773	301	725	48	-	48	-	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	65	36	65	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	(5)	246	(246)	(246)	-	-	vi
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	141	2	141	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	547	-	108	439	-	439	-	
Climate Emergency Works	9,859	9,859	3,336	435	3,011	325	-	325	-	
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	963	963	758	89	1,000	(242)	-	-	(242)	
Flood Management SuDS	420	420	218	11	298	(80)	-	-	(80)	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	135	19	135	-	-	-	-	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	4,541	4,541	400	-	400	-	-	-	-	

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Real Time Passenger Information	3,181	3,181	180	(18)	180	-	-	-	-	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	18,500	18,500	6,933	29	6,933	-	-	-	-	
BSIP Passenger Transport	3,815	3,815	1,251	103	1,251	-	-	-	-	
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	5	-	5	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Gateway Road	-	-	-	90	-	-	-	-	-	
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	746	34	3,056	(2,310)	-	-	(2,310)	**vii**
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	990	3	512	478	-	478	-	
Hailsham/Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	134	8	300	(166)	-	-	(166)	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	2,079	114	890	1,189	-	1,189	-	**viii**
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	22	100	2,838	(2,816)	-	-	(2,816)	**ix**
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,646	66,646	3,057	408	3,759	(702)	-	-	(702)	
A22 Corridor Package	1,250	1,250	100	-	100	-	-	-	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	379	1	104	275	-	275	-	
Emergency Active Travel - Tranche 2	(3)	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	150	(33)	150	-	-	-	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	316	(51)	350	(34)	-	-	(34)	
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	9,689	9,689	706	113	613	93	-	93	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	5,340	37	2,980	2,360	-	2,360	-	**x**
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,836	120	-	-	120	-	120	-	
Core Programme – Highways Structural Maintenance	498,675	498,675	24,704	3,563	24,704	-	-	-	-	
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	504	8	504	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	7,945	(149)	3,538	4,407	-	4,407	-	**xi**
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,561	39,561	3,835	543	3,835	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme	2,961	2,961	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Core Programme - Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement Programme	10,417	10,417	588	93	588	-	-	-	-	
Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)	**966,775**	**968,771**	**66,699**	**5,884**	**63,561**	**3,138**	**(246)**	**9,734**	**(6,350)**	

Governance Services – Q1 2024/25
Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements

Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

Council considered the State of the County report in July. The report sets out the unsustainable financial position the Council faces. The financial challenges have primarily been driven by increasing demand and costs in both Children's Services and Adult Social Care and Health. These are issues affecting local authorities across the country and we continue to work with other authorities to lobby for additional funding, which appropriately reflects local needs, and for reforms which to help us target the resources we have most effectively. The State of the County report outlined a number of steps we have already taken to reduce costs and maximise income, however these steps will only go a small way to addressing the deficit and Cabinet agreed that officers identify areas of search for further savings in light of the remaining financial gap. The report also outlines the broader demographic and policy context which will form the backdrop for planning for 2025/26 and beyond. We have refreshed the Council Plan and Portfolio Plans for 2024/25 which include some small changes to performance measures and targets to reflect our yearend position for 2023/24. The updated plans are available on our website.

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

Regional Centre of Excellence

TfSE's Centre of Excellence platform was formally on the 18 June 2024, with over 120 new users signed up. The event brought together Local Transport Authorities, and partner organisations who have assisted with content for the portal, such as the Department for Transport (DfT), National Highways and Network Rail.

The first two training sessions were conducted at the launch. Josie Drath, Director and Rail Planning Lead at Arup delivered a session on Business Case Development. A session on creating and maintaining healthy living streets was carried out by Lucy Saunders, founder of Healthy Streets.

Training sessions, case studies and events will continue to be added to the Centre of Excellence website for users to view.

Active Travel

The TfSE Regional Active Travel Strategy and Action Plan (RATSAP) has been drafted. The Regional Active Travel Steering Group met 7 times throughout the RATSAP's development and is expected to continue meeting quarterly to provide accountability for RATSAP's implementation and knowledge sharing across organisations. Next steps include finalisation of RATSAP, presentation of RATSAP to the October Partnership Board, and the commencement of the action plan.

Freight Forum

Meetings of the Wider South East Freight Forum were held on 19 March and 20 June 2024. Both meetings were well attended by representatives from the freight and logistics sector, businesses, and local authorities across the region.

The March meeting focused on the challenges of providing lorry parking and driver welfare facilities. As a result, Kate Over, TfSE's Transport Strategy Manager, will be representing the Freight Forum on the DfT's HGV Parking Task and Finish Group.

The June Meeting focussed on the challenges associated with the decarbonisation of the freight and logistics sector, in particular the issues that the Forum members need to influence or address that are not covered by existing plans and activity. It also sought to identify any new activity that Forum members and sub-national transport bodies (STBs) could support or undertake to speed up progress on decarbonisation across the South East.

Delivering the Strategic Investment Plan

Funding to support early-stage scheme development has been secured and is in the process of being allocated to our local transport authority partners. This will enable us to build a pipeline of schemes ready for delivery as and when funding opportunities become available.

Corporate Lobbying

During Q1 the Leader and Chief Executive have continued to raise issues and priorities for the county with our local MPs. In June, Cabinet agreed the Council's productivity plan, a new request from Government for local authorities. The plan provided an opportunity to put forward a range of financial, legislative and policy burdens and barriers that Government could reduce or remove. The plan was submitted to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, as well as the Local Government Association (LGA) to support it in its sector wide lobbying.

We continue to draw on broader partnerships and networks to lobby effectively. During the lead up to the General Election the Leader and officers liaised with the County Councils Network and the LGA to ensure key issues for the Council were brought to their attention and formed part of national lobbying of all political parties. Chief Officers also continue to influence service specific national policy developments through national professional associations and networks. The Chief Executive has continued to contribute to national policy development as representative for the South East region on a national grouping of local authority Chief Executives.

Supporting democracy

During Q1 we supported 32 meetings including: 1 County Council meeting; 2 Cabinet meetings; 10 Lead Member meetings; 10 Scrutiny Committees and Review Boards and 9 other committees and panels. We also despatched agendas for a further 4 meetings and supported the Whole Council Forum. The webcasts of meetings were viewed 1,448 times in Q1. The most viewed meeting was the Council meeting on 7 May 2024, which received 282 views, either by live view or as a recording.

In Q1 the Member Training and Development programme continued to deliver a range of courses and briefings in support of Members and the roles they hold. Courses delivered included sessions on Economic Development, Vaccination and Immunisation in East Sussex, Climate Change, and Education in East Sussex. Most training sessions continue to be delivered remotely with resources, such as slides from training sessions, being saved to the Councillors' area of the intranet for future reference. The Member Reference Group also met on 12 June and discussed a number of issues, including, upcoming I.T. developments and the member training and development survey.

The Council's scrutiny committees continued to use a variety of approaches to ensure timely scrutiny input on a range of issues in Q1. The People Scrutiny Committee scoped and commenced a scrutiny review of Healthy Ageing, which will report later in the 2024/25. The committee also held reference group meetings focused on the Health and Social Care Integration Programme, Prevention in Children's Services and Care Quality Commission inspection of Adult Social Care. A 'Brief Bite' training session was held earlier in Q1 on the role of Healthwatch and how it relates to scrutiny. The Place Scrutiny Committee has continued its reference group work on the Local Transport Plan and held a scoping meeting for a review of Local Speed Limit Policy, which will be progressed over the summer and autumn. The Scrutiny and Audit Committee Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group met in May to consider an overview of current scrutiny activity as part of its remit to co-ordinate and develop the effectiveness of the Council's scrutiny activity. The update was subsequently considered by the Governance Committee later in Q1.

Q1 saw the start of the busiest time of year for school admission appeals, when cases relating to the September school intake are heard by Independent Appeal Panels. During Q1, we received 140 appeals, and conducted 17 virtual appeal hearings, 9 of which took place over multiple days. Of the 140 appeals, 14 were successful, and 62 were dismissed by an Independent Appeal Panel. A further 53 were either withdrawn by the families or were not needed because a place became

available at a preferred school before the hearing, and the remaining 11 are due to be heard during Q2.

We received one Independent Review Panel request during Q1, which will take place in Q2.

Legal Services

During Q1, Legal Services assisted Trading Standards to obtain 8 successful convictions against a fraudulent trader for counterfeit tobacco offences relating to both sale and possession for sale. The trader will be sentenced in due course. The Service assisted Trading Standards to obtain a confiscation order of £16,345 following previous successful convictions against a fraudulent trader for counterfeit building work. The Service also assisted Children's Services to secure 12 fines ranging from £55 to £440 against parents for knowingly failing to ensure the regular attendance of their children at school. In Q1, the Service also provided advice on 4 judicial review applications, 2 issued in Q4 2023/24 and 2 issued in Q1 2024/25 The first Q4 2023/24 application challenged the Council's decision not to exercise discretion to maintain an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan for a young person once they had reached 25 in circumstances where an appropriate Adult Social Care support package was available. Permission to judicial review was refused and no appeal against refusal was submitted. The second Q4 2023/24 application related to an alleged failure by the Council to secure school provision named in an EHC plan. School provision was made and permission to judicial review was refused and no appeal has been submitted. The first Q1 2024/25 application disputes the Council's assessment of an asylum seeker that they are an adult and not a child. The decision as to whether permission to judicial review is granted has not yet been made. The second Q1 2024/25 application relates to an alleged failure by the Council to issue an EHC plan which had been amended by the First Tier Tribunal. However, the Council's application to stay the requirement for the EHC plan to be issued whilst the First Tier Tribunal reviews two parts of the plan is pending. The Council has offered to provide the remainder of the plan pending the First Tier Tribunal's review. The decision as to whether permission to judicial review is granted has not yet been made.

During Q1 the Service advised in relation to 65 Court of Protection cases and 13 matters involving safeguarding vulnerable adults (compared to 67 and 24 in Q1 2023/24) and 52 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications in the Court of Protection (compared to 79 in Q1 2023/24).

The Service continues to work closely with Children's Services, providing advice and representation, including in pre-proceedings (with the aim of avoiding the need for court action to safeguard children) and court applications for care proceedings. Our priority is to keep children within their family when it is safe to do so, and for public law applications to be a necessary and proportionate response to achieve the best outcome for the child. At the end of Q1 2024/25, there were 40 ongoing pre-proceedings compared to 47 at the end of Q1 2023/24. At the end of Q1 2024/25, there were a total of 56 ongoing care proceedings compared to 62 at the end of Q1 2023/24. In Q1 2024/25, concluded proceedings took on average 45 weeks per child, 9 weeks less than Q1 2023/24.

The Service continues to provide general advice on childcare related issues and on other matters before the court where the Local Authority are involved. These matters include applications for revocation of placement orders, discharge of care orders, secure accommodation orders, deprivation of liberty orders and adoption related matters. The Service has also continued to provide training and legal advice to Children's Services on legal processes, policy and operational instructions.

During Q1, the Service completed 13 agreements to secure financial contributions to the Council of £643,260 together with the delivery of additions and improvements to the highway network across the county. The Service also advised on 66 new property matters compared to 41 in Q1 2023/24. In addition, the Service advised on 59 new contract and procurement matters compared to 62 in Q1 2023/24. During Q1, the Service also assisted Income Recovery in securing the recovery and repayment of £29,214 of debt.

Coroner Services

Coroner Services provide funding and support to the East Sussex Coroner in undertaking the Coroner's role of investigating violent, un-natural or sudden deaths of unknown cause and deaths in custody. As an independent judicial officer holding office under the Crown, the Coroner operates entirely independently to the Council in making decisions about post mortems and inquests. During Q1 2024/25, 474 deaths were reported to the Coroner, compared with 565 in Q1 2023/24, averaging 158 deaths per month. Of those deaths, 49% (232) went on to have a post mortem, compared to 48% in Q1 2023/24. 87 inquests were opened during Q1, compared to 91 inquests opened during Q1 2023/24. 102 inquests were closed in Q1 2024/25, compared to 57 closed in 2023/2024.

In Q1 2024/25, 1 inquest with a Jury was held, compared to none in Q1 2023/24. 18 inquests were held in writing, which do not require court bookings, compared to 19 in Q1 2023/24. There are currently 276 open inquests, compared to 265 at the end of Q1 2024/25.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

Trading Standards obtained a Directed Surveillance Authority under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) during Q1. The Authority was obtained for a maximum period of three months and expired on 10 July. It has been subject to regular review to ensure it remains relevant and necessary in line with the original objectives.

Local Government Ombudsman complaints

The Ombudsman issued 18 decisions in Q1. 14 cases were closed before a full investigation for a variety of reasons. These reasons included insufficient evidence of fault, complaints being out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction or because the complaint had not been through our internal complaint process.

All 4 cases that were fully investigated related to Children's Services (CS), of which 3 were closed with the complaint partly or fully upheld as follows:

CS: The client complained that the schools' appeal panel failing to properly consider his appeal against the decision to refuse his son a Year 4 place at his preferred school; causing him and his family a great deal of stress. The Ombudsman found fault in the decision making by the panel and with the clerk's record keeping.

The Council agreed to send a written apology for the failings identified and arrange a rehearing of the appeal with a different appeal panel; remind the clerk about the need to make accurate and more detailed records of appeal hearings and provide training to the panel about the consideration of evidence and reaching decisions on prejudice; ensure that the presenting officer has sufficient information to allow for detailed answering of questioning by panels; and ensure the Council, as admission authority, provides submission statements with fuller, relevant information.

CS: The client's mother complained that her daughter had not received suitable education since she became unable to attend school in Year 7. Whilst the Ombudsman found much to commend in the Council's response to the absence from school, they did find there was a delay holding a multi-professionals meeting to decide the next steps, when attempts to secure the client's return to school proved unsuccessful. The Council agreed to apologise to the client and her mother and to offer a symbolic payment of £1,000 to acknowledge the impact of the delay.

CS: The client's mother complained that the Council failed to provide a suitable education for her son for 4 years. She said this resulted in a lack of education and social skills, which limited his prospects. The Ombudsman found fault because the Council failed to provide education provision from May 2023 to January 2024, wrongly requested that the client's mother put a review request in writing, causing delay, and failed to identify a suitable school placement since August 2021.

The Council agreed to provide a written apology to the client and his mother and to make a payment of £1,500 to recognise the prolonged and significant distress experienced; and make a

payment of £3,600 to be used for the benefit of the client to recognise the loss of education provision from May 2023 to January 2024.

Web activity

There were 1,807,059 unique page views of the Council website in Q1. The jobs section of the site was viewed more than 800,000 times. 70% of visits were from a mobile device.

A newly built website for family hubs was launched in May, which had 11,064 unique pageviews during Q1 and 48 forms submitted by residents with an enquiry or wishing to take up services on offer.

Customer satisfaction with the overall website was 66% and for microsites 82%.

Media and information work

In Q1, the team responded to 101 media enquiries and issued 15 press releases. There were 326 media stories about the council. Work in Q1 was limited by the pre-election period.

Effective publicity and campaigns

Examples of effective campaigns include publicising an amnesty on long overdue library items which is calculated by the library service to have saved £15,000. More than 5,000 'lost' books were returned and 133 people are now able to use library services again. The campaign used targeted letters and social media posts to reach people.

Following a social media campaign, which targeted residents of East Sussex and surrounding areas, there were record applications and 13 newly qualified social workers accepted posts in Adult Social Care. The campaign drew 48 people to an online recruitment event and 70 applications were received for 10 posts; the number of posts was then expanded because of the quality of the applicants.

South East 7 (SE7)

SE7 Leaders and Chief Executives met jointly in Q1 to share information on how councils were responding to common challenges. In particular they focused on addressing financial difficulties related to the rising cost and demand for children's social care, special educational needs and disabilities and adult social care. Other areas of discussion included economic development, support for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, inspection regimes and devolution. SE7 Chief Executives also continue to meet regularly, and in Q1 discussed opportunities for collaboration, national policy developments, and progressing work agreed by the Leaders.

When they met in Q1, Leaders and Chief Executives also discussed how best to progress the partnership's collective lobbying work in the context of the General Election. Leaders agreed it was important to suggest practical policy reforms that would reduce the financial challenges for councils and improve services for residents, drawing on the County Councils Network's 'Manifesto for Counties'. The partnership subsequently worked collaboratively in developing productivity plans, and individual member councils included a number of shared SE7 lobbying messages within their plans. The partnership agreed it would be important to ensure their productivity plans were reviewed by the new Government and agreed to submit the plans to the Local Government Association to support its national lobbying.

Revenue Budget Summary

The GS net revenue budget is £9.046m and is expected to overspend by £225k. The overspend is mostly in Legal Services and is due to the cost of locum cover for staff vacancies and maternity leave.

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

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q1 24/25 outturn	Note ref
None								

Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
There are no savings for 2024/25	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes [1]			**0**	**0**	**0**	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	

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

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

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

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

APPENDIX 7

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Corporate Governance	5,773	(202)	5,571	5,736	(200)	5,536	37	(2)	35	
Corporate Support	3,887	(412)	3,475	4,136	(401)	3,735	(249)	(11)	(260)	
Total Governance	**9,660**	**(614)**	**9,046**	**9,872**	**(601)**	**9,271**	**(212)**	**(13)**	**(225)**	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q1	Actual to date Q1	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q1 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
No current programme for Governance	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Total GS Gross (Planned Programme)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

APPENDIX 8

Strategic Risk Register – Q1 2024/25

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

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
12	**CYBER ATTACK** National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has highlighted the substantial risk to British web infrastructure, with elevated levels of Cyber Crime being reported against all areas of government, particularly in light of current international unrest. Cyber-attacks are growing more frequent, sophisticated, and damaging when they succeed. With many additional functions now routinely carried out virtually and remotely, the change in working practice gives rise to more requests to relax security controls, with services more likely to take risks on the technology they procure and how they use it. Controls have been enhanced to manage these requests. The impacts of a cyber-attack are far-reaching, and it is difficult to put a figure on the cost, but authorities that have been subject to major attacks have calculated the disruption to have cost between £10m and £12m.	Most attacks leverage software flaws and gaps in boundary defences. IT&D use modern security tools to assure our security posture: Monitoring network activity and identifying security threats; Keeping software up to date with regular patching regimes; Continually monitoring evolving threats and re-evaluating the ability of our toolset to provide adequate defence against them; Ongoing communication with the Security industry to find the most suitable tools and systems to secure our infrastructure. IT&D continues to invest in new tools, which use pre-emptive technology to identify threats and patterns of abnormal behaviour. The Council achieved Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation during 2022/23. Cyber Essentials Plus is the industry standard for the private and public sectors, underpinning safe sharing with partners and helping ensure sufficient controls are in place to minimise the risk of a cyber incident. Enhancing user awareness: Expanding E-Learning and policy delivery mechanisms to cover Cyber threat; educating staff around the techniques and methods used by active threats; and providing General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) training and workshops to cascade vital skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under GDPR legislation. Business Continuity Scenario testing has been cascaded through Departmental Management Teams. Services hosted in ISO 27001 accredited Orbis Data Centres. As well as mitigations against attack, the following measures are currently in place to minimise the impact should there be a successful attack: •Behavioural analysis systems defend against hostile activity. •Resilient systems enhanced with immutable backups enable quick recovery. •Robust protocols for response escalation and communication.	Red
9	**WORKFORCE** An inability to attract and retain the high calibre staff needed could lead to a reduction in the expertise and capacity required to deliver statutory services to our residents, including to prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults at the required level and standards, impacting on the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives.	A number of strategies responding to the current significant recruitment and retention challenges have been put in place. Highlights include: - On-going attendance at events such as careers fairs to maximise our presence with job seekers. - Development of partnerships with organisations that support people back into employment to extend our reach into sections of the labour market that are underrepresented or face significant barriers to employment. - Continued use of apprenticeships, traineeships, intern arrangements and more flexible work arrangements etc as a way of bringing in new talent to the Council. - Continued delivery of our two leadership development programmes to support our talent management strategies: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and 'Head of Service Masterclasses'. - Provision of information sessions and training around application and interview techniques for candidates who want to apply for roles at East Sussex County Council (ESCC). - Engagement with employees at ESCC, who are under 25, to get feedback on what attracted them to the Council as an employer; and to begin establishing a forum for young people in the new year to highlight any issues, and to attract candidates from a younger demographic to the Council. Additional work undertaken in Q1 includes:	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		- Conclusion of the exit interview pilot with proposals for future arrangements currently being developed based on the learning from the pilot. - Development of a 'managers toolkit' to support strategic workforce planning within departments.	
15	**CLIMATE** Failure to limit global warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation levels, which requires global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) to be reduced by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' by 2050 at the latest. The predicted impacts of climate change in East Sussex include more frequent and intense flooding, drought, and episodes of extreme heat, as well as impacts from the effects of climate change overseas, such as on food supply. This will lead to an increase in heat-related deaths, particularly amongst the elderly, damage to essential infrastructure, increased cost of food, disruption to supply chains and service provision, and greater coastal erosion.	**Climate change mitigation**: the science-based target is to reduce scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 50% every 5 years (equating to 13% per year). The focus is on buildings, as they made up 79% of carbon emissions in 2020/21. Internal oversight of progress is by the corporate Climate Emergency Board. **Climate change adaptation**: we work with partners on some aspects of adaptation, including flood risk management plans and delivering a Heat Alert service during the summer months. In Quarter 1 2024/25: **A) Mitigation**: 1) **Carbon Reduction Target**: the target for 2024/25 is a 13% carbon reduction compared with 2023/24 and a cumulative reduction of 50% against the baseline year of 2019-20. Energy usage data for Q1 will be available in Q2. 2) **Carbon Reduction Schemes**: the target for 2024/25 is for the delivery of a further 23 capital schemes. A total of 6 schemes have been delivered in Q1 (4 solar PV, 1 LED lighting & 1 heat decarbonisation scheme). The estimated outturn is for 20 capital schemes to be completed this year, as the current revenue of all capital budgets has delayed the development of the project pipeline. **B) Adaptation**: 1) **Adaptation Plan**: A climate change vulnerability and risk assessment report is due to be completed by the consultants Arup during Q2, which will be used to help inform the development of a corporate adaptation plan.	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
20	**PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE** Inability to secure sufficient high quality placements for children in our care, suitable accommodation for care experienced young people and respite provision, leading to significant financial pressure leading to significant financial pressure and poorer outcomes for children/young people.	Effective demand management, robust management of front door. Delivery of early help services, implementation of Family Hub programme throughout 2023-24, and Level 2 Family Keyworkers. Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Edge of Care 'Connected Families', The Family Hubs programme has been implemented across E.Sussex delivering early intervention and support within communities, Connected Families (Connected Coaches and Intensive Practitioners), Foundations, SWIFT are delivering intensive evidence based interventions alongside Social Workers to maximise the opportunity for children to be cared for within their own family. There has been a 14% reduction in the number of children subject to child protection plans since February 2024, this is as a direct result of the launch of the Connected Families Intensive Practitioners (CFIP service). Further delivery of kinship/Special Guardianship Order placements. Capital bid for Sorrel Drive. In 2023/24 Children's Services worked with IMPOWER to enhance our approach to using data to shape placement sufficiency. We have developed trajectory planning, implemented the 'Valuing Care' approach to ensure children receiving the right care for their needs and value for money achieved, and improved support for in house foster carers, including an investment in allowances. An analysis of the children becoming Looked After during Q1 2024-2025, indicates that a high proportion (81%) are entering into foster care or kinship care provision rather than residential care. Fostering Recruitment & Retention Strategy completed. East Sussex County Council is part of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme, Regional Fostering Strategy and piloting Mockingbird hub. Uplift to fostering allowance (for in house carers, Special Guardianship Orders, Kinship carers) approved by the Chief Management Team to help secure sufficient supply of in house foster carers as an alternative to more expensive care packages. In Q3, the valuing care tools have been embedded into the business as usual with a strong focus on reunification. Fostering allowance uplift has been made part of the recruitment drive. Both elements are attempting to mitigate the increased costs due to the lack of placements for Looked After Children.	Red

APPENDIX 8

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
19	**SCHOOLS AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (ISEND)** For Children with Special Educational Needs. Inability to secure statutory provision due to lack of availability of specialist placement within the county and increasing demand for placements in this sector. This would put the Council at risk of judicial review and/or negative Local Government Ombudsman judgements for failing to meet our duties within the Children and Families Act 2014, with associated financial penalties and reputational damage.	Effective use of forecasting data to pre-empt issues. Work with statutory partners to develop contingency plans. Work with the market to increase provision where needed. Expanding internal interim offer for children.	**Red**
1	**ROADS** Extreme weather events over recent years, including this winter, have caused significant damage to many of the county's roads, adding to the backlog of maintenance in the County Council's Asset Plan: and increasing the risk to the Council's ability to stem the rate of deterioration and maintain road condition. The economic impacts of the pandemic and events in Ukraine have had some effects on service delivery during this year, particularly with increased costs and shortages of suitable contractors and materials.	The changing climate is now influencing the rate of road deterioration, with more extreme events such as warmer wetter winters; and drier summers punctuated by unseasonal heavy downpours (drying and shrinking the substructure of roads). Additional funding over the last few years has helped maintain road condition, however, the latest condition and funding modelling showed the potential for deterioration over the next 10 years. Additional carriageway patching, footway, signing and lining works were carried out with additional budget allocated through the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources process in 2023 and Cabinet approved additional investment of £15.7m in June 2023 for highway maintenance. The improvements are well underway to provide greater network reliance. Deterioration in road surfaces in 2024 has continued with a wet winter and spring. Recognising this, Cabinet have approved a further £1m in July 2024 for a programme of targeted patching works to address the worst areas of road damage. Road Condition Indicator (RCI) scores for this year indicate we are on target for principal roads but slightly below target for non-principal and unclassified roads, this is what we expected from the modelling given the current conditions. The evidence shows the wet winter and spring weather has taken its toll on the condition of many of the county's roads. Mitigations include encouraging road users to report potholes so we can intervene as soon as possible in accordance with our policies, closely managing the operational performance of the highway contractor and lobbying Government for additional investment as, without it, it will be increasingly difficult to manage the risks of further decline.	**Red**

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
18	**DATA BREACH** A breach of security/confidentiality leading to destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. This includes breaches that are the result of both accidental and deliberate causes. A personal data breach is a security incident that has affected the confidentiality, integrity or availability of personal data regardless of whether information has been accessed, altered or disclosed via electronic or manual means. Risks to individuals, reputational damage, fines from the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO), compensation claims.	Policy and guidance procedures in place to support practice. Data Protection Officer (DPO), Caldicott Guardians and Information Governance Officers monitor breach reporting and put in place mechanisms to minimise recurrence. Staff training to develop awareness. E-learning and policy delivery mechanism expanded to enhance skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under General Data Protection Regulation legislation. Technical security measures operated by Information Technology and Digital (IT&D), including access control and segregation of duties.	**Amber**
8	**CAPITAL PROGRAMME** There are risks and uncertainties regarding the capital programme over the current Medium Term Financial Plan period and beyond, which could impact on the ability to deliver the Council's priorities and set a balanced budget. Factors such as inflation, supply chain issues, unforeseen operational risks, and wider economic and geopolitical factors are likely to impact project deliverability and affordability. Additionally, if capital expenditure isn't profiled accurately, then significant slippage against the budgeted programme can undermine the planning process, particularly in relation to treasury management modelling and the impact of borrowing. Due to the complexity of factors and uncertainties impacting them, the level of government grants and other sources of capital programme funding such as developer contributions and capital receipts could be significantly reduced. A combination of the above risks, alongside an environment of higher interest rates, could significantly increase the cost of borrowing to fund the capital programme, increasing pressures on the Council's revenue budget in an already challenging financial environment.	The Council reviews and updates its 20-year Capital Strategy annually as part of the Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, which sets the framework in which the capital programme is planned and allows the Council to prioritise investment to support its objectives. The development and delivery of the capital programme is overseen by a Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB), which is a cross departmental group, who also hear from Departmental Capital Board/Sub Boards who oversee priority areas. The capital programme includes an element of 'normal' level of inflation for ongoing target-based core programmes (as opposed to programmes that have cash limited envelopes). Additionally, a capital risk provision in the form of additional borrowing flexibility is in place to provide the ability to react to emerging risks such as supply chain issues and inflationary pressures. The level of provision is reviewed and approved on an annual basis as part of the RPPR process and is maintained by the CSAB in adherence to financial regulations. As part of the RPPR process, services are asked to provide a profiled programme based on best knowledge, which is reviewed and challenged by CSAB, to ensure the programme is profiled as accurately as possible. A corporate slippage risk factor can be applied to the programme to reflect likely programme spend to provide greater robustness to the planning and monitoring process. The CSAB have oversight of all sources of capital funding, including grants, capital receipts and developer contributions, to ensure that assumptions are prudent and realistic, and funds are used effectively and to minimise the need to borrow. Funding announcements are actively monitored, and funding targets reviewed to minimise the impact on delivery of the capital programme, ensuring that there is sufficient liquidity to meet funding requirements. The cost of borrowing for the capital programme has a direct impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan position, therefore capital investment decisions are considered as part of the RPPR process based on Treasury Management capacity and affordability in the context of the Council's wider financial position. The Council's approved Treasury Management Policy and Strategy has been prepared in the context of	**Amber**

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		the current financial situation and seeks to ensure that capital investment plans are affordable, prudent, and sustainable.	
6	**LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH** The transfer of South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) responsibilities and functions to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) does not successfully integrate the development of economic strategic planning, business support, and management of capital funded programmes, into Council operations as required by Government policy. Possible consequences if the transfer is not managed successfully include: •Management, monitoring, and evaluation of the current capital programmes do not meet Government requirements, leading to potential clawback of £m funds; or an inability for ESCC to demonstrate it can manage funds successfully, affecting future allocations of growth funds. •Third parties with existing contracts may raise concerns if new / variation funding agreements are not put in place early from April 2024. •Loss of an effective 'business voice' through the current local economic growth board (Team East Sussex) and its various subgroups. •An inability to produce an agreed local economic strategy, which sets the ambitions, objectives, and key outcomes for East Sussex.	East Sussex County Council, working with partners, has successfully secured significant amounts of local growth funding totalling £127m since 2012 via the South East and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to deliver a wide range of infrastructure projects in East Sussex. In August 2023, Government formally announced that direct funding for LEPs will be removed from April 2024. Upper tier local authorities (UTLA's) will then be required to take on the current non-statutory LEP powers, responsibilities, and functions. These include strategy development, business support and oversight/management of capital programmes. We submitted our proposal to Government in November 2023 to become an UTLA as per the guidance issued. East Sussex has now been confirmed by Government as a 'functional economic area' to take on LEP responsibilities. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and East Sussex County Council have produced draft integration plans to mitigate the transfer risks on current and future capital programmes; and the financial, legal, and reputational risks. SELEP and our own Corporate Management Team endorsed the draft integration plans in quarter 3 2023/24, and the plans were taken to Lead Member in January 2024 and approved by Cabinet in March 2024. Further Government guidance and an Assurance Framework are due to be released in the new financial year to set out transition arrangements and have been delayed due to the general election. Essex County Council (ESCC), as the Accountable body for SELEP, are producing a Transition Agreement between all six of the upper tier local authorities (incl. ESCC) and the Government department to hand over local accountable body responsibilities for the legacy capital programmes to UTLA's. This document is still being finalised and is expected to be concluded, with all parties signing in quarter 2. In the absence of this agreement, East Sussex has established clear governance, reporting and transparency arrangements to address the Government's responsibilities since April 2024 and is already implementing the requirements by continuing with the established Team East Sussex board with new terms of reference. A draft version of the local economic prosperity strategy has been produced and new governance procedures have been established to oversee the management of the current LEP funded programmes/projects. Looking ahead, the lack of large-scale funding programmes to support economic growth across the county presents a big risk to us. Recent funds have been awarded directly to local Borough and District authorities (e.g., UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Funds and Long Term Plan for Towns) or funding has come from time-limited specific sources. The County Council and Team East Sussex, the local economic growth board, are jointly committed to producing a longer-term East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy to 2050. The strategy will set out our collective approach to take advantage of future funding sources as they become available. Significant work has been completed with consultants and stakeholder consultations and a draft strategy produced in March 2024. The draft strategy is currently being reviewed by partners and is scheduled for approval in 2024 and will help to mitigate economic strategic planning risks. The County Council is already in a good position to mitigate the risks on business support and ensuring business has a voice. We directly run the Business East Sussex Growth Hub services and	**Amber**

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		Government have committed to fund this in 2024/25. A funding allocation and contract have now been received and information is being submitted back in quarter 1 for approval from Government. We will also ensure the business voice continues to be heard through Team East Sussex, our local strategic advisory economic growth board for the county which continues to meet on a quarterly basis.	
4	**HEALTH** Failure to secure maximum value from partnership working with the National Health Service (NHS). If not achieved, there will be impact on social care, public health and health outcomes and increased social care operational and cost pressures, as well as shared Integrated Care System objectives for jointly managing patient flow through our System. An increase in activity and complexity in the presentation of patients through our acute hospital sites, has resulted in an increase in the NCTR (No Criteria to Reside) numbers and presents a system risk in respect of adequate patient flow.	East Sussex was allocated £5,088m, as part of the national Government Discharge Fund Grant for 2024/25, to support local authorities to build additional adult social care and community-based reablement capacity to reduce hospital discharge delays by delivering sustainable improvements to services for individuals - focussed on improving discharge to home, alongside increased therapy and assessment provision and associated plans to reduce the use of bedded discharge pathways. Funding allocations have been agreed for Q1 2024/25 and rolled forwards for the remainder of the financial year. The Integrated Care Board (ICB) has retained the £4m uplift, to be used as transformation monies to cover dual running costs/pump priming to affect the change and pace needed to avoid delays in hospital settings. Collaborative work continues with system partners on our Discharge Transformation work, 6 areas of work have been identified to address the increase in the number of patients who no longer meet the Criteria to Reside in an acute hospital bed. Demand and capacity modelling will also be undertaken to inform the capacity requirements for the system going forward and inform best use of discharge funding. In 2023/24 we agreed our footprints, and a pan-Sussex core offer for Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) has been developed. Shared development of ICTs, which align with borough and district boundaries, will be focussed on proactive care for the most complex and vulnerable patients, and population health improvement. These will also address local priorities based on intelligence and insight, and data packs have been produced for each area to help further understand and address local health and care needs and inequalities. Building on our progress with integrated care in East Sussex, we have started the process of identifying leadership infrastructure for our 5 ICT footprints in East Sussex. Development sessions have been held in all 5 footprints to start to identify and plan collaborative action, and relevant tests of change to further integrate service delivery.	**Amber**

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
New	**Care Act reviews and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments** Demand exceeding capacity for annual Care Act reviews and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments	These are known issues for virtually all local authorities with social care responsibilities as this activity falls within our duties under the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005. Performance is therefore tracked on a monthly basis by the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) Department and benchmarked wherever possible. For Care Act reviews, for example, our performance is 8th out of 16 South East authorities. Mitigations and actions: Additional resource has been deployed to undertake DoLS assessments (August '24) to ensure more timely response to requests. The impact of this is expected to be realised in Q4 2024/25. Care Act Reviews – ASCH completed 15,413 reviews in 2023/24. Our agreed target performance is 66.6% and the forecast outturn for 24/25 is 60.5%. A project manager has been in post since April and has already succeeded in significantly reducing the maximum waiting time for reviews. Young carers reviews are undertaken by Imago Community, ensuring a timely assessment and review for this cohort.	**Amber**

Report to:	**Cabinet**
Date:	**26 September 2024**
By:	**Chief Executive**
Title of report:	**Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) – update on planning for 2025/26**
Purpose of report:	**To provide an update on the RPPR planning position and consider exceptional in-year actions required.**

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Cabinet is recommended to:

i. note the updated planning position and the actions being taken to support the Council's financial position as set out in the report;

ii. agree that the Council consults where required on the savings proposals set out in the report and at appendix 1;

iii. agree that Chief Officers continue to identify further potential savings as set out in section 5;

iv. agree to continue lobbying vigorously through all available avenues for sustainable funding to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex.

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1. Background

1.1 In June Cabinet considered the State of the County report, a key milestone in the Council's Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process, our integrated business and financial planning cycle. The report set out the updated demographic, economic and service evidence base, the national and local policy context, and the latest updates on our medium term financial planning position and capital programme at that time.

1.2 State of the County set out the strengths and diversity of our county, as well as needs and challenges. The report also demonstrated the varied and essential range of support the County Council provides 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 deliver both local and national priorities.

1.3 However, the State of the County report also set out the most difficult financial outlook ever facing the Council. There is a substantial and growing gap between the costs of delivering essential services to meet the needs of East Sussex residents and the income we expect to have to fund these services in future years. The current year's budget, set by the County Council in February, is reliant on one-off reserves, a temporary measure which does not address the underlying funding gap and is unsustainable. As a result of this gap, and no indication of further income available to address it, Cabinet agreed in June to identify areas of search for further savings.

1.4 Since June, as set out below (and in the quarter 1 (Q1) monitoring report elsewhere on this agenda), the Council's financial position has deteriorated. Despite the significant additional provision made in February's budget based on the evidence and modelling of future needs and costs, the pressures on services have continued into 2024/25. This is due to continued increases in demand for services and the cost of delivering them - a picture mirrored nationally. As a result, the Q1 monitoring report sets out a substantial projected service overspend of £23.5m in the current year. Although, as the report outlines, robust steps are being taken to further reduce spending, the forecast in-year deficit has the potential to deplete further our very limited available reserves, removing any remaining flexibility for the year ahead.

1.5 This is both a stark and urgent position. Unless additional funding is forthcoming, the Council will not be in a position to set a balanced budget in February without action, over and above steps already being taken. Decisions are needed now in order to begin progressing, before the end of this financial year, the savings proposals which will potentially be required to help make ends meet next year. For these reasons, this report is being brought to Cabinet outside of our usual RPPR planning cycle and approach.

1.6 This is an exceptional step, and recommendations to start the consultation needed to underpin sound decision-making later in the RPPR cycle are being made at this time as to delay them would result in the financial position worsening further and additional savings having to be found. The process for considering and, should they be agreed, implementing proposals takes some time. Consultation and consideration of the results will take a number of months and, depending on what is then decided, notice may have to be given on contracts and services reprovisioned. To enable a saving to be made as soon as possible, and mitigate the risk of a worsening financial position, some decisions will have to be taken early in 2025, following and taking account of the consultation. This means that the process has to start now. This report focuses on initial savings proposals which require public consultation to begin this process, subject to Cabinet approval. Further proposals are being developed and there will be another update to Cabinet in November.

1.7 It is important to state clearly and openly that the proposals set out in this report are brought forward out of necessity. We know they will have significant impacts on local people, our staff and partners and, in many cases, will only add to the future need for services as well as impacting on our ability to respond. However, the Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget for the coming year in February. Given our very limited available reserves, which will be further reduced by the current year's pressures, this can only be achieved by receiving significant additional funding, which we have limited ability to raise, or reducing spend. Following the substantial savings of £140m already identified since 2010, which moved the Council to a Core Offer, there are few remaining options to reduce spend. We are faced with hard, short term choices which do not reflect how we would want to approach evidence-based, longer term planning to meet the needs of our communities and services.

1.8 Nationally, we await details of the new Government's approach to local government funding and the key areas placing severe pressures on councils. The national Budget statement has been set for 30 October and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement is expected in December. A broader overview of national developments, and the updated Medium Term Financial Plan position, will be brought to Cabinet in November in line with our usual RPPR process, and following the Budget Statement. We continue to take all opportunities to raise and be clear with Government about 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 are seeking the support of local MPs in pressing this case. However, in the context of pressure on public finances nationally, there is currently no indication of additional Government support, and we must take action locally to address the

serious financial position and to safeguard the decent and effective services our residents need and deserve as far as possible.

1.9 We also remain 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 budget decisions.

2. The challenge in East Sussex

2.1 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 demand 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, are placing significant pressure on local authorities, both financially and in service provision. 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.

2.2 These demand-led, statutory services are core to supporting the most vulnerable, but the essential requirement to respond to all those who need statutory support leaves few options for local authorities to manage growing costs. Preventative work, which can help stop needs escalating and therefore reduce the amount of higher intensity support required, has been reduced over time as councils' resources became more stretched. This leaves very little room for investment in these approaches, which are our best option to manage demand in the longer term, and impacts on the outcomes we want to achieve for local people as services become ever more reactive.

2.3 Many of our public and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector partners are also experiencing high levels of demand. Pressures in the NHS nationally and locally post-Covid not only impact on people's experience of health services, but also have knock-on effects on council services, particularly social care.

2.4 These pressures are not unique to East Sussex but they are especially pronounced here because of the needs of our population, the resources available to us, and the steps we have already had to take over many years to respond to local needs within limited and reduced resources, and funding mechanisms which do not properly reflect the level of need.

2.5 The county's demography has a significant impact on the needs of local people and communities. Proportionately we have high numbers of over 65s and over 85s compared to the south east and England as a whole. East Sussex is ahead of the national ageing population trend. This means we have an older population which brings great strengths but also higher need for care and support, and we are at a tipping point, seeing escalating and more complex care needs. By 2028 it is estimated that there will be an additional 22,000 people with two or more health conditions in East Sussex. The number of older people with dementia is expected to increase by nearly 1,600. All of this means the pressures on our adult social care services are particularly acute compared to elsewhere.

2.6 Pockets of significant deprivation also impact on demand and the county differs substantially from the wider south east in this respect. For example, Hastings is in the top 10% most deprived local authority areas nationally and three of the five district and borough council areas have met national criteria for 'levelling up' partnerships. Take-up of benefits is higher than the national average in parts of East Sussex, for example almost 6,800 working age adults in Hastings (15%) have been assessed as being entitled to Personal Independence Payments. The proportion of older adults on Pension Credits is higher than the national average in both Hastings and Eastbourne. Nearly 3,800 children and young

people in Hastings (almost a quarter) are in low income families. These factors all generate more need for our support across a range of services.

2.7 The huge natural assets of East Sussex offer an exceptional environment in which to live and work. However, they also place limitations on the development and infrastructure which support economic growth, prosperity and the related generation of business rates to help fund services. The county has an economy of small businesses, and our protected landscapes and limited infrastructure make it difficult for those businesses to grow. Earnings are below both the national and regional average.

2.8 Coupled with the significant needs within the county, we have fewer resources at our disposal than many other county councils. While our overall reserve balances as a portion of our budget are broadly in line with other authorities, they 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.

2.9 In this challenging context, we have managed our resources carefully and taken difficult decisions when we had to. This involved taking innovative approaches to delivering savings which focused on delivering our priority outcomes, including an emphasis on efficient and lean support functions in order to prioritise funding for frontline services. The scale of previous savings ESCC has delivered means that we have already implemented service reductions many other authorities are now pursuing in response to pressures.

3. Current financial position

3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented within the State of the County report in June estimated a deficit budget position by 2027/28 of £83.6m, with a projected deficit of £55.3m in 2025/26 alone:

Medium Term Financial Plan	**2025/26 £m**	**2026/27 £m**	**2027/28 £m**
Annual Budget Deficit / (Surplus)	**40.976**	**16.503**	**11.778**
Carry Forward of 2024/25 Deficit	14.344	-	-
Annual Budget Deficit / (Surplus) after Carry Forward	**55.320**	**16.503**	**11.778**
Total Budget Deficit / (Surplus)	**55.320**	**71.823**	**83.601**

3.2 Scenarios being considered, subject to local and national decisions, had the potential to reduce the cumulative deficit to £31.2m, of which £26.6m was in 2025/26:

	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Revised deficit	**55.320**	**16.503**	**11.778**	**83.601**
Scenarios currently being considered				
Continuation of Adult Social Care (ASC) grant funding	(5.386)	0.000	0.000	(5.386)
Proceeds of Business Rates (NNDR) pooling	(2.194)	2.194	0.000	0.000
Council Tax: Premiums on second homes	(3.524)	(0.070)	(0.072)	(3.666)
Reduction in contractual inflation in line with forecasts	(6.481)	0.000	0.000	(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	**26.597**	**6.373**	**(1.770)**	**31.200**

3.3 The projected year end position at Q1, as set out earlier on this agenda, adds further pressure:

2024/25 Q1 Forecast (£000)	**Planned Net**	**Projected Net**	**(Over)/ under spend Net**
Adult Social Care	259,957	269,761	(9,804)
Public Health	-	-	-
Business Services / Orbis	29,715	30,455	(740)
Children's Services	144,893	157,375	(12,482)
Communities, Economy & Transport	72,503	72,712	(209)
Governance Services	9,046	9,271	(225)
Total Services	**516,114**	**539,574**	**(23,460)**
Centrally Held Budgets	35,225	27,090	8,135
Corporate Funding	(536,995)	(542,887)	5,892
TOTAL	**14,344**	**23,777**	**(9,433)**
One-off Use of Financial Management Reserve 2024/25	(14,344)	(14,344)	-
Use of FM Reserve to cover operational overspend	-	(9,433)	9,433
FINAL TOTAL	**0**	**0**	**0**

3.4 Given the considerable level of national funding uncertainty, work continues to develop and update the MTFP, including factoring in the latest modelling of future demand, and an updated position will be reported later in the year.

3.5 At State of the County, strategic reserves were projected to be £16.7m by the end of 2028/29. The forecast draw to balance the projected 2024/25 overspend and other minor changes have reduced this projected level to £7.2m. Strategic reserves are not statutorily ringfenced or held for specific purposes and therefore can be utilised to offset revenue pressures. However, they can only be used once, so using reserves in this way is not sustainable.

4. Our response

4.1 As signalled in June, we have already taken action to minimise day to day expenditure wherever possible, to provide additional oversight of workforce costs and to ensure that recruitment to vacant posts is carefully considered. We are also ensuring that increased income offsets increased costs as far as possible, we have reviewed and reduced our office estate and we continue to prioritise the sale of assets where appropriate. We have checked the value for money our services provide, ensuring they perform well against our nearest comparator councils and that we adopt good practice from elsewhere where we can. We have sought suggestions from our staff for any further opportunities for efficiency or cost saving. Chief Officers have reviewed all the suggestions received and are taking those forward which are not already in hand and where there is a potential benefit to the organisation.

4.2 We are seeking out opportunities to benefit from advances in new technology and artificial intelligence to benefit both service delivery and capacity where possible. However, we do not have the resources, both funding and staff, needed to invest at the scale required to achieve significant cost savings. With new technologies also comes additional risk, including incurring cost on innovative ways of working which may not be successful. We cannot financially afford to take such risk. To maximise the capacity we do have, and to minimise the risk, we are taking a 'fast follower' approach, learning from authorities developing and testing new tools and identifying where we can adapt or adopt these at low cost. This work is most likely, in the short term, to assist with managing increasing demand rather than to deliver cashable savings.

4.3 From September, in light of the Q1 position, we are going further. Additional controls have been put in place for enhanced review and senior management approval of all spend over £1000 which is not already subject to separate oversight. All recruitment outside priority roles will subject to an additional senior review and approval process. We will update our assessment of value for money with the latest data to identify any areas which could be considered further.

4.4 All these additional measures are overlaid on our existing strong financial and governance processes and approach to service delivery which have been endorsed by recent independent reviews. Peer challenges led by the Local Government Association found the organisation to be focused, well managed and effective. Ofsted, following its detailed inspection, has praised the quality of our Children's Services. Our external auditors have endorsed the value for money services provide across the Council. These considered judgements confirm that East Sussex is a well-run council, with effective and efficient services. They provide assurance that we are doing all the right things.

4.5 Evidence shows that the best investment is in the upstream, preventative services which improve outcomes and ultimately make better use of resources. However, we simply do not have the funding to scale up or even maintain these services to the level we would want, and that would help manage the growing demand for support.

5. Savings

5.1 All the actions we are taking to contain day to day costs will have some impact but are not enough. In light of the substantial projected deficit, 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.

5.2 Departments are undertaking work to identify how further savings could be delivered. There are significant constraints. 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 and those that remain were retained in our Core Offer due to their strong preventative value. 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.

5.3 This work is ongoing and the approach being taken by each department is outlined in more detail below. All departments are reviewing support functions to identify any further opportunities for efficiency and, ultimately, reductions. In addition, a full review of planned capital spending is being completed with a view to bringing forward proposals for a revised programme which focuses on meeting essential basic need and reduces the impact of borrowing costs on the revenue budget. An update on the capital programme will be provided to Cabinet in November.

5.4 Work to date on savings has identified a number of proposals which require public consultation due to the nature and extent of their impact. Cabinet is asked to agree to begin these consultation processes in recognition of the pressing need to move forward potential savings ahead of the new financial year. Identifying whether and where savings can be made as early as possible is essential in supporting the Council's ability to set a balanced budget in the new year. There is a cost to delaying, as later implementation of savings will require additional proposals to be found to fill the gap.

Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH)

5.5 The ASCH department budget represents almost half (48%) of the Council's total net budget, and as such significant savings will need to be found in this area. For Adult Social Care, our priority is to meet our legal duties to provide care and support under the Care Act. To help us to do this, we have identified five priority areas.

5.6 These priority areas include the community care budget, which is already under pressure as the demand and costs of care increase due to changes in the population, greater complexity of need and increasing financial hardship amongst residents. Other priorities include ensuring we have sufficient frontline workers such as social workers and occupational therapists, retaining a robust financial assessment function to ensure we are funding those most in need, and ensuring we manage the care market to ensure supply and best value.

5.7 In addition, we have sought to prioritise infrastructure funding for the VCSE sector, recognising the huge contribution this sector makes to preventing, reducing and delaying the need for care and support across the county. We have also aimed to protect support for unpaid carers, who play an invaluable role in meeting care and support needs for so many residents, which would otherwise fall on statutory services.

5.8 Whilst Public Health funding is ringfenced to improve public health outcomes, a review of the deployment of public health budgets has been undertaken as part of the RPPR process, to ensure best use of resources and alignment with Council Plan priorities within the grant conditions. Activity and expenditure is reported as part of the annual financial accounting process and must be certified by the Director of Public Health.

5.9 Savings proposals for Adult Social Care are being developed taking into account the priority areas. A number of savings proposals have been identified which would entail significant changes to services and therefore require a public consultation, as set out at appendix 1. These proposals cover the following areas:

- **Housing support** - The East Sussex Floating Support Service (ESFSS) is available to East Sussex residents aged 16+, living in, or moving to, independent or supported accommodation in all housing tenures who require housing-related support. The service provides time-limited support, normally three to four months, for clients and their households who may be at risk of losing their home, already homeless or living in temporary accommodation and/or living in poor quality or unsuitable accommodation. During 2023/24 the service supported 5,282 clients and their households, 60% of whom were aged 16-59 and 40% aged 60+, with 71% of clients supported to remain in their existing accommodation. The proposal for consultation is to reduce the funding for this service from £4,372,615 to £500,000 per annum, a reduction of 88.5% in overall funding. This significant reduction in funding is likely to require a fundamental service redesign, with consideration given to narrowing the scope of the service to targeted client groups such as older people or Adult Social Care clients only. There is no statutory requirement for the Council to provide these services, however we have historically recognised the value of the service, its support for clients and contribution to the prevention agenda. The total potential saving is £3,874,000 with £1,937,000 delivered in 2025/26 as set out at appendix 1, and the remainder in 2026/27.
- **Supported accommodation for vulnerable adults** – This service supports adults aged 18 and over whose primary need is a risk of harm due to being homeless. It comprises 28 units across two schemes located in Hastings and Eastbourne which support clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It aims to support individuals to move out into independent housing within 18 months. In 2023/24 39 people were accommodated in the schemes. The service is funded by the Council and commissioned in partnership with the five district and borough councils. The proposal for consultation is to stop funding the on-site support, which could lead to service closure. There is no statutory requirement to provide the service, however we have historically recognised the value of these services and the potential they have to contribute to the prevention agenda. The total potential saving is £258,000 with £129,000 delivered in 2025/26 as set out at appendix 1, and the remainder in 2026/27.
- **Supported accommodation for adults with mental health needs** – This service supports adults aged 18 and over who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, whose primary need is risk of harm due to a recognised mental health need. It comprises 45 units across three schemes located in Hastings, Eastbourne and Rother which support clients 24 hours a day, seven days a week. It aims to support individuals to move out into independent housing within 18 months. In 2023/24 66 people were accommodated in the schemes. The proposal is to review and reduce supported accommodation provision for adults with mental health needs, including potential service closure. There is no statutory requirement to provide the services, however, we have continued to recognise the value of these services and the potential they have to contribute to the prevention agenda. The total potential saving is £356,000 with £178,000 delivered in 2025/26 as set out at appendix 1, and the remainder in 2026/27.
- **Phoenix Centre** – The Phoenix Centre provides day services to older people with a range of complex physical and mental health needs living in the community. The service is based in Lewes and offers care and support to up to 25 people per day, Monday to Friday. Currently there are 29 people who receive a service at the Phoenix Centre. The proposal for consultation is to stop providing the service and support people to access alternative services in the community.
- **Milton Grange day service and mental health community outreach** – Milton Grange day service delivers a range of support and activities to older people living in the community who have complex mental health and physical needs. The service is based in Eastbourne and provides a service for up to 45 people per day, Monday to Friday and up to 25 people per day on Saturday. Currently there are 97 people who receive a service. The mental health community outreach service offers a range of therapeutic

interventions to people living in the community who have a mental health need. In 2023/24 118 people used the service. The proposals for consultation are to stop providing the day service and support people to access alternative services in the community, and to discontinue the directly provided mental health community outreach service and consider providing this support via a range of existing community and bed-based services.

- **Linden Court** – Linden Court, located in Eastbourne, is a day service for people with learning disabilities. The service is used by 42 clients accessing the day service, mostly within the building. The proposal is to close the service and instead find clients places in alternative services run by the Council, such as the day service at Beeching Park in Bexhill, or other providers. The total potential saving is £327,000 with £200,000 delivered in 2025/26 as set out at appendix 1, and the remainder in 2026/27.
- **Steps to Work** – Steps to Work provides training to prepare clients with a learning disability or autistic people, with an assessed Care Act eligible need, for work, and support to find and retain employment. The Shine Car Valet at County Hall is part of this service providing work experience for clients that assists them finding paid work. There are 61 clients accessing support from Steps to Work, 40 of whom are actively engaged. The proposal is to close Steps to Work and stop supporting the clients currently accessing the service. Those clients in paid or unpaid work would be able to carry on in their roles, whilst those accessing pre-employment training or actively seeking employment could be found employment support from the independent sector.
- **Hookstead and St Nicholas Centre day services** – Hookstead and St Nicholas are day services for people with a learning disability. The proposal is to consolidate these two services into one, closing the day service at Hookstead in Crowborough and extending the opening of the day service at St Nicholas Centre in Lewes to 5 days a week. Hookstead is used by 42 clients using the building-based provision and community sessions. These clients would be supported to move to St Nicholas or another service if they prefer.
- **Community support services for people with a learning disability** - East Sussex Community Support Service has two elements - Supported Living and a Community Support Service. The Community Support Service provides support to clients who live in their own home, while the Supported Living service provides additional support to residents of supported living services. The proposal is to stop providing this service where it is delivered to clients in their own homes (currently 35 clients) and restructure our Supported Living service to meet the needs of clients supported in these settings (27 clients). For clients we would no longer support, alternative external providers would be identified.
- **Drug and alcohol recovery services** – These services are commissioned to support those in recovery from drug and alcohol misuse to sustain their recovery via support networks and dedicated support for the street community, and to provide specialist support for carers of those affected by drug and alcohol misuse. These services are used by over 400 people across the county. The current contracts are already due to end in summer 2025 but it is proposed that we stop funding recovery services in future, which would mean there would no longer be any directly commissioned recovery services in the county. The total potential saving is £318,000 with £234,000 delivered in 2025/26 as set out at appendix 1, and the remainder in 2026/27.

5.10 Subject to Cabinet's agreement to consult, it is intended that consultation would take place concurrently on all the above proposals from early October for a period of 8 weeks. Equality impact assessments (EqIAs) will be completed, to give a full picture of whether any people sharing legally protected characteristics may be particularly affected by the proposed changes. An initial assessment of potential disproportionate impacts related to protected

characteristics is included in appendix 1. Following consultation, reports will be presented to Members for decision.

Children's Services (CS)

5.11 A key pressure area in CS continues to be care placements for looked after children where increased complexity of need, coupled with significant limitations in the availability of suitable placements and dysfunction in the care market, has led to a substantial escalation in the cost of residential placements over the past 18 months – two years. Our focus therefore remains on taking forward our programmes of work to address this. This includes the embedding of Valuing Care principles and processes to ensure children receive the right care, in the right place, for the right amount of time, and the introduction of family safeguarding to support families to stay together wherever possible, and to enable reunification of children with their family where appropriate. We 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.

5.12 Beyond children's social care, the majority of other service areas also have a statutory basis including SEND and home to school transport, which both continue to be under significant budgetary pressure due to increased and more complex need, and other statutory education responsibilities. As well as looking to manage costs in these areas where possible, whilst maintaining the delivery of statutory responsibilities, the department is reviewing the remaining non-statutory areas of provision and support services to identify potential for further savings. This includes looking at opportunities to consolidate functions that are replicated across the department's divisions, working with Communities, Economy and Transport to look at ways to reduce home to school transports costs, and examining all areas of spend across CS with a view to reducing costs further. No areas have been identified which require a public consultation at this point.

Communities, Economy and Transport (CET)

5.13 A large proportion (72%) of the CET budget relates to the major, long-term contracts covering highways maintenance and waste and the statutory requirement to provide concessionary fares. In addition, the department provides a range of frontline services which deliver statutory requirements. The department is seeking to identify and develop savings proposals in areas of the budget which are not contractually committed.

5.14 Areas under review include rights of way maintenance, the preventative service offer in Trading Standards and the approach to the delivery of road safety training. Opportunities for efficiencies using technology in the Registration Service are also being explored, along with savings in waste disposal arrangements. The Council's economic development offer, where this goes beyond statutory requirements, is also being considered.

5.15 At this point one proposal has been identified which requires a public consultation, as set out at appendix 1:

- **Booking system for household waste recycling sites** – It is proposed to consult on the introduction of a pre-booked appointment system for all ESCC sites. The introduction of a booking system would mean less queueing to deposit waste, improved customer service and customer experience, and reduced costs for the County Council through better oversight of trade waste. Similar arrangements have been introduced successfully by other local authorities including West Sussex, Hampshire and Kent, and there is no evidence that suggests a booking system would increase fly tipping.

5.16 Subject to Cabinet's agreement to consult, consultation on this proposal will be undertaken in due course. An EqIA will also be completed, to give a full picture of whether any people sharing legally protected characteristics may be particularly affected by the

proposed change. An initial assessment of potential disproportionate impacts related to protected characteristics is included in appendix 1. Following consultation, a report will be presented to Members for decision.

Business Services and Governance Services

5.17 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. The departments also ensure the organisation meets a wide range of statutory requirements.

5.18 All services provided by these departments are under review to identify where further reductions or efficiencies could be made. However, given significant previous savings made in these areas in order to prioritise funding for frontline services, they are already run very leanly and include single points of failure. Any further reductions are likely to impact on support to statutory and other customer facing services and the overall resilience of the organisation. Consequences of further reductions include:

- Significant risk of plant failure (e.g. heating, lighting, lifts)
- Significant risk of IT incidents (e.g. data loss, system or WiFi failure)
- Significant risk of challenge to procurement processes
- 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.

5.19 Notwithstanding the above and recognising the financial challenges the Council faces, specific areas under consideration include:

- the IT & digital offer;
- property costs including further review of the office estate;
- legal support;
- support for business planning and performance improvement; and
- communications support for service departments and the ESCC website.

Next steps

5.20 At this point, Cabinet is recommended to agree that the Council consults as appropriate on the initial proposals identified at appendix 1 to enable these to be progressed. Following consultation, recommendations on individual proposals will be brought to Members for decision, including an analysis of the feedback received and the full EqIAs to support decision making.

5.21 The potential savings in 2025/26 from these proposals, if agreed, are set out in appendix 1. The savings identified to date have the potential to reduce the 2025/26 financial gap by £4m. A substantial gap remains and work is ongoing to develop further savings proposals across all departments to support the Council's ability to set a balanced budget for 2025/26. A broader set of savings proposals will be brought forward in November following further work, together with an update on the review of the capital programme.

5.22 All savings proposals identified will be taken forward through our usual governance, decision making and human resources (HR) processes. Progressing potential savings may entail beginning consultations with our staff on restructures and potential redundancies in order to be able to implement 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.

6. Engagement and lobbying

6.1 We will engage more broadly on our approach to the financial position and next steps with our statutory and VCSE sector partners and local MPs, and we will continue to communicate the Council's position clearly and openly to residents and to our staff.

6.2 Our ongoing lobbying will also be vital to ensure Government is fully aware of the unsustainable situation faced by the County Council, and the specific needs of East Sussex. We will 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. Above all, we will continue to make the case for a sustainable funding regime for local government, which is appropriately reflective of local need. This will be essential to ensuring we secure adequate resources to deliver what will be required to support East Sussex residents, communities and businesses with the core services they need in the years ahead. We will work individually, with our partners across the county, the region and nationally to articulate these messages vigorously and robustly.

7. Looking ahead

7.1 The Council's current and forecast financial position requires urgent action. This 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.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.

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

BECKY SHAW
Chief Executive

Savings Proposals Requiring Consultation

Department	Gross Cashable Saving £'000
	2025/26
Adult Social Care	3,994
Business Services	0
Children's Services	0
Communities, Economy & Transport	50
Governance Services	0
Total	**4,044**

Adult Social Care - Proposed Savings			Gross Cashable Saving £'000	Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	**Savings proposal for consultation**	**Impact assessment**	**2025/26**	**Age**	**Disability**	**Sex**	**Gender Reassignment**	**Ethnicity**	**Marriage / Civil Partnership**	**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).	191	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).	200		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).	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).	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.	129	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.	178	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.	1,937	Y	Y	Y				Y				Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics

Adult Social Care - Proposed Savings			Gross Cashable Saving £'000	Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	**Savings proposal for consultation**	**Impact assessment**	**2025/26**	**Age**	**Disability**	**Sex**	**Gender Reassignment**	**Ethnicity**	**Marriage / Civil Partnership**	**Pregnancy /Maternity**	**Religion / Belief**	**Sexual Orientation**	**No impacts identified**	**Further Information**
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.	234		Y									Carers are also impacted
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.	286		Y									Carers and rurality are further impacted characteristics
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. Milton Grange community 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.	521	Y	Y									Carers are also impacted
TOTAL - Adult Social Care			**3,994**											

Communities Economy and Transport - Proposed Savings			Gross Cashable Saving £'000	Specific or disproportionate impacts relating to protected characteristics										
Service Area	**Savings proposal for consultation**	**Impact assessment**	**2025/26**	**Age**	**Disability**	**Sex**	**Gender Reassignment**	**Ethnicity**	**Marriage / Civil Partnership**	**Pregnancy /Maternity**	**Religion / Belief**	**Sexual Orientation**	**No impacts identified**	**Further Information**
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.	50	Y	Y									
TOTAL Communities, Economy & Transport			**50**											

Report to:	**Cabinet**
Date of meeting:	**26 September 2024**
By:	**Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**
Title:	**East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy 2024-50**
Purpose:	**To seek Cabinet's approval of the new Economic Growth Strategy "East Sussex Prosperity" prior to its adoption**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to :

1) Endorse the new East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy, developed in partnership with Team East Sussex (TES); and

2) recommend to Full Council that the Strategy be endorsed and adopted

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1. Background

1.1 From April 2024 the former functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships, including responsibility for strategic economic planning, transferred to Mayoral Combined Authorities and relevant Local Authorities where these functions were not already integrated. The function of strategic economic planning has always been the responsibility of the Economic Development team however the formal transfer of the function by government brings with it greater accountability and, arguably, higher visibility.

1.2 The last economic strategy for the county was the East Sussex Growth Strategy which was developed in collaboration with partners in 2014 and ran to 2020. It focused on three key pillars of Business, People and Place, and provided a strategy for economic development activity in the county. Over the six-year period, it delivered numerous programmes and projects which unlocked over £600m of investment in East Sussex.

1.3 In 2020 the East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan was developed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the local economy and businesses. The Economic Recovery Plan was very much focussed on the short-term recovery from the impact and shock of Covid 19 with an expected duration of 18-24 months. The Recovery Plan has to date led to the unlocking of over £200m of investment in East Sussex.

1.4 The County Council's Corporate Plan for 2023-24 set out a target to produce a draft economic strategy by March 2024 and the current Corporate Plan 2024-2025 includes a target to ensure that the strategy is endorsed and adopted by key stakeholders including TES, the de-facto economic growth board for East Sussex. TES has the responsibility of endorsing the new economic strategy. The strategy will contribute to the achievement of three of the four county council's core priorities in driving sustainable economic growth, making best use of resources in short and long term, and helping people help themselves.

2. Supporting information

2.1 Preparatory work for the strategy took place with an in-depth review in 2022/23 of the evidence base and the primary economic drivers for successful sustainable economic

growth in the East Sussex context. This was based on a vast range of data, including an analysis of census data provided by the Research and Information Team. This led to the development of an Economic Insight Analysis by the Economic Development Team, with two technical sub papers exploring the economic drivers of productivity and innovation. Chief Officers considered a report on 29 March 2023 outlining the proposed approach and stages of work in developing the new East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy. Equally, on 15 May 2023, TES received a presentation covering the Insight Analysis, and proposed approach and stages of work for the strategy. Subsequently the production of an economic strategy began in 2023/24 with the formation of an Oversight Group made up from TES representatives (the TES Chair, a business representative, and a representative from four of the five second tier authorities). SQW, a specialist economic development consultancy, was commissioned to support the development of the strategy. At the same time, a Member Reference Group comprising members of the Place Scrutiny Committee was formed. The cross-party Member Reference Group has been engaged throughout the strategy's development, with involvement at each key milestone including the production of the draft final plan.

2.2 The Economic Development Team worked closely with key stakeholders and County Council officers during an extensive consultation programme which ran from August – December 2023 to ensure strategy alignment with key County Council as well as stakeholder strategy and policy documents. Area-based consultation events were held in person in all five geographical areas, hosted by the relevant district or borough council and comprising key stakeholders from each area. Four topic-based workshops were held virtually based on major transformational trends which, alongside national trends, will certainly impact the East Sussex economy: a net zero economy; the economic impacts of an ageing population; artificial intelligence and digital transformation; the future of work in the context of changing working patterns and practices. A future skills workshop was held comprising members of Skills East Sussex and a workshop on business growth was held comprising the Business Support Providers network which is convened by the East Sussex Growth Hub.

2.3 All the TES "thematic groups" were consulted (Business East Sussex, Culture East Sussex, Developers East Sussex, Environment East Sussex and Skills East Sussex). In addition, two "people's voice" in-person consultation events were held with a large employer (King and McGaw) to gain the perspectives of employees living and working in the county, and a young person's event with 16 and 17-year-old students at East Sussex College Group to gain their perspectives of what their futures might be. This was important as we particularly wanted the views of those who are not "traditionally" consulted with during strategy development. Several bi-lateral consultations were also had with other stakeholders such as the High Weald National Landscapes, South Downs National Park and several individual businesses.

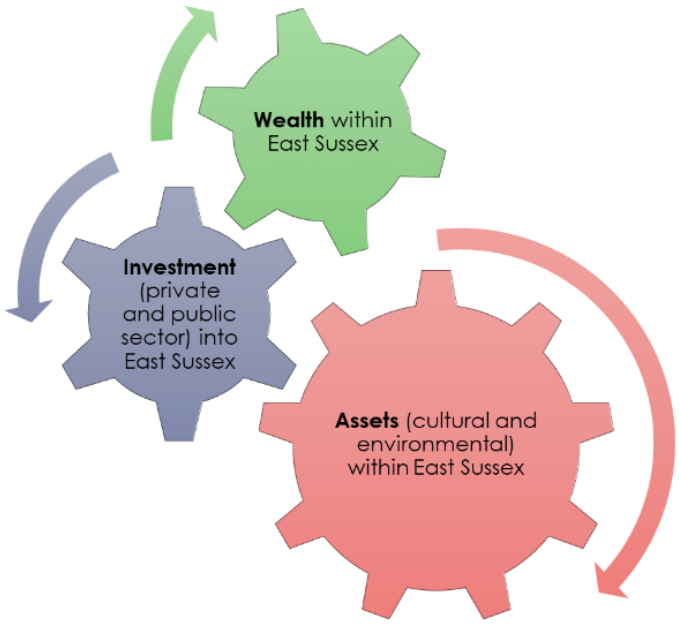
2.4 As part of the consultation work a "storyboard" was developed, setting out a positive future scenario for prosperity in East Sussex , informed by different ways in which the transformational trends outlined at 2.2 above could play out. Based on the nature and character of East Sussex the core scenario was identified as the balance between three main routes to prosperity (investment, assets, and wealth).

Investment: Economic growth will be supported by investment from both the private and public sectors. Businesses will continue to invest (eg in sites, in equipment, and in their workforce), enabling them to adapt and pivot. The extent to which they do so will determine their ability to navigate effectively the transition to net zero carbon and to pivot in response to changing market opportunities. In parallel, the public sector will continue to invest at

some level (eg in improvements in connectivity and other infrastructure, including to the supply of employment land).
Assets: These take many different forms – from the existing micro businesses and social enterprises and the strength of the third sector through to the county's substantial assets and resources linked to the natural environment (notably the South Downs National Park and the High Weald National Landscape); its cultural heritage; and the built environment.
Wealth: There is, already, substantial wealth within the county. For the most part, East Sussex is – and remains – a very desirable place to live. This is particularly apparent amongst those who are well advanced in their careers or even retired. This needs to be balanced however with the sustainability of the county's prosperity, especially in relation to the challenges of low wage levels.

2.5 Wealth is attracted to and retained within East Sussex, in part because of the quality of assets that the county provides. The county's assets are also a crucial underpinning of investment into the county, while the process of investment may be critically important in sustaining those assets. In practice all three themes are playing out – even though there may also be clear tensions between them, and some variation at a local level. The balance between these three different routes defines the core growth scenario, as illustrated in below

Figure 1:



2.6 The Economic Prosperity Strategy for East Sussex is informed by these three routes and the broader drivers that underpin them. "East Sussex Prosperity", which covers the period from 2024 – 2050, has a vision which states: "By 2050 East Sussex will be a place where people live and work well. It will be characterised by well-paid work and good opportunities; innovative and thriving businesses; and an excellent quality of life in an outstanding natural environment". Two principles underpin the strategy to 2050: the need to achieve net zero and a commitment to embrace the principles of the circular economy across all activities. Supported by these principles, the strategy seeks to achieve a county of opportunity and ambition; and innovation and creativity.

2.7 The strategy has three main areas of focus: "prosperity for business", "prosperity for people", and "prosperity for place". It sets out how, in delivering the strategy, the need exists to develop East Sussex's innovation capacity, including looking outwards to neighbouring areas. It must be recognised that the process of delivery will also need to be 'innovative and agile', taking advantage of multiple opportunities for investment, within the context of a clear long-term approach. The timeframe of 2050 was agreed for the strategy as this transcends political or funding cycles, goes beyond local planning cycles and is consistent with the timeframe for the Local Transport Plan 4.

2.8 This is a partnership strategy, owned by the County Council and endorsed by TES, and is for use by stakeholders across East Sussex. It considers the economy as a broad term, recognising the role of transport, infrastructure, culture & tourism, environment, skills, housing and other areas that contribute to economic growth but does not seek to either duplicate or replace other strategies. Rather, it is an overarching strategy that can be used for a variety of purposes including "setting out the stall" for East Sussex and acting as the evidence base for investment.

2.9 The draft strategy was presented to TES on 18 March 2024 and the final strategy was endorsed at the TES meeting on 2 September 2024. Prior to that the strategy was presented to the Scrutiny Member Reference Panel on 6 March 2024.

2.10 Following adoption of the strategy an investment plan will be developed working with TES and other stakeholders. At this stage the approach to developing the plan has not yet been scoped however some initial discussions have begun to take place with partners in preparation for the work to become a focus for the team during the autumn of this year.

2.11 Since the election in July 2024, the new government has a key mission around growth and it is reported that a new national industrial strategy is being produced with an expectation that local economic plans will respond to these priorities. The East Sussex Prosperity Strategy has been produced to be flexible and iterative to both take account and align with such national and local changes and articulate areas of focus for future investment opportunities.

3. Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 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.

3.2 For this reason Cabinet is therefore recommended to endorse the strategy and to recommend its endorsement and adoption to Full Council.

Rupert Clubb
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Katy Thomas
Tel. No: 0791 922 7549
Email: katy.thomas@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

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Appendix 1

June 2024

East Sussex Prosperity

The East Sussex 2050 Economic Prosperity Strategy

Final

TEAM EAST SUSSEX

East Sussex County Council

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Foreword

East Sussex is a vibrant county. It has a population of around 550,000, supporting some 246,000 jobs and generating economic output of around £9.9 billion. Like the rest of the UK we have faced major challenges in both the national and local economy over recent years – Covid19 was a significant economic shock and the effects of the current cost of living crisis continue to be felt right across our communities. But there are strong reasons for optimism: the county enjoys a superb natural environment, with an excellent quality of life supported by outstanding coast and countryside, a thriving cultural offer and strong, locally based ambitious businesses. We have an excellent record in supporting innovation and growth, our workforce is increasingly skilled and adaptable thanks to strong partnerships between employers and training providers, we have a vibrant voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, and our colleges and universities are important drivers of growth. We are now reaping the benefits of the effective, well-established partnerships that have been built over the years.

We have spent the past year reviewing what the economic evidence says about East Sussex and talking to key stakeholders and partners, including Team East Sussex's sectoral boards, individual businesses and young people about the future they want to see for the county. Over 300 stakeholders have contributed their views, and we are immensely grateful for the valuable time and contributions that have so willingly been given in helping us to draw together this new strategy. It shows how deeply we all care about this beautiful county and the future of those who live and work in it.

East Sussex Prosperity is a strategy with a long-term view. Looking to 2050, it seeks to secure sustainable economic growth, setting out how over the next generation, East Sussex can secure better opportunities and living standards for people who live in the county and how businesses can thrive and grow. It will remain a fluid and dynamic strategy, updated to reflect changes locally and nationally as we progress towards 2050. Our next steps will be to develop a high-level plan outlining the missions needed to deliver the vision of a more prosperous future for all. The success of delivery will be partly dependent on a range of factors over the coming years, but we are confident that by working together and pooling our respective strengths, success can be achieved.

We commend this strategy to you and can assure you of the commitment of Team East Sussex and its partners to developing an inclusive economy that is more sustainable and more productive than it is today. Our vision is that "*by 2050, East Sussex will be a place where people live and work well. It will be characterised by well-paid work and good opportunities; innovative and thriving businesses; and an excellent quality of life in an outstanding natural environment*"

David Sheppard
Chair, Team East Sussex

Councillor Keith Glazier
Leader, East Sussex County Council

Executive Summary

Background

East Sussex Prosperity is a strategy with a long-term view. Looking to 2050, it seeks to secure inclusive and sustainable economic growth, setting out how over the next generation, East Sussex can secure better opportunities and living standards for people who live in the county, and how businesses can develop new routes to value creation.

East Sussex Prosperity: The vision to 2050

"By 2050, East Sussex will be a place where people live and work well. It will be characterised by well-paid work and good opportunities; innovative and thriving businesses; and an excellent quality of life in an outstanding natural environment"

Within this long-term vision, the Strategy outlines the necessary steps to support sustainable prosperity today and in the future. Considering the impact of transformational changes in the environment, in technology, and the county's demographics enables us to prioritise investment now to meet the needs of future generations.

Context

East Sussex has a population of around 550,000, supporting some 246,000 jobs and generating economic output of around £9.9 billion.

Beyond these headlines, the county enjoys a superb natural environment, with an excellent quality of life supported by outstanding coast and countryside and a thriving cultural offer.

It is also diverse: Eastbourne and Hastings-Bexhill are the largest urban areas, but no single centre dominates; most of the county is rural and protected within the South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape.

The county's business landscape is diverse too: of the 23,000 enterprises, the great majority are small employers, but with growing specialist strengths in advanced manufacturing and digital technology. Outward connections to Brighton, West Sussex, Kent and London are also important.

Although East Sussex is an attractive place to live, it faces some significant economic challenges, which have been persistent over time:

- Productivity is relatively low: the amount of gross value added generated for every job in East Sussex is 73% of the UK average. This is reflected in a persistent pay gap.
- Costs are relatively high. Relative to earnings, house prices are among the highest in the UK.

There are sharp economic disparities within the county, including significant concentrations of disadvantage, especially in Hastings.

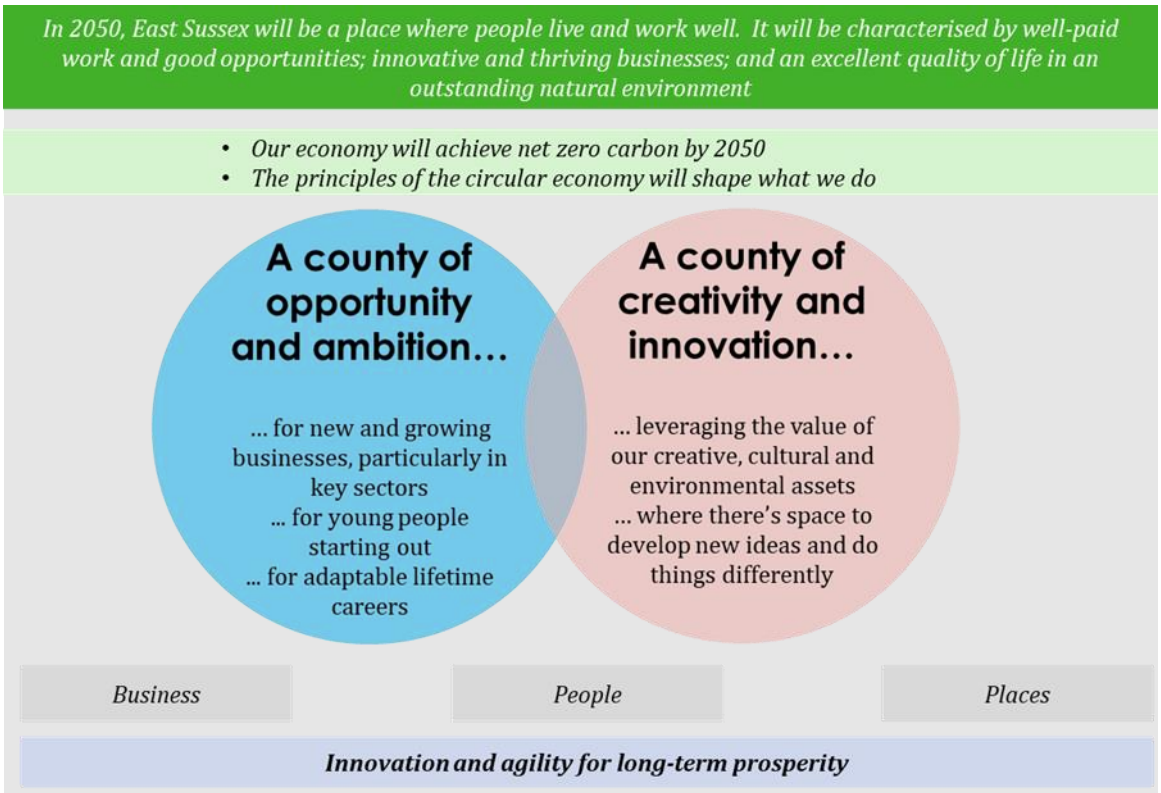
This strategy seeks to address these challenges. It does so in the context of an economy which is likely to change radically, as the county adapts to climate change and the transition to net zero, the implications of an ageing population and changing working patterns, and the consequences of ever more sophisticated digitalisation.

Looking towards 2050: Priorities for the future

Two principles underpin the strategy to 2050: the need to achieve net zero and a commitment to embrace the principles of the circular economy across all activities.

Supported by these principles, the strategy seeks to achieve a county of ***opportunity and ambition*** and ***creativity and innovation:***

Figure 1: East Sussex Prosperity: Strategic framework



This will be achieved through actions focused on:

- **Prosperity for business:** This means ensuring a flourishing micro-business environment, encouraging firms to scale up, adapting effectively to the challenges of climate change, and remaining attractive to responsible investment. This will require a

sustainable and appropriate land supply pipeline, alongside support for innovation and growth.

- **Prosperity for people:** This means developing better opportunities for young people to stay and develop careers in East Sussex, attracting a skilled and diverse workforce to the county (including 'returners' to East Sussex) and enabling people to develop new skills and career paths over their lifetimes. Recognising the interplay between the housing market and the labour market and the need for an affordable mix of housing will also be critical in achieving this.

- **Prosperity for places:** This means recognising local distinctiveness and character, ensuring that all places in East Sussex are able to thrive and reach their potential, and that the county's environmental assets are protected and enhanced. This includes making the most of the county's creative, cultural and environmental opportunities and building the links between them and targeted investments in connectivity.

Across all these priority themes, delivery will need to be **innovative and agile**: the lifetime of this strategy will see new opportunities for investment and unpredictable events. Flexibility and responsiveness within a clear long-term vision will be vital.

1. Introduction

This Strategy sets out a long-term plan to support a more prosperous East Sussex: a place where people live and work well, characterised by well-paid work and good opportunities; innovative and thriving businesses; and an excellent quality of life in an outstanding natural environment.

It looks ahead to 2050. But it is also a strategy for *now:* taking a long-term view and understanding the impact of transformational change helps to inform priorities for action in the short and medium terms.

A strategy for the long term and a strategy for today

This Strategy deliberately takes a long-term view. It looks ahead to 2050, beyond current planning, economic and political cycles.

2050 can seem quite far into the future, especially in the context of the more immediate economic pressures and international tensions prevalent at the time of writing. By then, today's school leavers will be mid-career. The advance of artificial intelligence and other technologies will have led to new products, services and ways of working, many of which are yet unknown. There will have been several economic recessions and recoveries – as well as 'black swan' events that we cannot foresee.

However, **2050 looks closer when we consider some of the fundamental changes that need to be made over the coming decades and the intermediate steps that need to be taken to achieve them**. By 2050, the UK is committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions (over a 1990 baseline), a target which is well-known and legally binding. We are already well on the journey to achieving this, and significant progress has been made. But to reach the 2050 target, we need to achieve reductions of 68% and 78% in net emissions by 2030 and 2035 respectively[1] – and if these intermediate targets are to be met, there needs to be an acceleration of progress in the short term[2].

Likewise, we know that, on average, East Sussex's population will be older in 2050 than it is today: a consequence of great medical advances and improvements in living standards, but with profound implications for the housing, services and working patterns that we will need in the future, and which we need to plan for now.

Looking ahead to where we need to be in the long term can help to clarify priorities today – provided we remain agile and responsive to change.

[1] HM Government (2021), *Build Back Greener: Net Zero Strategy*

[2] Climate Change Committee (2023), *2023 Progress Report to Parliament*

A strategy for prosperity

Within this long-term context, this is a strategy for prosperity. **It is fundamentally focused on sustainable economic growth**: how, over the next generation, East Sussex can secure better opportunities and living standards for people who live in the county, and how businesses can develop new routes to value creation. This in turn ought to support a healthier, greener and more inclusive county.

This includes opportunities to innovate, develop new skills and adapt to new technology. But the *nature* of these opportunities is distinctive to East Sussex's unique character: the towns, coast and countryside that make it a special place, and the environmental quality that needs to be protected and enhanced for future generations.

Alongside this strategy, there are several plans in place at county and district level focused on the wider determinants of wellbeing (such as health, the natural environment, and so on). This strategy does not repeat these wider plans: instead, it complements them, through a clear focus on the county's economic future.

A strategy for action

Although the strategy has a long horizon, **it will guide action in the short to medium term** and will have a key role in identifying the actions that need to be taken *today* if the county's economy is to address the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades.

It has been adopted by **Team East Sussex**, a partnership bringing together business, local government and further and higher education to drive economic growth and prosperity across the county. The strategy will support project development, future investment and opportunities for new ideas and collaboration. It will also help to identify where sustainable economic growth can be achieved locally through the **devolution of funding and responsibilities**, enabling resources to be more clearly focused on the county's shared priorities.

Strategy structure

The remainder of this strategy is structured in eight main chapters:

- Chapter 2 sets out a **'spatial picture'** of East Sussex, highlighting the county's key characteristics and assets.
- In the context of this spatial picture, Chapter 3 focuses on the **key long-term economic challenges** that East Sussex faces and which this strategy needs to address.
- Building on this, Chapter 4 **looks to the future**, highlighting the major transformational trends that will impact the economy through to 2050 and setting out some scenarios for the future.
- Chapter 5 brings together the analysis in the preceding chapters, setting out a **strategic framework** and set of objectives.
- Chapters 6-8 then work through this framework in detail, explaining how

the strategy will relate to **business, people and places** in East Sussex

- Finally, Chapter 9 explains the need for **innovation and agility** across the board, and it explains how we will apply those principles as we move towards delivery.

2. A picture of East Sussex

In 2021, East Sussex had a population of around 550,000, supported some 246,000 jobs and generated economic output of around £9.9 billion. But beyond these headlines, sustainable prosperity is rooted in the distinctive assets and characteristics of the county and the five districts and boroughs (Eastbourne, Hastings, Lewes, Rother and Wealden) that it comprises. This chapter sketches a 'spatial picture' of East Sussex and its environmental, cultural and economic character.

Environmental quality

East Sussex enjoys a superb natural environment, much of which is of national and international significance. In the west of the county, the **South Downs National Park** covers 92 sq. miles of Lewes, Wealden and Eastbourne districts, extending to the coast around Beachy Head. England's newest National Park (and, in population terms, its largest), the South Downs closely borders the major settlements of Eastbourne and Lewes.

In the east and north, the **High Weald National Landscape** encompasses most of Rother, much of Wealden and part of Hastings. It incorporates some of England's most important ancient woodland, including the Ashdown Forest near Crowborough.

Beyond these two nationally protected landscapes, other important areas of environmental significance include the Romney Marsh in the far east of the county and the Pevensey Levels between Bexhill and Hailsham. In addition, the county boasts some 65 Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Consequently, **most of East Sussex's land area is covered by some form of environmental designation**. This is an important contribution to quality of life and to a distinctive 'sense of place', as well as a key element of the county's offer as a high-quality, sustainable visitor destination.

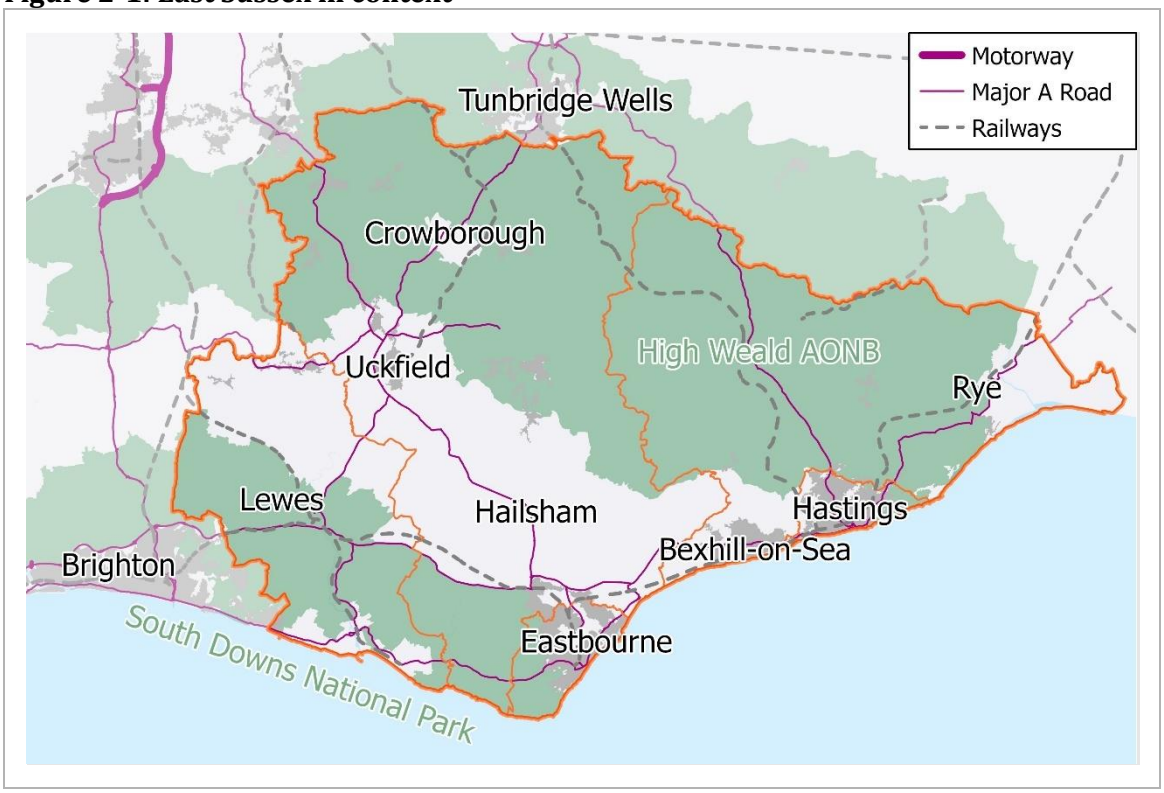
Distinctive places

With most of inland East Sussex embraced by the county's protected landscapes, the largest urban settlements are along the coast.

Eastbourne, with a population of around 103,796[3], is an important retail and service centre with a growing concentration of digital tech businesses. It also contains important cultural and leisure assets within the Devonshire Quarter, including the Towner Eastbourne contemporary art gallery, the Congress and Devonshire Park Theatres, Devonshire Park Tennis centre and the Welcome Building.

[3] Town populations are based on Built-up Area Mid-Year Population Estimates (ONS, 2020)

Figure 2-1: East Sussex in context



Source: SQW. Contains OS data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

To the north of Eastbourne, **Hailsham** is the main administrative centre for Wealden, and there are important opportunities for growth along the A22 and A27 corridors.

To the west, the smaller towns of Seaford, Peacehaven and Newhaven follow the coast towards Brighton, with **Newhaven** an important light industrial centre and ferry port for (mainly) freight connections to France.

Inland from the coast, **Lewes** (with a population of about 18,000) is the historic county town, located within the National Park, and with significant cultural institutions, such as the Glyndebourne opera house and festival located some four miles outside the town.

In the east of the county, **Hastings** and **Bexhill-on-Sea** together form East Sussex's largest contiguous urban area, with a combined population of around 139,000. Hastings has a vibrant cultural and creative scene, with recent investment including the Hastings Contemporary, Observer Building, the Heritage Action Zone area and, at Bexhill, the De La Warr Pavilion. But Hastings is a significant centre for advanced manufacturing too, especially linked with the county's established strengths in vacuum technology.

The centre and north of the county is **extensively rural**, with important local centres including **Uckfield**, **Crowborough**, **Heathfield**, **Battle** and **Rye**.

Rural East Sussex makes an important contribution to the county's economy: it has a relatively high business density and mostly rural Wealden accounts for some 36% of the county's total business stock. Small and micro enterprises are taking advantage of new technology to overcome the challenges of relative remoteness, there is evidence of innovative businesses quite widely distributed across the rural area[4], and there are emerging opportunities in sustainable rural production, making use of local materials[5]. Food production is an important sector, with farming activities complemented by a wider supply chain, and the county's environmental quality protected and enhanced by agriculture and forestry.

Within rural East Sussex, the quality of the natural environment also underpins a thriving visitor economy, linked with the county's cultural attractions, food and drink offer and rising demand for sustainable tourism opportunities. The viticulture sector is an especially distinctive opportunity for growth: the chalk aquifer that serves the Champagne region re-emerges in East Sussex, providing a superb environment for wine production.

Connections and flows

All districts and boroughs in East Sussex experience net commuting outflows[6], although the pattern in Eastbourne is almost in balance, reflecting the town's large concentration of employment. Within the county, the largest inter-district flows are from Wealden into Eastbourne, and within the Hastings and Rother economic market area.

Connections beyond the county boundary are very important too. **Brighton** is a major cultural, educational and employment centre, with good access to Lewes and the west of the county. The west of the county is also close to **Crawley, Gatwick and the A23/M23 Corridor**, while to the northeast, **Tunbridge Wells** is an important employment hub and service centre for much of Rother and Wealden, as well as for Hastings. **London** is not far away: historically, proximity to London was an important factor in the growth of East Sussex's coastal resorts, and today, the capital is both an important travel-to-work destination (albeit an expensive one) and a key market for the county's leisure and visitor offer.

Despite this close proximity to other major centres, **transport connectivity is relatively weak**, reflecting the protected environment of much of the county. Rail connections run from London to Lewes, Eastbourne, Uckfield and Hastings, and east-west along the Coast from Brighton to Ashford via Eastbourne and Hastings. The main road network follows a similar pattern, with the A27/ A259 running along the coast, and the A21 and A22 running

[4] SQW/ East Sussex County Council (2022), *Innovation and Productivity in East Sussex*
[5] Urban Foresight/ Rother District Council (2023), *Rother Rural Economy: Emerging opportunities for the rural economy in the protected areas of Rother*

[6] ONS, Census 2011. Although the 2011 census is now quite old, data from the 2021 census are limited in reliability due to the effect of Covid-19 on travel to work.

north to join the M25. The county also enjoys a number of strategic active travel links, including the South Coast and London to Eastbourne routes on the National Cycle Network. The draft Local Transport Plan (LTP4) will seek to further improve transport connectivity and support economic prosperity.

Digital connections have improved significantly in recent years: in Rother and Wealden (the two most rural districts in the county), full fibre coverage stood at 53% and 54% of premises respectively in 2023 (compared with just 6% and 17% two years earlier)[7]. However, while there are great opportunities in rural East Sussex for increased remote working and the use of digital technology to overcome relative isolation, it is important that infrastructure investment keeps pace with the economic potential.

Key economic assets

Consistent with its polycentric settlement pattern and the presence of larger centres nearby, other economic assets are quite widely distributed. In **higher education**, the University of Sussex is located right on the Brighton and Hove/ East Sussex border, and is a major research and teaching institution, with globally significant strengths in sustainability and environmental sciences and a major presence in life sciences and computer science. The University of Brighton is a world-renowned higher education institution that offers students an outstanding undergraduate education across a diverse range of subject areas. Linked with the county's extensively rural character, Plumpton College, near Lewes, is a specialist land-based institution, offering both university-level and further education provision. Mainstream **further education** is largely united within East Sussex College Group and delivered from main campuses at Eastbourne, Hastings and Lewes (with a smaller specialist presence in Newhaven).

There are relatively few **larger private sector employers** in East Sussex: overwhelmingly, the county has a small and micro-dominated business base. Nevertheless, larger firms represented in the county include historic businesses such as Harvey's at Lewes; advanced manufacturers such as Kurt J Lesker in vacuum technology at Hastings; the insurance firm Hastings Direct at Bexhill; and, linked with Eastbourne's growing digital cluster, the software engineering and AI business, Switchplane. This brief illustration of the larger business stock highlights East Sussex's sectoral as well as geographical diversity.

The county's business stock is explored further in Chapter 6. But two points are worth highlighting here. The first of these is **the relationship between 'economic' and 'quality of life' assets**. This includes the direct economic value of the county's cultural institutions and events, as well as the connections between food and drink production, creativity and the visitor economy currently championed by the 'Sussex Modern' initiative. It also includes the role of environmental quality and proximity to coast and countryside as a

[7] Ofcom, *Connected Nations 2023*

factor in some location decisions by business owners, especially given reasonable access to London and the greater South East.

Second, **local business networks are important**, at town and district, as well as county level. This includes recent sector-focused coalitions of entrepreneurs (such as the tech-based Chalk consortium in Eastbourne), and active local chambers of commerce and business associations. These represent small and micro enterprises, as well as generating pride in place.

Conclusions: Implications for strategy

From this brief sketch of the county's geography and key assets flow three key implications for a long-term economic strategy:

- First, **protecting and enhancing East Sussex's environmental quality** is economically important, as well as being of inherent value. With most of the county covered by landscape designations, and in the light of the climate emergency and its implications for flood risk, land use and so on, a prosperous economy must also be a sustainable one, with opportunities for growth going with the grain of East Sussex's natural and historical inheritance.
- Second, **there is much *local* distinctiveness, as well as features which are common to the county as a whole.** As outlined earlier, there is considerable contrast between the rural north and centre and the coastal towns – and great diversity at a local level. It follows that the strategy to 2050 will need to reflect the scope for local differentiation, and how local strengths can contribute to the success of the whole.
- Third, **future strategy needs to be 'outward facing'.** East Sussex's neighbours (particularly Brighton and Hove, but also London and the wider South East) are very important economically and should be seen as assets from which local people and businesses can benefit, within the context of the need to ensure that travel patterns are sustainable. The county isn't an island – and being part of a *generally* affluent wider region ought to be a source of strength.

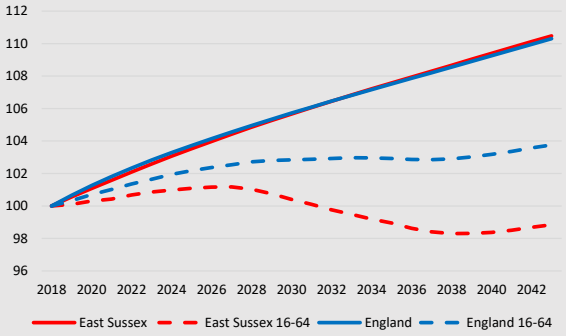
Finally, the assets described in this chapter yield, for many people and places, a superb quality of life. But these are at risk from some significant economic challenges, to which the next chapter turns.

The East Sussex economy

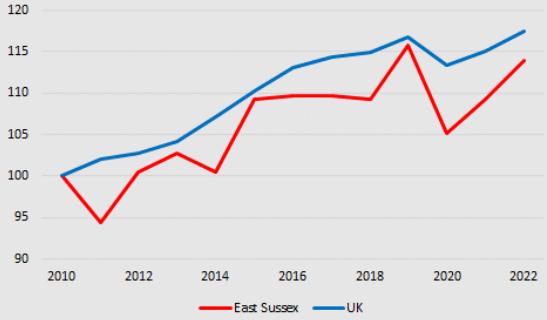
People

- Population of 550,700 in 2022 (12% increase since 2000)
- Over the next 20 years, the *overall* population will continue to rise – but with a fall in the number of people of working age.
- Between 2018 and 2043, the number of people aged 65+ is expected to rise by 47% (compared with growth of 10% in the population overall)

Population growth (2018=100)



Jobs growth (2010=100)



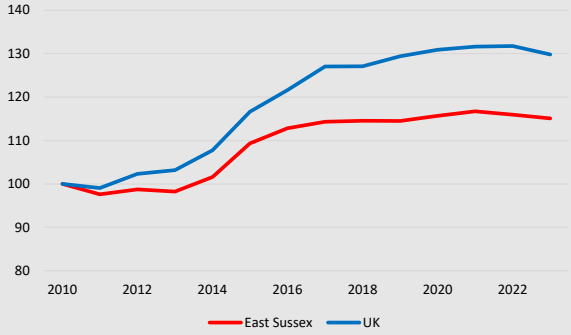
Jobs and skills

- There were 246,000 jobs in East Sussex in 2022 – an increase of about 14% over the preceding decade.
- About 78% of the working age population are economically active – broadly in line with the national picture
- Workforce skill levels have improved steadily over time. But qualification levels lag the national average: 39% of people aged 16-64 are qualified to RFQ4+, compared with 46% in the UK

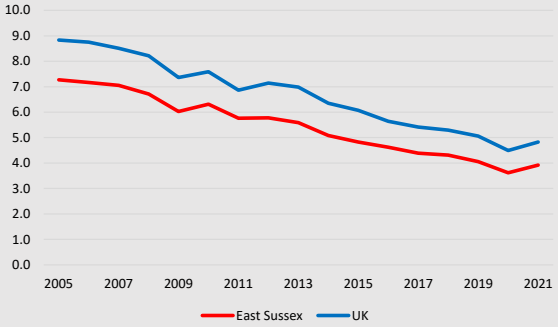
Businesses

- There were around 23,000 enterprises in East Sussex in 2023 – 90% of which employ nine people or fewer
- 'Enterprise density' is relatively high, with 718 enterprises per 10,000 people of working age, compared with 646 across the UK. But growth in the business stock has been slower than the national average over the past decade

Business stock growth (2010=100)



Per capita emissions (t, CO2e)



Carbon footprint

- CO2 emissions are relatively low in East Sussex – and lower than in the county's South East neighbours
- Between 2005 and 2021, per capita emissions fell by 42% (compared with 39% nationally), with the biggest falls in waste management and commercial emissions

3. The economic challenge

Although East Sussex offers a superb environment and an excellent quality of life, it has economic challenges that are long-term and persistent. These are reflected in relatively low productivity, which translates into a pay gap; relatively high costs; and economic disadvantage which is geographically highly concentrated. It will be important to address these over the lifetime of this strategy, and this will demand action on a number of fronts.

Introduction

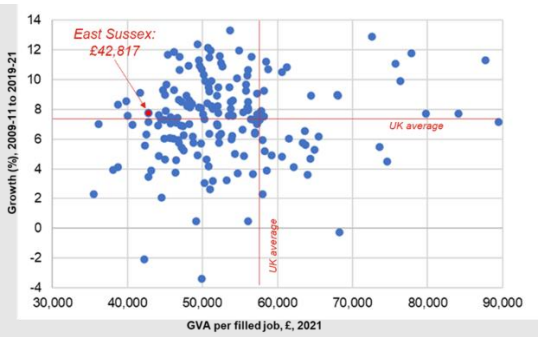
East Sussex's quality of life assets make it an attractive place to live. They are also a source of local pride and distinctiveness, as well as being drivers of opportunity. But the county faces some significant economic challenges which will need to be addressed over the period of this strategy. Essentially, these boil down to three key issues: **weak productivity and low pay; relatively high costs; and sharp spatial disparities**. This chapter discusses each of these in turn.

Productivity and pay

Since the financial crisis of 2008/09, the UK has experienced weak productivity growth. In 2022, national productivity (measured as the amount of output per hour worked) was some 16% below that of the United States or Germany[8], with growth averaging less than 1% per annum over the preceding decade[9]. This matters: increasing productivity (generating greater value from the resources that we already have) is the largest single component of overall economic growth and is important in maintaining and improving living standards. Consequently, raising the rate of productivity growth has long been a key national objective.

Measured as gross value added per filled job, productivity in the South East as a whole was some 8% greater than the national average in 2021. But the picture for East Sussex is much less positive: GVA per filled job was 73% of the UK equivalent. And while the county has seen modest productivity growth in recent years, this has not been sufficient to significantly change the relative position:

Figure 3-1: GVA per filled job, counties and cities[10]



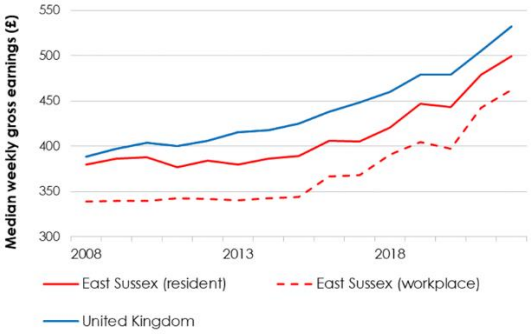
[8] House of Commons (2024), *Productivity: Key economic indicators*
[9] Office for Budget Responsibility (2024), *Historical Official Forecast Database*

[10] 'Counties and cities' as defined as 'ITL3' statistical regions by the Office for National Statistics

Source: ONS, Current price (smoothed) GVA(B) per filled job

Productivity can appear to be a somewhat abstract measure. However, it ultimately translates into pay. In 2022, gross weekly earnings commanded by people working in East Sussex were around 90% of the UK average – although the gap was lower for East Sussex *residents* working in jobs outside the county:

Figure 3-2: Median gross weekly earnings (£), all employees



Source: ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

These low rates of pay coincide with a labour market in which employers report **significant workforce skills shortages** – even though unemployment has been somewhat higher, and economic activity somewhat lower, post-pandemic in East Sussex than nationally. Formal workforce qualifications are relatively low, and within a strongly SME-oriented economy, there are gaps in management skills in all sectors[11].

The challenge therefore is to generate higher rates of pay over time. In turn, this means generating more 'value' for every job – whether this is enabled through higher workforce skills and capabilities, increased business investment in new products, processes and management, or better infrastructure that enables firms to operate more efficiently. These **'drivers of productivity'** have been widely recognised for many years[12], although their practical application depends on the local context.

Relatively high costs

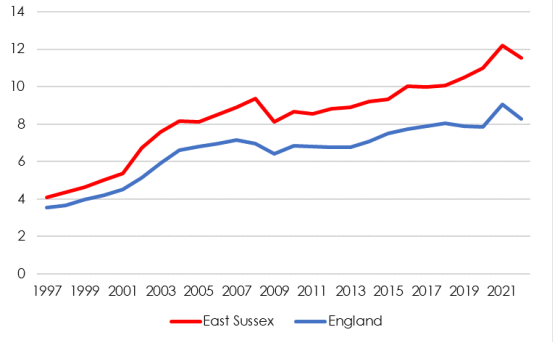
The East Sussex 'pay gap' is exacerbated by the fact that the county is a relatively expensive place in which to live. While housing has become less affordable across the UK (and especially in the South East), **East Sussex has some of the country's highest housing costs relative to pay**. In all districts in East Sussex, housing is less affordable than it is nationally, and the gap has widened over time: in Wealden, median house prices were 13 times median workplace earnings in 2022, compared with an England average of eight times earnings)[13]. Rising purchase prices also translate into reduced affordability in the rented sector. Changing working practices (especially reduced daily commuting) might also have a significant impact on the county's housing market.

[11] Future Skills Sussex (2022), *Local Skills Improvement Plan*, p.23

[12] Currently described by the Government as 'Education, Enterprise, Employment, Everywhere', although similar definitions of the key drivers of productivity have been set out in successive national strategies.

[13] ONS, Housing affordability in England and Wales. House prices in Rother and Lewes were also over 12 times median earnings (Eastbourne and Hastings are closer to the national average).

Figure 3-3: Affordability ratio (median house prices to workplace earnings)



Source: ONS, House price to workplace earnings ratio

In part, this is a consequence of the county's attractiveness as a place to live, and the challenges associated with sustainable development in protected environments. But it means that for many people working locally, the prospects of home ownership are likely to be distant, wealth inequality is likely to increase over time if affordability continues to fall, and labour bottlenecks (especially in those sectors, such as social care, that are growing and relatively labour-intensive) are likely to expand. **Over the long term, there is a need to enable people to live and work locally**, while improving the county's environmental quality and the sustainability of the housing stock.

Concentrated challenges

The third major challenge is the prevalence of sharp economic disparities at a local level across East Sussex. Almost three-quarters of East Sussex neighbourhoods classified as in the 10% most deprived nationally are located in Hastings[14], and the borough also experiences a higher concentration of worklessness and – perhaps surprisingly for an urban area that ought to attract inbound commuters – a relatively low number of jobs relative to working-age residents. Economic inequalities correlate with wider health and social outcomes: there is, for example, a nine-year gap in male life expectancy between parts of Hastings and the area around Wadhurst[15].

Smaller concentrations of disadvantage are of course distributed throughout East Sussex, including in towns such as Hailsham and in some rural communities; and there has been successful investment in Hastings over the years, not least in its cultural infrastructure, highlighted in the previous chapter. But the challenges facing the town (and by extension, the wider Hastings-Bexhill urban area) are significant. **Looking ahead to 2050, it matters that East Sussex's larger towns all perform successfully as focal points for economic, social and cultural activity**: a sustainable and prosperous East Sussex needs to be well performing everywhere and have good transport connections, especially in its biggest towns.

Conclusions: Implications for strategy

At the time of writing, the 'pay gap' and high housing costs highlighted earlier are especially acute given the current 'cost of living crisis' and the weak outlook for growth (and real pay growth) in the medium term[16]. **But the evidence is that the three challenges highlighted in this**

[14] DLUHC, Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2019
[15] Office for Health Improvement and Disparities
[16] Office for Budget Responsibility (2024), *Economic and Fiscal Outlook*

chapter have been persistent over time: earnings growth has not kept pace with housing costs growth for 25 years; the workplace 'pay gap' has not narrowed; deprivation (and a lack of economic 'scale' relative to urban potential) remains quite concentrated; and sustainable connectivity remains constrained. These are long-term challenges which a generational strategy needs to address, supported by the coordinated use of funding and responsibilities at local level and through other strategies (e.g. transport).

Positively, these challenges are in the context of the substantial strengths outlined in the previous chapter. But looking to 2050, they also need to be considered alongside long-term transformational trends, which the next chapter explores further.

4. Looking towards 2050

A series of transformational trends will influence how prosperity in East Sussex is shaped over the next 26 years. The most critical of these are climate change and its profound global and local implications; the drive to net zero; digital transformation and the implications of artificial intelligence; the ageing population; and changes to working practices. These will impact all aspects of the economy, including business opportunities, future skills needs and travel patterns.

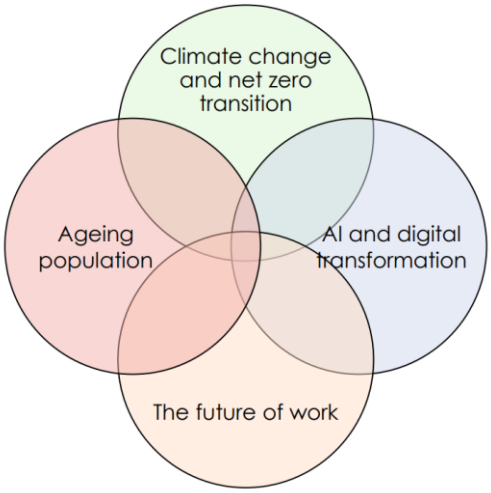
Linked with the earlier analysis of the county's economy, these inform the development of a core scenario for future economic development.

Introduction

This Economic Prosperity Strategy for East Sussex looks ahead to 2050. It is therefore generational in timescale. This means that the young adults completing their college studies in summer 2024 will be well into middle age by the time the Strategy is delivered. By that time, many of the toddlers currently in nurseries across East Sussex will be parents with children of their own. The Economic Prosperity Strategy must do what it can to ensure that the toddlers of 2050 (and their parents and grandparents) continue to thrive within the county.

Over this timescale, a series of **transformational drivers** will be at play. The Economic Prosperity Strategy will need to both anticipate and navigate these. These relate to climate change and the drive to net zero; digital transformation and the implications of artificial intelligence; the ageing population; and changes to working practices:

Fig. 4.1: Key drivers of change towards 2050



In some senses these drivers are generic and universal; they will affect every local economy in the UK (and often beyond). However, the form they will take is uncertain. They are interconnected and therefore complex. In addition, their consequences are likely to be specific to East Sussex given its demography; its economic and business structure; its settlement structure, transport and digital connectivity and location; and its landscape and environmental assets and challenges. This all means that there is, in

practice, a good deal of uncertainty and risk (both upside and downside).

This chapter explores the likely key drivers of socio-economic change over the next 26 years. It then sets out key themes within an overall growth scenario for East Sussex. This is important in framing the Economic Prosperity Strategy as a whole.

Key Drivers

Climate change and net zero transition

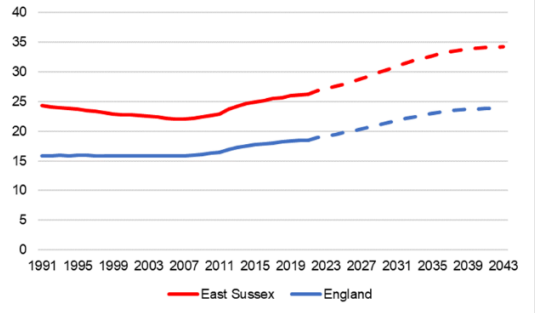
Economic prosperity over the next 26 years will be determined in part by the process of **climate change**, and the extent to which local areas (and people, communities and businesses) are able to **mitigate** its consequences and to **adapt** to it. In East Sussex, there are particular challenges given its coastal setting, its vulnerability to flooding (the implications of which are already being seen), and its extensive and highly valued designated landscapes and the need to protect them. The process of climate change will affect visibly its land-based sector; its 'blue' economy (which relies on the marine environment as a critical resource); and its visitor economy – but it will have an impact on all sectors, across the economy.

Nationally (and internationally), the commitment to **net zero carbon** is a direct response to the challenges of climate change. The UK is legally committed to achieving net zero carbon by 2050 (i.e., within the timescale of this strategy). Although some interim milestones have been delayed by UK government (linked, for example, to the ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars), the imperatives surrounding the overall transition to net zero carbon remain in place. For much of the local economy, the consequences will be substantial. By 2050, manufacturing processes will be different; patterns of mobility will be transformed; construction processes will rely on different materials and methods; and land use patterns may be unrecognisable.

The ageing population

Another major societal driver relates to the **ageing population.** Already East Sussex has a relatively old population, and demographic projections suggest that it will become much older in the decades ahead – both absolutely and relative to the rest of the UK. By the mid-2040s, more than a third of its population will be aged 65+.

Figure 4-1: Share of population aged 65+



Source: ONS, Mid-Year Population Estimates (1991-2021); Population projections (2018 based) (2022-43)

In many respects, the growing number of older people is to be celebrated: people are living longer, many are also healthier for longer, and retired people often form the core of many voluntary and community activities. But it is creating pressures too, particularly in terms of the escalating costs surrounding health and social care, and in relation to the affordability of state

pensions. These issues are becoming increasingly spatially concentrated: the UK's large cities will age relatively slowly, but much of rural and coastal Britain will age "rapidly and predictably"[17].

The implications are substantial. A recent report by the *International Longevity Centre* suggested that nationally, the state pension age would need to rise from 66 to 70 or 71 by 2050 to maintain the current dependency ratio[18,19]. This could add five years onto working lives. The inference is that on average, workers will be older, employers will need to adapt, and there will be a need to support people as they work for longer.

The future of work

In parallel, however, substantial changes are already underway in the **nature and process of work.** The World Economic Forum, for example, has observed a shift away from the "*linear transitions*" of yesteryear (from school, to specialised training, to a progressive career ladder in 'a job for life' and then retirement). Instead, workers are pivoting between professions with significantly different skill sets and navigating mid-career job transitions accompanied by substantial reskilling and upskilling. It concludes that these pivots are *"as important to the success of firms as they are to the prosperity of workers"*[20]. Equipping both workers and businesses to pivot will be a key theme for the Economic Prosperity Strategy in the period to 2050. Changes are also occurring to workplace locations, with homeworking becoming popular for those able to do so.

Artificial intelligence and digital transformation

Processes of this nature are both enabled and necessitated by profound and pervasive **digital transformation.** This is impacting on all parts of the economy. It variously involves artificial intelligence, automation, Internet of Things (IoT), robotics and big data, and it is considered by many to be the fourth industrial revolution. It is transforming the way people live and work, and the pace of change is phenomenal. The first-generation iPhone was launched in 2007 – some 17 years ago – and it has transformed many aspects of social, economic and community life. Over the next 26 years, the pace – and profundity – of change is likely to be even greater.

Looking ahead, there will be new industries (linked, for example, to cybersecurity and gaming) but also substantial changes to existing activities and sectors – from healthcare, through drug discovery and life sciences more broadly, to financial services and beyond. Indeed, the British Council (amongst others) has noted that around two-thirds of today's students will be employed in jobs that do not yet exist. This means that

[17] Chief Medical Officer (2023), *Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report: Health in an Ageing Society*

[18] *"The UK and other ageing populations will have to increase their state pension age to 71 by 2050 to maintain the number of workers per retiree"* Blog published by the International Longevity Centre UK. 5th February 2024

[19] In the context of this blog, the International Longevity Centre defines the dependency ratio as 'the percentage of people aged 65+ relative to the working adult population (aged 15-64). On some definitions, children are also included in the calculation (so older people and children relative to the working age population)

[20] *Future of Jobs Report 2020, World Economic Forum*

rather than assuming the job roles/occupations of their parents' generation, they will need "*to grow into critical and creative citizens who are able to shape the future for themselves*"[21].

Global context and local focus

Across these different drivers, the pace of change is rapid. As noted already, there are inherent interdependencies – so, for example, the changing nature of work owes much to the process of digitisation.

But the nature of change is also unpredictable. This is magnified by uncertainty in the global geo-political economy. Over the two last decades, there has been a global financial crisis and a global pandemic. Nationally, the UK's departure from the EU has also had profound consequences. Currently, there is war in Ukraine, conflict in the Middle East and the fragilities of international trade and global supply chains are clear to see. The rise of populist governments in different parts of the world is also a factor, as the consensus underpinning key post war institutions is tested.

In combination, the consequence is a level of volatility which is far in excess of that which defined most of the last 26 years. This global volatility and fragility will however shape the growth narrative for East Sussex through to 2050.

But at the same time, there is a growing recognition of the potential for local leadership. Within the UK, successive governments have championed a gradual process of **devolution**, enabling powers and funding to be better coordinated at local level to support long-term change. Extending this process – and ensuring a clear voice for East Sussex – will be increasingly important over the next 26 years.

Developing a scenario for future prosperity in East Sussex

The key drivers need to frame a positive future scenario for prosperity in East Sussex. A scenario is not simply a forecast of what is expected to happen. Instead, it is a plausible alternative future, informed by different ways in which the transformational trends outlined above could play out.

Based on the nature and character of East Sussex – as described in earlier chapters – a core scenario might be understood as the balance between three main routes to prosperity, each of which will be in play.

A first theme surrounds continued **investment** into the county – at a greater or smaller scale. This means that economic growth could be supported by higher or lower levels of investment from both the private and public sectors.

Businesses will continue to invest (in sites, in equipment, and in their workforce), enabling them to adapt and pivot. The extent to which they do so will determine their ability to navigate effectively the transition to net zero carbon and to pivot in response to changing market opportunities. In parallel, the public sector

[21] See Preparing young people for the careers of the future | British Council

will continue to invest, at some level, in – effectively – an enabling capacity. This could mean improvements in connectivity and other infrastructure (including with regard to the supply of employment land and transport connectivity). It could also result in targeted but significant regeneration in those parts of East Sussex which really need it – most especially Hastings and, on a smaller scale, Newhaven.

A second route to prosperity is defined around **assets** within East Sussex. These take many different forms – from the existing micro businesses and social enterprises and the strength of the third sector through to the county's substantial assets and resources linked to the natural environment (notably the South Downs National Park and the High Weald National Landscape); its cultural heritage (including, for example, the opera house at Glyndebourne, Towner Eastbourne, Hastings Contemporary, and Battle Abbey and battlefield); and the built environment.

Looking ahead, these different assets could define the core of a locally rooted growth narrative. This involves local supply chains and high local multipliers as (for example) independent retailers in the county's town centres source and sell locally grown food. Moreover there is a strong commitment to principles of the circular economy – which involves sharing, leasing, reusing and recycling a wide range of products to reduce waste and increase the overall sustainability of consumption. Novel approaches to local procurement (including by the public sector) are also likely to feature.

Looking ahead cultural assets may also be afforded a high value – whether or not this is fully monetised. In other words, local people recognise the benefits associated with their cultural amenities and landscape assets, and they recognise these increasingly to be core to a high quality of life. The inference is that economic output might be lower in relative terms, but levels of well-being and equality are potentially enhanced.

Wealth is a third key route to prosperity that shapes an overall growth scenario. There is, already, substantial wealth within the county. For the most part, East Sussex is – and remains – a very desirable place to live. This is particularly apparent amongst those who are well advanced in their careers or even retired and can afford to buy a house locally. The DFLs (down from London) – as they are sometimes colloquially described – can bring with them significant wealth, and this is an economic driver in its own right.

The (predominantly older) people and households with significant wealth are perhaps less immediately concerned about the challenges of low wage levels in East Sussex, or the limited opportunities for career progression. However they do spend money locally, creating demand for many different services and as a result they create local jobs. They are an important element of East Sussex's economic make-up and there is a future scenario in which their relative and absolute importance grows further. This needs to be balanced however with the sustainability of the county's prosperity, especially in relation to the affordability

challenges highlighted earlier and the retention of its distinctive character.

An overarching scenario

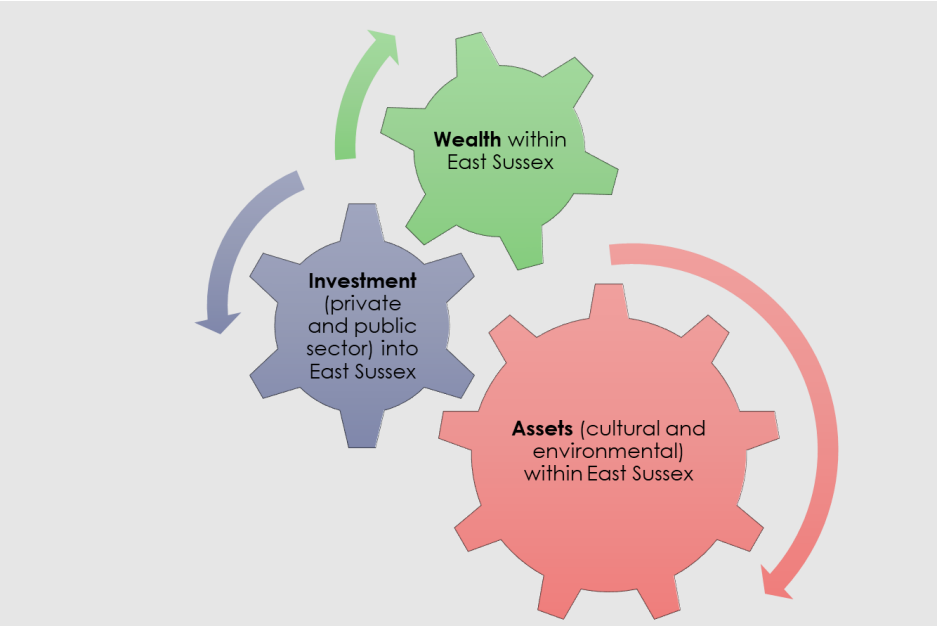
In practice, all of these routes will be at work in shaping the economic future of East Sussex, within a national and global context. The balance between them will define a core growth scenario – as illustrated in Figure 4-2.

Wealth is attracted to – and retained within – East Sussex in part because of the quality of **assets** that the county provides.

The county's assets are also a crucial underpinning of **investment** into the county, while the process of investment may be critically important in sustaining those assets. In practice all three themes are playing out – even though there may also be clear tensions between them, and some variation at a local level.

The Economic Prosperity Strategy for East Sussex is informed by these three routes – and the broader drivers that underpin them. It is explained in the chapter that follows.

Figure 4-2: Key routes towards a growth scenario for East Sussex



5. East Sussex Prosperity: The strategic framework

To achieve a vision to 2050 of a place where people live and work well, the strategic framework is underpinned by the net zero carbon mission and the principles of a circular economy. It defines two themes, of a county of opportunity and ambition, and a county of creativity and innovation, which the following chapters translate into specific areas for action.

Vision and Defining Principles

Within the *East Sussex Prosperity Strategy*, the **Vision** is that:

By 2050, East Sussex will be a place where people live and work well. It will be characterised by well-paid work and good opportunities; innovative and thriving businesses; and an excellent quality of life in an outstanding natural environment.

Within this Vision, the emphasis is on *working as well as living* – whilst recognising that both may look very different by 2050. It is important, specifically, that *people have the opportunity to engage in well-paid work locally*, so that they can also enjoy the benefits of living within East Sussex's outstanding natural environment and enjoying its cultural and creative assets.

For this to be possible, *East Sussex must be a place where businesses flourish and thrive* – whether local micro businesses, established enterprises or potential inward investors, and across a wide range of sectors.

In delivering the Vision, there are however **two Defining Principles** which will be applied throughout. Both relate to environmental imperatives:

- **the economy of East Sussex will achieve net zero carbon by 2050:**

  In one sense, this commitment is a non-negotiable, given the UK's legal commitments. However in delivering this strategy, we intend to embrace the journey to net zero carbon positively and with real purpose, and our aim is to be in the vanguard nationally.

- **the principles of the circular economy will shape what we do:**

  In other words, we will have real regard to the efficiency of resource use, and we will aim to repurpose, reuse and recycle materials and inputs wherever it is possible to do so. We will take account of lifecycle costs, and we will factor these into our decision-making.

Themes

Framed by this overarching Vision and the two Defining Principles, the core of the Economic Prosperity Strategy is defined by two broad **Themes**.

Theme 1: A county of opportunity and ambition

East Sussex will thrive over the period to 2050 only if it provides opportunity for – and unleashes ambition among – both its people and its businesses. The county needs to be a place of aspiration, particularly for those starting out in their careers, and it needs to be a place where their dreams (including in relation to home ownership) can be realised.

In practice, this means that it needs to *nurture and support existing, new and growing businesses*, particularly in key and/or emerging sectors. It needs, positively, to welcome business investment and growth – whilst respecting fully its landscape characteristics and designations and advancing the transition to net zero carbon. It also needs to be supported by a connected transport system.

East Sussex is seeing many of its younger people leaving the county to pursue their studies, but then staying away – although some choose to return much later in life. To some extent, this process is inevitable and elements of it are wholly positive, but *East Sussex must provide reasonable options for its younger people* if the loss of young people (and the growth in the dependency ratio) is not to accelerate further.

These options relate most directly to employment: currently too many jobs in the county are poorly paid and offer few or no real prospects for progression. This needs to change.

But they also relate to housing. It is really important that younger people who work in the county have some prospect of home ownership or secure long-term tenancies; currently, neither appears to be possible for many.

Opportunity and ambition are equally important for those who are 'mid-career' – and for those who are either choosing or needing to work for longer than they had perhaps anticipated.

An older workforce will be a defining feature of the period to 2050, and the Economic Prosperity Strategy must unlock both ambition and opportunity linked to it.

Both employers and workers will need to adapt, novel forms of work will have to be navigated and technology must be embraced positively. Genuine lifelong learning will need to be commonplace, and providers of education and training will need to work alongside both businesses and individuals in spearheading an exemplary response. There is an opportunity – and indeed a need – for East Sussex to lead the way nationally.

Theme 2: A county of creativity and innovation

East Sussex is a creative place: it has many major creative and cultural assets as well as a burgeoning creative sector consisting, in the main, of networks of micro businesses and freelancers. But this second Theme is not a sectoral statement: it is concerned with creativity and innovation in the round. It is as relevant to land-based businesses as it is to small gaming companies – or to larger financial

services businesses or public sector organisations.

Despite the strength and potential of the creative sector, the evidence suggests that East Sussex as a whole is not currently especially innovative – and this needs to change.

The imperative is to harness the assets that exist county-wide – both creative and environmental – and to use these as a catalyst for 'doing things differently'. All sorts of implications follow – from better and more extensive business networking, to deeper relationships with anchor institutions in or close to East Sussex (University of Brighton, University of Sussex, Plumpton College – plus major public sector organisations like schools or NHS organisations), to new and different sources of early-stage investment (recognising the value of the experience and resources linked to those who move to the county in later life).

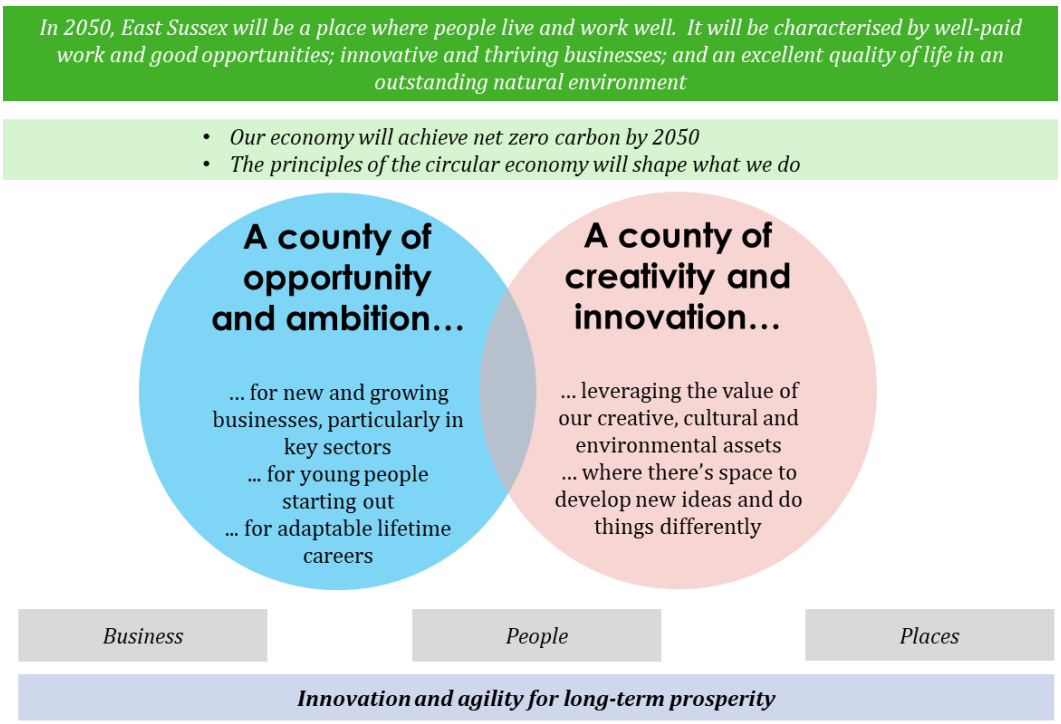
Within this context, 'value' might also be understood in new and different ways. There is enormous value linked to the designated landscapes in East Sussex, and the intention ought to be to reflect this across the local economy. Moreover the scope for innovative practice linked to resource-use efficiency and the journey to net zero carbon ought to be actively nurtured and encouraged.

Conclusion

Through these two Themes – and the Guiding Principles – the Economic Prosperity Strategy will navigate the period to 2050. Across a generational timescale, it will ensure that East Sussex continues to be an inclusive county in which people of all ages genuinely thrive.

The chapters that follow explain how this will be achieved, linked with the drivers of productivity explored in Chapter 4.

Figure 5-1: East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy



6. Prosperity for business

East Sussex's business stock is dominated by small and micro enterprises, with an orientation towards local demand-responsive activities and the visitor economy. But there are some outstanding businesses and emerging areas of strength. The strategy focuses on ensuring a flourishing micro-business environment, encouraging firms to scale up, remaining attractive to responsible investment and adapting effectively to the challenges of climate change.

Areas for intervention relate to ensuring a sustainable and appropriate land supply pipeline is in place, developing business networks and providing support for innovation and growth.

Consistent with the overall Vision, **Prosperity for Business** defines a first key Priority Area in delivering the Economic Prosperity Strategy.

Context, challenges and opportunities

Within East Sussex, there are currently some 23,000 enterprises. In all parts of the county, the vast majority of these are small and the overall size distribution is very similar to the regional and national averages. Within East Sussex, the business stock has grown over recent years; in 2010, the total number of enterprises was around 20,000, some 3,000 fewer than today. Again, this is a pattern seen nationally (driven in part by structural changes). The overall rate of growth in the stock of enterprises however has been lower in East Sussex than across the South East region as a whole.

Within this context, East Sussex has a very distinctive sectoral structure of both business stock and employment:

- two broad sectors are over-represented (relative to the regional and national averages): accommodation and food services (which has very close links to the visitor economy); and human health and social work activities.
- conversely, under-represented sectors include information and communication; professional, scientific and technical activities; and (to a lesser extent) manufacturing.

This broad pattern is both distinctive and clearly recognisable. It suggests specialisms in sectors which are linked strongly to the characteristics of the local population and/or to the visitor economy. Conversely, the overall incidence of activity in high value growth sectors is quite limited. In seeking to achieve the overall Vision of the Economic Prosperity Strategy, the structural make-up of the East Sussex economy is important and challenging, and it highlights **the importance of growing a more balanced economy** to achieve sustainable prosperity.

Nonetheless, while this overall assessment is grounded in evidence, within East Sussex there are some outstanding businesses (or groups of businesses). In the south east of the county there is, for example, a small but distinctive cluster of businesses with specialisms in vacuum technologies and advanced engineering. There is also a growing specialism in viticulture – which signals high value primary production whilst also delivering place-related benefits (given links to the visitor economy), and which is underpinned by the skills and development offer at Plumpton College. In Eastbourne and (increasingly) Hastings, there are many creative businesses – some with links to Brighton and London – which appear to be thriving. In the east, there is a small, but locally significant, fishing specialism. Through one large company, insurance is a major focus in the Bexhill area.

Evidence box: The vacuum cluster in East Sussex

East Sussex's important presence in vacuum technology began in the 1960s, when Vacuum Generators (now VacGen) opened a factory at St Leonards-on-Sea. Since then, a cluster of firms has emerged: this is especially concentrated around Hastings and Bexhill, with key companies including Kurt J Lesker, HiVac Engineering, Torr Scientific and Photek, as well as VacGen itself, which is headquartered at Hailsham.

Many of the applications of vacuum technology are at the leading edge of innovation, with applications including optical coatings, semiconductor electronics and fundamental physics research. The sector is also globally focused and has a high demand for advanced technical skills locally. Ensuring that these can be met locally will be key to the sector's future as a driver of growth in East Sussex.

Across East Sussex, there are examples of innovative, creative and highly successful businesses. But in the round, there are just not enough of them given the scale of both ambition and challenge that sits at the core of the Vision for the economy county-wide.

Priorities looking ahead

Over the next 26 years, it will be critically important that new businesses continue to be formed (whether through entrepreneurship or relocation) and that existing ones grow.

In practice this means that there is a need to:

- **Develop a flourishing micro-business environment**:

  Given its character – and its demography – micro businesses will continue to be a big part of East Sussex's growth narrative over the period to 2050. This needs to be celebrated. Micro businesses can be consistent with new models of living and working, providing levels of freedom and flexibility that are valued by many. Some micro businesses are also very innovative, and the transformational trends identified earlier – especially the expanded scope

for flexible and remote working – offer a more diverse range of opportunities.

Evidence box: Digital Eastbourne

Digitalisation is transforming the economy everywhere, but in Eastbourne, there is a growing concentration of businesses at the forefront of creative, digital and technology innovation. These include the established software and AI company Switchplane, smaller development firms such as Random Creation House, and a wide range of digital media businesses.

Chalk Eastbourne, the business-led collective for the sector, estimates that there are around 2,300 creative, digital and technology businesses in the town, attracted by East Sussex's cultural and quality of life attractions. Retaining and growing the sector will be supported by increasing collaboration and knowledge sharing and by developing the local talent pool.

However there may be challenges too. In the main, micro-businesses are less well resourced than larger firms and they may struggle to invest in their staff (if indeed they have any). Immediate pressures can limit capacity to look to the longer-term and to take advantage of new markets. They can also be quite lonely, particularly when they are also home based; for many people, the social aspects of work are very important in relation to overall well-being. For both reasons, micro-businesses may not always work well in relation to the younger workers that East Sussex needs to retain.

In order to harness the strengths of micro businesses whilst mitigating some of the associated risks, it will be essential that the wider micro business environment is a flourishing one. Micro business owners (and their staff) should genuinely feel that they are part of something bigger, and that they are recognised and valued as a core part of the journey to 2050.

Many micro business owners simply enjoy what they do, particularly given the freedoms and flexibilities it can bring. Others, however, will have ambitions to scale up, grow and expand into other areas of activity.

- **Enable firms with ambition to scale up:**

For East Sussex as a whole, it is important that those businesses – of whatever size – with growth potential and ambition are appropriately equipped and supported. Locally there already exists expertise in delivering scale up programmes as part of the business support ecosystem. In time, these businesses can become local 'anchors' – by training their staff, working with other businesses through supply chains, and contributing to local areas in many different ways. They can also potentially be innovators and disruptors, by pivoting *within* businesses – rather than through a constant churn in business stock. East Sussex needs to be a place where

businesses with the capacity and inclination to grow are enabled rather than stifled in their ambitions.

In practice, growing a business is hard. There is a requirement for people with the right skills – even if those skills are difficult for employers to specify and anyway are constantly changing. Finding appropriate commercial sites and premises can also be a major issue. Securing business finance – of the right form and at the right time – is often a third critical factor and it can make the difference between success and failure.

- **Attract responsible and higher-value investment:**

East Sussex benefits from significant external interest – whether from in-moving retirees or from visitors to its outstanding landscapes and its cultural and creative amenities and attractions. In seeking to deliver the Economic Prosperity Strategy, there is a need to attract and capture appropriate forms of investment from both the private and public sectors. This will enable ambitious businesses to scale up and grow. It should also mean that those places in need of re-investment are able to secure the resources they need.

However this investment needs to be 'right' for East Sussex. It needs to be attuned to the character of the county, working with the grain of its communities, places and businesses. Importantly, it needs also to be aligned with commitments to sustainable growth.

- **Build business resilience to climate change, technology transformation and changing workforce dynamics:**

Finally, amongst businesses of all sizes – and from all sectors – there will be a need to build resilience, given the profound uncertainties that are likely to characterise the period through to 2050. At this stage, no one can anticipate with certainty what this might mean. But 'resilience' is not about 'certainty'; it is about having the wherewithal to adapt – whether to changing technologies, the changing climate, changing regulation and legislation, or changes in the nature and process of work.

Evidence box: Growing the circular economy at Newhaven

Newhaven has a distinctive place in East Sussex's economy, shaped by its port and connections to Dieppe and by its important industrial base. The loss of some larger manufacturers has presented challenges for the town – but it has diversified and contains several major sites for expansion.

Newhaven Enterprise Zone seeks to deliver a new era for the town, focused on its potential in a lower carbon economy. This recognises the scope for energy generation and the re-use of materials from waste and industrial operations, with the Enterprise Zone seeking to develop a cluster of activity in the low carbon and environmental goods and services sector. This will become increasingly important in meeting East Sussex's net zero commitments and is already driving

demand for new skills and services. Joining up a range of other regeneration opportunities in the town, Newhaven has also been designated as a 'pathfinder' for a more flexible approach to the use of Government funding.

Areas for intervention

Given the priorities set out above, there are various actions that need to be taken by partners within East Sussex. All of these constitute a long-term commitment consistent with a strategy that looks to 2050. However within this, some shorter-term interventions should also be identified.

1: Ensuring a sustainable and appropriate land supply pipeline

Large parts of East Sussex are within designated landscapes. East Sussex also faces significant environmental challenges linked particularly to tidal and fluvial flooding and inundation. For all these reasons, developable land with appropriate transport links – whether for employment or housing or both – is in short supply.

The allocation of sites for employment or housing is a matter for local plan-making, and it is not, strictly, within the remit of the Economic Prosperity Strategy. However with a horizon that stretches to 2050 – and hence beyond existing local plans – it is appropriate to acknowledge the criticality of development land. Already, businesses (both those from within the county and those looking to relocate to East Sussex) are struggling to secure sites that meet their needs while available premises are few in number and many perform poorly in environmental terms. Over the years ahead, the nature of demand for employment land will change, in the context of new industries and technologies, hybrid working and automation. It will be important that the evolving needs of businesses are recognised, and that a sustainable and appropriate land supply and transport access pipeline is in place.

In relation to premises, the high street will continue to change as town centres evolve. Vacant retail units may need to be diverted to other commercial (or residential) uses, and steps should be taken to ensure that town centres in East Sussex are hubs for business life (noting particularly their appropriateness for many micro business activities).

At the same time, consideration will need to be given to affordable 'move on' space. This is frequently far more difficult to secure. Similarly, there will be a need for at least some larger sites that could reasonably be promoted to investors, particularly those in high value-added sectors like advanced engineering.

Throughout, there will need to be a recognition that appropriate sites and premises – which achieve good environmental standards and are linked with sustainable transport infrastructure – will be a core part of the economic prosperity narrative. Without them, East Sussex is very unlikely to flourish.

Evidence box: Commercial land in East Sussex

Room to Grow 2 was commissioned by East Sussex County Council in June

2021. It examined the supply of commercial premises in East Sussex.

It concluded that there are very low industrial vacancy rates and therefore very limited options for companies looking either to expand or to move into the area. It noted that demand is particularly high for warehousing and logistics uses, but it is also strong in relation to industrial and manufacturing uses. Some new sites have come forward (often with some public support), but in general it noted that the development process is 'too slow'. In addition, there are challenges linked to the environmental performance of many industrial and manufacturing premises within the county. Given constraints on available land in many parts of the county, renewal of existing estates will be important, both for their environmental resilience and to ensure they continue to provide an attractive product for the market.

The report commented on the loss of office space, including through Permitted Development Rights. It also noted that demand for office space was subdued, and rental levels were low. However it noted that demand for flexible workspace would probably increase following the pandemic.

Two of its conclusions are likely to be especially important looking ahead: external grant funding has been and will continue to be vital to encourage development due to viability issues; and the shortage of development sites will translate into a shortage of available stock '*which may force*

companies to consider relocating outside of the area'.

2: Developing business networks

In seeking to deliver the Vision associated with the Economic Prosperity Strategy, the challenges of economic fragmentation across East Sussex should also be addressed. There is a need to achieve something closer to critical mass. The gains could be substantial: local multipliers ought to be apparent as the scope for local supply chains grows, and a more networked business community is also likely to be a far more innovative one.

Effective networking may be animated on a sectoral basis. It may also be developed in particular places. Generally speaking, networking tends to be most effective when these two dimensions come together. Throughout, business networks need to be business led and innovation focused. Identifying current – and potential future – business champions and 'anchor' institutions will also be important.

There are several well-established business networks operating at local and county-wide level, and a focus on industry-led collaboration and innovation would do much to accelerate the delivery of the overall Economic Prosperity Strategy Vision. It would help to articulate business needs in relation to skills and workforce development, and it could also help to manage investment risk.

3: Providing targeted support for innovation and growth

A third key Intervention Area relates to the need for targeted support to business and other organisations in respect of innovation, growth, business investment in the workforce, engagement in international trade and support for the development of the management and leadership skills that will be needed in growing businesses and adapting to changing technologies and opportunities. Within the context of the visions and the transformational trends highlighted earlier, support for decarbonisation and the exploitation of lower carbon goods and services will be especially important.

Programmes of support have been (and are) available, but in large part, uptake has been very slow. In part this is a corollary of fragmentation within the business base and the fact that East Sussex does not have a natural economic centre. The pace of change will be relentless over the next 26 years and many businesses will need support if they are to navigate it effectively. Persuading them to engage – whether (currently) through national schemes like Made Smarter or through locally-developed responses – will therefore be extremely important.

Evidence box: Manufacturing in Wealden

Wealden is home to the highest number of manufacturing businesses in East Sussex, with key and varied clusters in the Polegate/Hailsham area, Uckfield, and Crowborough.

These businesses are essential to the local economy, employing large numbers of people and participating in international supply chains and markets. These companies include Britannia Superfine, a confectionery manufacturer in Polegate; TR Fastenings, which manufactures and distributes engineering fastenings from Uckfield; and Servomex Group Limited in Crowborough, which designs, manufactures, and distributes industrial instruments for gas analysis.

The presence of these diverse manufacturing businesses highlights how the rural districts of East Sussex play a significant role in the broader economic landscape. Supporting their growth will be important for sustaining this sector's contribution to the local economy.

7. Prosperity for people

Challenges in relation to workforce skills, economic activity and employment are important contributors to the productivity and pay gap described in Chapter 3. Looking to 2050, there is a need to build better opportunities for young people to stay and develop careers in East Sussex, attract a skilled workforce to the county (including 'returners' to East Sussex) and enable people to develop new skills and career paths over their lifetimes.

This means recognising the interplay between the housing market and the labour market and the need for an affordable mix of housing to support people living and working in East Sussex. It also means understanding future industry demand, supporting progression in work and optimising the effectiveness of the workforce in the context of demographic change.

Context, challenges and opportunities

The population of East Sussex currently numbers around 550,000 people of whom 313,000 are of working age, as conventionally defined (i.e., between the ages of 16 and 64).

Within East Sussex, the economic activity rate (i.e., the proportion of 16-64 year olds either in work or actively seeking work) is around 76%; this is notably lower than the average across the South East. The employment rate is also about five percentage points below the regional average.

The data therefore suggest that people of working age account for a smaller share of the population than elsewhere – so the dependency ratio is higher. And within the working age population, both activity and employment rates are lower. In combination, this all means that the value of economic output (GVA) is also relatively low.

The reasons for low activity rates are many and varied. Some people are unable to work because of ill health (and the data suggest this is a significant factor in the county). Others may be unable to work because of caring responsibilities – which becomes more likely as the dependency ratio increases. A third group may struggle to access suitable employment, for a range of reasons: skills and qualifications, a lack of opportunities to progress in the workforce to achieve their potential, or physical barriers to access (for example transport accessibility, availability and cost). There will also be some people who may neither want nor need to engage in paid employment, especially among older age groups. Some may be deterred from doing so by the relatively low wage levels which characterise employment opportunities within East Sussex, although these low wage levels are compounded by severe cost pressures, especially in the housing market. The mix of factors is therefore complicated.

Alongside low earnings, official data sources suggest that qualification levels among working age residents are relatively low. Indeed, the proportion qualified to degree level or above is fully ten percentage points lower than the regional average – which is a sizeable gap. Although qualifications are far from the whole story, the correlation between low qualifications and low resident employee earnings is striking.

For the Economic Prosperity Strategy, a critical issue is the extent to which the economically active population – both now and in the future – has the skills and confidence to pivot and adapt as job roles change and as new sectors emerge. Over the next 26 years, the range of jobs within East Sussex will change substantially. Demands from employers are also likely to change. A resilient, diverse and inclusive workforce will therefore be essential.

Evidence Box: Future Skills

A study on **Future Skills East Sussex** was commissioned by Skills East Sussex from the Institute for Employment Studies in 2023. Its findings are important for the Economic Prosperity Strategy.

It concluded that future recruitment and skills challenges will vary by sector. Some sectors (notably health and social care, the visitor economy and some elements of agriculture) will struggle to find sufficient recruits. There will be skills shortages in digital, engineering/ manufacturing and construction. IT skill needs will increase across all sectors – basic IT skills in health and social care and the visitor economy; more advanced/specialist skills in digital, engineering etc. – often driven by the introduction of new technologies.

The study also identified a cross-cutting requirement for skills linked to the transition to net zero carbon.

Priorities looking ahead

Against this backdrop, there are some clear priorities.

Specifically, there is a need to:

- **Build opportunities for young people to stay and develop careers in East Sussex**

  It is very important that opportunities are created and that more young people are encouraged to pursue their careers locally. Unless this is achieved, the dependency ratio will continue to worsen, and East Sussex will become progressively less sustainable in socio-economic terms over the period to 2050.

  However, the labour market profile presented above presents some clear challenges in this context: jobs are typically poorly paid, and qualifications are relatively low, certainly compared to neighbouring areas in the South East.

  The Economic Prosperity Strategy needs to chart a different course for East Sussex and finally decouple this 'low pay – low skills equilibrium'. Disruption in this context must link directly to the dynamism of the business base and the need to

encourage more companies to grow, creating clearer career opportunities. It should also relate to processes of entrepreneurship and the need/ opportunity to involve young people in this at an early stage. Young people will not choose to stay in the county unless there is something to stay for – and the Economic Prosperity Strategy has an important contribution to make.

Evidence box: Perspectives on the future from new entrants to the workforce

To inform the development of the Strategy, a focus group with local college students explored young people's aspirations, looking ahead to 2050.

Knowledge development and opportunities for on-the-job learning and career progression were seen as key factors in choosing future employers, with an emphasis placed on a good workplace culture. In a labour market that is likely to become tighter over time, these will become increasingly important factors.

Students cited housing costs as an important concern for the future, and potentially one which might limit their ability to seek work and progress locally. However, many also found the prospect of moving away for work to be attractive, at least initially, reflecting perceived opportunities (and a greater sense of dynamism) elsewhere. This reflects historic patterns of young people leaving for university and graduate employment – but many wish to stay local, and there ought to be scope to attract people to return to the county if the opportunities are available.

- **Attract a skilled workforce**

  At the same time, there is a need for more immediate responses, given the challenges that employers are facing in securing the skills they need. Potentially, people 'returning' to the county and new residents relocating to East Sussex could bring their skills and experience with them, providing an invaluable resource. This links again to the need to position East Sussex as a place for business and a place in which ambitions can be realised. For new (and existing) residents, the county's quality of life is an important attractor, which will be supplemented by the housing offer, the quality of education provision, public services and the wider factors that make the county a good place to live.

- **Enable good, rewarding work throughout working lives**

  Looking ahead towards 2050, there is a need to recognise that the nature of work is changing profoundly. Those that are well qualified for today's jobs might find that the range of opportunities available to them is very different in two decades' time. Yet they might also find themselves having to work for longer and needing – and/or wanting – to engage in paid employment well into their 60s and 70s.

The imperative in this context is to equip people to work for longer, pivoting their skills and experience in the process – and without any loss of either confidence or self-esteem. Indeed, quite the reverse: the insights and perspectives provided by older workers need to be recognised and valued by employers and used effectively within thriving businesses.

Areas for intervention

The priorities identified above lead to four main areas for intervention over the decades ahead. The first of these is concerned with the **housing market** as a crucial factor influencing the ability of people to live and work in East Sussex. The following three focus on **skills and the labour market**, recognising the importance of the interactions between them.

1: Rebalancing cost pressures, especially in the housing market

Fundamentally, there is a need to consider the rewards from work in relation to the cost of living in East Sussex. Currently, there is a major mismatch: many working people simply cannot afford home ownership given the level of earnings they can command locally, and high costs also impact the rental market. This is one reason why young people leave East Sussex and spend at least the early part of their working lives elsewhere, but it is a systemic challenge for people of all ages and if unchecked, will impact on the county's economic and social sustainability.

Evidence box: Workforce perspectives

As part of the consultation process which shaped the East Sussex Prosperity Strategy, a focus group was held with a group of employees from a business in East Sussex. The business is established and successful; it employs around 80 people. The employees in the focus group had different occupations, some linked to assembly, some focused on design, and some had roles which were linked to company management.

There was much consistency in terms of the feedback, which included:

- the challenges linked to housing and the concern that '*I will never be able to afford a house even though I work full time*'
- an observation that East Sussex '*is filling up with people from London*' – with implications for housing in particular
- the need to ensure that town centres in East Sussex are vibrant, and that there is '*something for young people to do*'
- the need for more and better public services – e.g. it is very difficult to see an NHS dentist, or a GP
- a recognition that younger people (including the adult children of employees in the focus group) are very unlikely to remain in the local area and instead will leave to earn more elsewhere.

A range of organisations and strategies will have a role in addressing these issues, highlighting a need for an

increasingly 'multi-agency' approach over the coming decades.

In East Sussex, the affordability of housing for those in 'normal' jobs – and without other sources of wealth – is a major challenge, and the links between housing and wider economic and social outcomes is well articulated[22]. More homes will need to be built to meet identified local need, with more affordable housing of all tenure types and efficient transport networks to support people at all stages of their careers. This will be a priority in delivering the Strategy – alongside ensuring a supply of employment and creating the opportunity to generate higher incomes through business growth.

2: Understanding and responding to industry demand

Key to redefining the relationship between jobs, skills and economic growth in East Sussex is a better and more consistent understanding of the changing nature of demand.

Significant progress is being made in developing a better – and more sustained – dialogue with the business community, particularly as jobs and job roles change quickly. This needs to be sustained and in turn needs to be understood by both training providers of different forms, and by young people (and their parents) as they make decisions at different stages. For too long, these different perspectives have been disconnected and detached – but the need for a real dialogue is overwhelming.

This dialogue needs to take place with reference to different timescales. There are immediate issues that need a short-term response, particularly in relation to sectors which are struggling to recruit in the context of changing patterns of international migration.

7.1 But East Sussex also needs a longer-term view. Locally there is a well established and active county wide employment and skills board so, building on the Local Skills Improvement Plan, businesses, training providers and those involved in education at all ages need to work together to anticipate how jobs and job roles are likely to evolve over the medium to long term, and they need to plan provision accordingly. They need to equip both young people and those who are further advanced in their working lives for what might lie ahead. They need to engineer real resilience within the East Sussex workforce, focusing on transferable skills and the profound implications of new technology.

3: Support for progression in work

In parallel, there is a need to ensure that more people are able to progress at work – recognising links to social mobility.

This may mean making explicit provision for in-work training – which again requires a stronger dialogue between training providers and employers.

[22] Annual Report of the Director of Public Health for East Sussex 2019/20

4: Working with employers to optimise the effectiveness of the changing workforce

Action will be needed over the years ahead to restructure jobs – and wider working arrangements – so that they are effective in relation to a workforce which is generally older and may also have wider responsibilities (e.g., caring for dependants) or other protected characteristics. There will be a need for real creativity and some flexibility, and acceptance of a profound change in the process of work (e.g. where, when, and how it is done). In a tighter labour market with changing expectations of the nature of work, this also points to a greater emphasis on workforce health and wellbeing, and the imperative for equality, diversity and inclusion, and the role that employers can play in ensuring this and the links with greater productivity.

Within this context the implications of technology in general and automation in particular merits close consideration. Many routine jobs could disappear altogether. At the same time, there may well be scope for greater creativity. Older workers will need to adapt and both employers and training providers will need to support them.

8. Prosperity for places

East Sussex is a diverse county, and strategy to 2050 will need to recognise local distinctiveness and character as contributors to the county-wide picture, ensuring that all places in East Sussex are able to thrive, and that the county's environmental assets are protected and enhanced.

Key areas for intervention involve making the most of the county's creative, cultural and environmental opportunities and building the business, skills and transport links between them; ensuring a long-term focus on Hastings and Bexhill to ensure that this significant urban area can reach its full potential (and help drive the economy of the county as a whole); and making targeted investments in connectivity, consistent with the strategy's decarbonisation and sustainability objectives.

Context, opportunities and challenges

As the spatial sketch of East Sussex demonstrated in Chapter 2, the county is diverse. In big picture terms, this is most obvious in the differentiation between the rural 'core', most of which is within either the National Park or the National Landscape, and the more urban coast. But there is substantial further complexity, in terms of local economic strengths and characteristics and the relevance of connections beyond the county. Consequently, the strategy to 2050 needs to take a locally distinctive approach, in the context (from a land use and infrastructure perspective) of the six Local Plans at district and National Park level.

Long-term investment in infrastructure will also need to be in the context of the sustainability principles outlined in the Strategic Framework. Consistent with this, the draft East Sussex *Local Transport Plan 4* parallels this strategy in adopting a 2050 horizon[23]. It includes a strengthened emphasis on supporting sustainable economic growth, the need to decarbonise transport (recognising that transport accounts for some 35% of the county's greenhouse gas emissions), as well as a greater focus on inclusion across the transport system, especially in the context of the county's ageing population.

Priorities looking ahead

Looking to 2050, there is a need to:

- **Capitalise on, while protecting and enhancing, East Sussex's environmental assets and designated landscapes.**

  East Sussex is unusual in the extent to which the county is covered by environmental designations. Recent

[23] East Sussex County Council (2023), *Local Transport Plan 4*

decades have seen significant progress in expanding and strengthening these, notably in the process for the creation of the South Downs National Park. As the need to mitigate the consequences of climate change become ever more important, the need to increase and enhance these protections will grow.

In that context, getting the balance right is important and challenging. East Sussex's natural environment is a major store of economic value: people are attracted to the county as a place to live and work because of the quality of the coast and countryside, it is fundamental to the visitor economy offer, and the county also has an important land-based sector (including in emerging specialisms such as viticulture) that are dependent on its resilience. And in East Sussex, the National Park and the National Landscape incorporate relatively large populations and business bases (the South Downs National Park is, for example, the most populated of all national parks in England) and coexist in close proximity with larger urban areas. The point is that the economic value of East Sussex's environmental assets is highly dependent on their protection, and this is embedded within the long-term economic strategy.

Evidence box: Sussex Modern

Sussex Modern was established in 2017 as an independent business consortium focused on bringing visitors and investment to the county. Described as the 'wine tourism development agency for Sussex', it promotes the opportunities associated with the intersection of viticulture, food and drink and a dynamic cultural offer. It explicitly seeks to "tell a story of Sussex that is about more than sleepy villages, coastal retirement towns and historic ruins… celebrat[ing] and promot[ing] Sussex as home to a vibrant, youthful culture for audiences with metropolitan tastes for world-class art and high-quality wine – all within breathtaking landscapes". The concept highlights the potential of East Sussex's key environmental and cultural strengths to appeal to new audiences and evolve in response to changing demand while protecting its core assets.

- **Ensure a balance between county-wide priorities and local differentiation.**

  Local pride is an important asset, and as we have seen earlier in this strategy, there are emerging concentrations of economic activity which are locally rooted, and the county's diversity and polycentricity also gives rise to local distinctiveness. Local distinctiveness and pride also need to be continually reinvented and reinforced as demand changes and the roles of (for example) town centres evolve.

  Looking forward to 2050, it will be important to recognise and capitalise on this. But equally, there are important shared issues relevant to the county as a whole: the need to improve transport connectivity for instance, which impacts East Sussex

systemically and the need to strengthen digital and sustainable transport connections across the rural parts of the county; the interconnections between different elements of the cultural and visitor economy; and the operation of the labour market, which is 'bigger than local' and extends beyond the county itself. In a county which is relatively small compared with its South East neighbours and where no single centre dominates, it will be important to recognise the connections and commonalities, as well as the local differentiation.

- **Enable all parts of East Sussex to thrive**

Linked with this, it follows that if East Sussex is going to be economically and sustainably successful all parts of it need to be doing well: the county isn't big enough to allow significant variances in outcome without these impacting on the resilience and prosperity of the whole.

Currently, East Sussex faces a challenge in this regard, given the relative underperformance of Hastings, one of its two larger urban economies: ultimately, the ability of the larger towns to generate economic activity to support the county as a whole will be important for more sustainable travel and land-use patterns over the longer term. Tackling this underperformance will also involve action on a variety of fronts, in the educational and community sphere as well as in physical regeneration and business growth.

Areas for intervention

Building on these priorities, there are three key areas for intervention:

1. Making the most of the county's cultural, creative and environmental opportunities – and the links between them

East Sussex is distinctive in the range of its local cultural destinations (Towner Eastbourne, Hastings Contemporary, the De La Warr Pavilion, Glyndebourne, the diverse programme of festivals and events, and so on). What is interesting about the 'offer' is that these institutions are not purely local in scope: they are substantially outward-facing and linked with wider national and international networks. They are also closely associated with a wider sense of place, especially associations with the coast (and the long history of the South Coast's creative attraction) and the landscape, including the National Park and National Landscape. Beyond these famous creative institutions, there is also emerging creative innovation at local level (for example, the Creative Newhaven consortium) which will also benefit from being part of the wider county-wide scene.

There is work underway via the launch of Experience Sussex to build connections between sustainable food and drink and the cultural and creative offer, linked with the development of a higher value visitor economy. This builds on the work of existing Destination Management Organisations (DMO) in the county

including 1066 Country, Explore Wealden, Visit Lewes, and Visit Eastbourne.

The nexus of creativity, environmental quality, economic opportunity and wellbeing more broadly is also important in the attractiveness of East Sussex as a place to live – especially in attracting a younger demographic. Joining up and growing this creative offer demands both a county-wide approach and local distinctiveness and ought to be a key pillar of economic activity.

2. A long-term focus on Hastings and Bexhill

It is important that all places in East Sussex flourish. But as observed above, there are currently significant disparities, which are most apparent in the relative under-performance of Hastings (and by extension the wider Hastings-Bexhill urban area). The reasons for this are complex and are not easy to fix: they include relatively poor connectivity by road and rail, long-standing concentrations of deprivation linked with some distinctive housing market pressures, environmental constraints especially linked with flood risk, and a relatively small private sector employment base. These challenges are long-standing, many of them are shared with other coastal towns, and they are compounded by the more generic challenges of changes in the retail market, which impact town centres everywhere, but affect those with the weakest local markets the most.

There has been significant investment over several years to address some of these challenges. Much of this has successfully borne fruit – for example, the success of institutions like Hastings Contemporary and the growth of the local creative scene, and recent investment in the Coombe Valley Way. However, much public investment has been stop-start, perhaps not sufficient in scale to fully address the breadth of the challenge, and with insufficient mechanisms to relate opportunities for growth to community benefit. Nevertheless, Hastings has some very distinctive assets: it is an attractive and inherently interesting place to live and there is evidence of high residential demand (albeit that this creates challenges of its own). It also has substantial urban scale – with the potential to act as a driver for the east of the county, and the recent Town Investment Plan has started to bring together key opportunities[24].

Over the long term, the renewal of Hastings and Bexhill as a key anchor and driver of growth ought to be a focus of county-wide strategy. That means recognising that while there are no silver bullets (specific government initiatives will always be time and project-limited and will never be sufficient on their own), a joined-up approach over the long term, with the capacity to experiment and to think about bold ideas will be important. Enabling East Sussex's largest urban area to perform effectively should, over time, make a county-wide difference to the productivity, pay and concentrated

[24] Hastings Borough Council (2023), *Town Investment Plan*

disadvantage issues highlighted earlier in Chapter 3.

3. Targeted investment in connectivity to support economic potential

Consistent with the principles set out in the Strategic Framework, investment in East Sussex's transport connectivity must contribute to the net zero imperative and minimise the impact on the county's core environmental assets.

However, connectivity across much of the county is not as good as it needs to be. Rail services are, compared with other parts of the South East, relatively slow, local public transport links are often less frequent (especially in rural East Sussex), and there are some disruptive bottlenecks on the road network, especially on the A27.

These challenges are recognised within the East Sussex draft *Local Transport Plan 4 2024-50,* which, from an economic growth perspective, emphasises improvements on the East Coastway line between Brighton, Eastbourne and Hastings, bus enhancements, especially in the coastal towns, active travel connectivity and targeted highway improvements where they can also deliver bus and active travel measures. Linked with the focus on strengthening the performance of Hastings and Bexhill, the 'market-driven' growth of Eastbourne as an emerging tech hub as well as a major service centre, and the regional significance of Brighton, strengthened connectivity along the coast is likely to be especially important.

Successful delivery of transport infrastructure will require a combination of partnership collaboration, national regulatory and policy activity and funding supported by local policies and schemes that combine to achieve the shared ambition and vision.

Future growth will also depend on continuous improvements in **digital connectivity**. Supply has improved greatly over the past decade, as a result of public investment and the market. But as demand accelerates and new technologies emerge, it will be important for East Sussex to remain competitive – including in rural and 'harder to reach' parts of the county.

9. Delivering the strategy: Innovation and agility

In delivering the strategy, there is a need to develop East Sussex's innovation capacity, including looking outwards to its neighbours. The *process* of delivery will also need to be 'innovative and agile': taking advantage of multiple opportunities for investment, within the context of a clear long-term approach.

Innovation and agility: A long-term approach

Across all elements of the Economic Prosperity Strategy there is a requirement for **innovation and agility**.

East Sussex has enormous assets, the importance of which is likely to grow over the period to 2050: cultural and creative assets are likely to be valued more highly, and the significance of an outstanding natural landscape will certainly increase.

However, there is also a clear need for change. East Sussex needs to be a place where the population as a whole can thrive. It is currently falling short on this ambition, particularly in relation to its younger people (who are struggling to secure homes of their own) and many of its employed people (who are struggling to make ends meet). There is a substantial disconnect between the wages that local people can command and the cost of living in East Sussex, particularly with regard to housing – and this also results in some significant spatial disparities.

In navigating this change, the key watchwords will be innovation and agility. These must shape some combination of the county's (actual or potential) assets; the investment it generates; and the wealth it attracts. The imperatives surrounding innovation and agility will also relate to all three routes to prosperity outlined in previous chapters: business, people and places.

Innovation and agility – for prosperous businesses, prosperous people and prosperous places

In response, there is a need for a systemic approach to innovation and agility as a basis for long term prosperity. The terminology is over-used, but the 'ecosystem' needs to function better and with innovation at its core.

The transition to net zero carbon needs to be a central part of this – recognising the consequences for businesses, people and places. Embracing fully the principles of the circular economy will also demand an innovative response from businesses, people and places across East Sussex.

Evidence box: Working locally and nationally to support low carbon growth

East Sussex benefits from two universities – the University of Brighton and the University of Sussex, both of which have established business relationships in the county

and a long history of involvement in economic development.

The University of Brighton is currently a partner in the **Clean Growth UK** initiative, a university-led business network which helps members develop clean and green products, services and business models and get innovative ideas to market faster.

So far, the programme has raised around £26 million in R&D funding for member businesses and is an example of how a major institution with a footprint in the county can collaborate with partners elsewhere in the country, support innovation locally and drive the growth of a low carbon economy.

Fragmentation is currently, however, a challenge for the county. Whilst its places are clearly distinctive – and this distinctiveness is core to its character – fragmentation is not the necessary consequence. Stronger networks could achieve a great deal, at a range of spatial scales, and across both sectors and places.

Some of these networks ought to transcend the county boundaries. Links with (particularly) Brighton to the west, but also Crawley/Gatwick and London are already important. They are clearly double edged and some of the challenges facing East Sussex are, to some extent, a consequence of those relationships. But those interconnections are here to stay, they need to be embraced positively, and they are likely to be reinforced by enhanced digital connectivity.

Evidence box: Geographies of innovation

Recent work for the Department of Science, Innovation and Technology has sought to identify innovation clusters across the UK, by measuring firm relationships and patterns of innovation.

This highlights the emergence of digital and life science clusters around Eastbourne, and a media and creative cluster around Hastings. It also demonstrates the influence of Brighton, especially in the west of the county. However, local evidence will be important too, in identifying emerging concentrations of activity, including in new areas of technology.

Source: DSIT/ Cambridge Econometrics/ The Data City (2024), The Innovation Clusters Map

Businesses within East Sussex need to network with each other. But they also need to be working with and through wider clusters that span administrative boundaries. Brighton has a large and vibrant creative sector, and there ought to be real synergies with creative businesses in Eastbourne and Hastings. This in itself will be a catalyst for innovation and agility.

In a similar vein, alongside Plumpton College (which is important but also relatively small and specialist), both the University of Sussex and the University of Brighton ought to be seen as fully part of the innovation system across East Sussex. Both are major knowledge hubs, and they are nearby – whatever their relationship to an administrative boundary. Both ought to be seen as key anchor institutions and

forging closer links to them needs to be a priority.

More generally, alongside the port at Newhaven, the proximity of Gatwick Airport and the Channel Tunnel ought to create possibilities in terms of international business (particularly through trade). East Sussex is part of a global economy and – whilst recognising some of the environmental challenges – a responsible approach to international business is needed. In itself, that will do much to crystallise both innovation and agility.

Finally, East Sussex needs to grasp its relationship with London. The 'DFLs' cause local comment yet they are already central to how East Sussex functions. London is a global city and with a phenomenal knowledge base. Proximity to it ought to be a real asset, particularly with regard to innovation and investment.

In seeking to create prosperous businesses, prosperous people and prosperous places, East Sussex needs to 'work' its relationship to the capital. This has implications for place marketing and the role that East Sussex wants to play, but in effecting innovation and agility, London cannot – and should not – be ignored.

Moving towards delivery

Innovation and agility will be critical in *how* the strategy is delivered. The next 26 years will see several economic cycles and policy changes at national and local level – and there will undoubtedly be unexpected economic events along the way. This strategy will shape partners' approach to project development and prioritisation. Delivery will need to take place through a variety of funding mechanisms, aligned where possible, and there will need to be strong, shared leadership, embedded within future devolution of investment and responsibility.

Achieving the Vision will require the actions of many partners over time, all with a focus on their individual commitment and contribution to economic prosperity. Oversight, awareness raising and knowledge sharing, networking and collaboration must be core to our ways of working, to enable investment and project delivery that will incrementally take us towards our shared goals for 2050.

10. Summary of Evidence Call

We would like to thank everyone who submitted documents as part of the evidence call in summer 2023. Below is a list of the evidence received in that call.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive as other documents (such as Local Plans and their evidence bases) were considered as part of the development of the strategy.

- East Sussex Economic Growth Strategy 2014-2020
- East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan 2020
- Productivity and Innovation in East Sussex (ESCC 2022)
- Room to Grow 2: A report into commercial property in East Sussex
- Team East Sussex (TES) Stakeholder Updates (various)
- East Sussex in Figures Economic Profile updates (various)
- East Sussex Economic Impact Assessment 2023
- Stiles Harold Williams (SHW) Focus documents
- East Sussex Environment Strategy 2020
- East Sussex Climate Change Road Map 2022-25
- Wealden District Council Housing Strategy 2020-25
- Wealden District Council Cost of Living Strategy
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) Economic Recovery and Renewal Strategy
- South East Local Enterprise Partnership - State of the Region report
- Newhaven Unleashed Business Plan
- East Sussex Cultural Strategy 2013-25
- South East Creative Economy Network Statement of Intent
- Creative Industries Sector Vision
- Creative Open Workspace Masterplan and Prospectus
- Sussex Visitor Economy Baseline review
- Sussex Visitor Economy Vision and Actions
- Sussex Wine Tourism: A Plan for Growth

- Create Growth Programme bid
- Sussex Destination Management Plan
- The Growth Belt: Supporting rural small businesses
- Accelerating Progress: Empowering small businesses on the journey to net zero
- Streets Ahead: A report by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Menu for recovery, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Time is money, FSB
- Small Business, Big Heart, FSB
- Future Skills Sussex – Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP) and associated annexes including 7 key sector deep dive reports
- Pan-Sussex Local Skills Improvement Plan
- Employability and Skills Labour Market Information (LMI) reports
- Apprenticeships East Sussex data
- Plumpton College Strategy (2022-2027)
- The Economic and Social Impact of the University of Sussex
- Catching the Value of the Catch, Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils
- Re-Imagining Newhaven: Newhaven's Future High Streets Bid
- Eastbourne Levelling Up Fund Bid
- This is Newhaven: our town investment plan
- FSB South East Quarterly Small Business Index
- Nobody Left Behind, Local Government Association (LGA)
- Inclusive Economies and Healthy Futures, LGA
- Principles, Priorities and Pathways for Inclusive Green Economies, LGA
- Wellbeing Economy Policy Design Guide, Wellbeing Economy Alliance
- Wealden Economic Development Strategy 2023 – 2033
- Wealden Industrial Estates Review Stage 1 (2019) & Stage 2 (2020)
- Wealden Viticulture Feasibility Study Final Report
- The Economic Impact of Tourism on Wealden District 2019
- Employment and Wealden Town Centre Study 2022
- Economic Study - Eastbourne and Wealden 2022
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan 2022, Wealden District Council

- Rural England Prosperity Fund Addendum, Wealden District Council
- Cuckoo Trail Strategy, Wealden District Council
- Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025, Wealden District Council
- Hastings Town Investment Plan
- Hastings Borough Council Town Fund Annex 1-6
- Hastings Borough Council Corporate Plan
- 2023-24 Corporate Plan update, Hastings Borough Council
- Hastings and Rother Task Force Review
- Hastings Local Plan Consultation Draft (Regulation 18) Winter 2020/21
- Hastings Station Gateway Capacity Testing Options and Assessment
- Hastings Station Gateway Key Findings and Next Steps
- Coastal Communities Economic Prospectus
- Chief Medical Officer's Annual Report 2021
- Employment and Economic Study Eastbourne and Wealden
- Newhaven Port Freight Assessment
- Lewes District Economic Needs Assessment
- Retail and Leisure Study (LDC 2023)
- Wealden District Climate Emergency Plan
- Project Art Works: Activity Plan for Outcomes 2023-24
- Project Art Works: Business Plan 2023-2027
- Project Art Works: Arches Revised Design and Access Statement
- East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 2024
- East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)
- Rother Levelling Up Fund bid - Bexhill; Culture, Community and Skills
- Rother Rural Economy, Rother District Council
- Marketing Strategy for 1066 Country 2016-2025 and The Impact of 1066 Country Marketing on supporting tourism, Rother District Council
- Rother and Hastings Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (ED Chapters only) - Employment Final
- Practical Wisdom: Brighton 2025 University Strategy 2019-2025
- Social Enterprise Prospectus (SELEP Social Enterprise Working Group)

TEAM EAST SUSSEX

East Sussex County Council

Contact

For more information:

economic.development@eastsussex.gov.uk

Economic Development Team
West B
County Hall
St Annes Crescent
Lewes
BN7 1UE

About us

East Sussex County Council is responsible for strategic economic planning for East Sussex following transfer of this function from Local Enterprise Partnerships in April 2024.

Team East Sussex (TES) is an independent, business-led, private/public body, with representation from business members and business representative bodies, the voluntary, community sector and social enterprise sector, further education, higher education and the local authority leaders of all of the county, borough and district councils across East Sussex. TES acts as an advisory body to the County Council in relation to economic growth, and is supported by council officers in a Secretariat capacity.

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Report to:	**Cabinet**
Date of meeting:	**26 September 2024**
By:	**Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**
Title:	**East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) 2024-2050**
Purpose:	**To approve the draft East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 strategy, Investment Plan and other supporting documents**

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended 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, ahead of this being presented to Full Council on 8 October 2024.

(2) Note the further work planned beyond the adoption of LTP4, as outlined in paragraphs 2.13 – 2.16.

1 Background

Local Transport Plan Context

1.1 Under the Transport Act 2000, Local Transport Authorities are required to have a Local Transport Plan (LTP) for their geographical area. The overall purpose of this is to set out the strategy and policy framework for transport, alongside enabling the transport, economic, social, and environmental challenges, and opportunities to be identified, whilst identifying the transport investment priorities; and establishing how to manage, maintain and improve the transport network.

1.2 The current East Sussex Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) was adopted in May 2011 and covers the period 2011 to 2026. It is supported by a series of five-year implementation plans which set out the intentions for transport investment for this period of time.

1.3 The requirement to update LTP3 has been influenced by several major changes in Government policy and priorities at a national, sub-national and local level. These include greater emphasis on the need to decarbonise transport; economic recovery following the Covid 19 pandemic, greater emphasis and integration of health and wellbeing policy, and the need to align with the Transport for the South East's (TfSE) Transport Strategy and Strategic Investment Plan.

1.4 The Department for Transport had initially proposed to issue updated Local Transport Plan guidance to local authorities in spring 2023. However, the publication of the draft guidance was continually delayed and has yet to be published. In lieu of the published draft guidance, DfT continued to urge local authorities to progress the review and update of their LTPs and provided local authorities with a strong indication of the likely contents. Prior to the public and stakeholder consultation, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) officers met with the DfT to discuss our draft LTP4 and they confirmed that the plan aligned with the draft guidance.

1.5 From a transport planning perspective, there has been an increased emphasis on the need to move away from 'planning for vehicles' towards planning for 'people and places', which is referred to as a 'decide and provide' approach. LTP4 has embraced this approach by developing

a preferred vision of the future alongside a strategy to work towards the delivery of, whilst enabling the management of uncertainty about the future.

1.6 Importantly this approach provides flexibility. Whilst the preferred vision will stay constant, the strategy and accompanying policies and measures can be adjusted or adapted to manage any uncertainties and changes wider Government policy on transport that arise during the plan period. This is critical when considering, for example, the newly elected government has identified five emerging strategic priorities for transport - rail reform (and the establishment of Great British Railways, which will bring rail infrastructure improvements and the delivery of services together), improving and expanding bus services, transforming infrastructure, making transport greener, and integrating transport networks of active travel measures.

1.7 This approach will enable us to adapt the East Sussex LTP4 strategy and investment plan to take account of any policy changes and the availability of new funding streams that are brought forward over the life of the plan.

2 Supporting information

2.1 The process to develop LTP4 involves three key project stages:

- Stage 1 -Scoping (Completed – August 2022 - December 2022)
- Stage 2 - Strategy Development (Completed - January 2023 – September 2024)
- Stage 3 - Delivery (October 2024 onwards)

2.2 We are currently in the final phase of Stage 2 and propose to move to Stage 3 subject to LTP4 being adopted. Given the longevity of LTP4 (2024-2050), it will be important that it is treated as a live document. Therefore, the Strategy will continue to be reviewed, updated and monitored periodically to take account of changes in priorities and policies at a national, sub-national and local level as outlined in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7, and the availability of funding.

<u>Strategy Development (Stage 2) update</u>

2.3 Following the Stage 2 public and stakeholder consultation undertaken between late November 2023 and late February 2024, we have reviewed all of the consultation feedback received from over 1,000 engagements, developed draft responses to these comments and identified where LTP4 needs updating.

2.4 We have continued to work closely with officers and key external stakeholders on proposed updates to the plan to ensure that the LTP strategy reflects partners emerging strategies and plans (e.g. District and Borough Local Plans, the East Sussex Prosperity Strategy, etc.).

2.5 The LTP4 Member Reference Group, comprising members of the Place Scrutiny Committee, have been engaged throughout the Strategy's development, The proposed updates to the draft final LTP4 were presented to the cross-party Reference Group in late June 2024, and a summary of the final changes in early September 2024 as part of the governance process for LTP4's adoption.

<u>Updates to the LTP and supporting documents following consultation</u>

LTP4 Strategy

2.6 In response to the consultation outcomes the following changes to the draft Strategy document have been undertaken:

- relocated and strengthened the reference to the 'decide and provide' approach, as referred to in paragraph 1.5, that is set out in the strategy;
- improved references to inclusive engagement and communication, outlining the critical importance of this from the outset, at the early stages of scheme design through to scheme delivery;
- improved references relating to different non-motorised users (people walking, wheeling and cycling, equestrian users);

- strengthened references regarding the opportunities for travel behaviour change initiatives alongside the delivery of transport infrastructure, subject to the availability of funding;
- improved references to accessing healthcare;
- highlighted that the opportunities for infrastructure and service improvements, specifically for active travel and buses, will be included as part of the review of the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) and Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP);
- strengthened the references to sustainable development and links to the current review of District and Borough Council's Local Plans;
- reviewed highway maintenance and links to active travel;
- strengthened references to coastal management and flooding and links to transport infrastructure; and
- Strengthened reference to biodiversity net gain and the local nature recovery strategy.

Supporting documents

2.7 In relation to the supporting assessments, the Equalities Impact Assessment has been strengthened with evidence from local residents and protected characteristic groups to enable the use of the LTP4 EqIA by teams developing transport infrastructure measures and services. We are not proposing to make any changes to the Integrated Impact Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Habitats Impact Assessment as these will be required to be reviewed throughout the delivery of LTP4.

2.8 As outlined in paragraph 1.6 the new government has provided an early indication of their transport priorities. This is alongside other policies which transport will align to, including the development of an industrial strategy and a 10 year infrastructure plan as well as updates to national planning policy to ensure the planning system meets the needs of a modern economy. The draft LTP4 Strategy has been updated to reflect these emerging policy areas, alongside the County's Economic Prosperity Strategy considered elsewhere on the agenda and is included in Appendix 1.

LTP4 Investment Plan

2.9 To support the delivery of the LTP4 Strategy the following updates to the draft LTP4 Implementation Plan have been made:

- amended the name from 'Implementation Plan' to 'Investment Plan' to indicate that the plan is largely unfunded, but importantly to demonstrate our ambition particularly to government and other funding providers in relation to the opportunities for scheme delivery as and when funding becomes available. This also aligns with terminology used by Transport for the South East (TfSE) with the 'Strategic Investment Plan' which supports their Transport Strategy. From a public and stakeholder perspective, it will also support with managing expectations on the delivery of the plan, as it will clearly set out the opportunities for scheme delivery subject to either the County Council and/or our partners securing funding;
- highlights that the LTP4 is an aspirational strategy that will be used to secure investment as outlined above (but needs to demonstrate ambition to help secure funding);
- to manage expectations around deliverability of the plan, strengthened references to the availability of funding (especially in the current financial climate) and that the plan is subject to the ability of ESCC internal teams and external partners to work collaboratively to seek and secure external funding;
- strengthened the text focussed on scheme scale (i.e. localised measures or strategic schemes) and likely types of funding that will be required to be secured;
- strengthened explanation of the roles and responsibilities in delivering the plan, with a separate section related to this;

- included new sub section covering engagement and consultation to demonstrate the approaches that may be required to bring schemes forward that align with a stronger policy context relating to the decarbonisation of transport;
- included new sub section on the proposed governance of the LTP4 in terms of the management of the delivery and the continued collaborative engagement with officers and stakeholders who have supported the development of LTP4;
- rename the monitoring and evaluation section to 'measuring success' to potentially include specific indicators to enable the future monitoring of the plan's success. We have not included targets in the plan as the achievement of any such targets is subject to the level of funding being secured and available; and
- expanded the forward timescales of the Investment Plan to indicate short-, medium- and longer-term timescales for the study, develop and deliver stages of schemes identified in the Investment Plan.

2.10 We have also liaised with other local authorities in the south-east to benchmark, learn and understand how others have developed their LTP's Investment Plan's alongside consultants Steer and apply this learning to the development of a robust LTP4 Investment Plan for the county. This benchmarking has helped inform several of the updates reflected above. A copy of the draft final LTP4 Investment Plan is included in Appendix 2.

Document accessibility

2.11 The finalised version of the LTP4 Strategy, Investment Plan and accompanying documents will be accessible and web-based documents available through the East Sussex County Council website. This approach will be applied to all modal strategies developed, where feasible.

Further work

Carbon Assessment of LTP4

2.12 A high level carbon assessment was undertaken as part of the scenario planning exercise used to develop the draft LTP4 strategy. The carbon assessment of the 'preferred future' scenario indicated that there would be a significant contribution towards achieving net zero transport. The Department for Transport's baseline forecasts are for a 50% reduction on 2019 levels; the East Sussex LTP4 'preferred future' forecast identified a further 19% to 30% reduction on the Department for Transport's forecasts.

2.13 Since then, work has been undertaken by several sub national transport bodies, including TfSE, to develop a Carbon Assessment Tool for local authorities to use to assess the carbon impacts on specific schemes and scheme types in their LTPs and Investment Plan's. The assessment tool was made available in August 2024 for use by local authorities. Officers are now reviewing the Carbon Assessment Playbook, before confirming an approach to the carbon assessment of LTP4. Therefore, a further detailed carbon assessment of the LTP and its specific schemes and scheme types will need to be undertaken after the adoption of LTP4.

LTP4 Scheme Prioritisation Framework

2.14 A framework to assess transport schemes for inclusion in the Council's annual capital programme of local transport improvements was developed as part of LTP3. This scheme prioritisation framework is currently being reviewed and updated to reflect the themes in the LTP4 Strategy. This will be tested over the next 6 to 9 months prior to bringing into effect to inform the development of the 2026/27 capital programme of local transport improvements.

Governance – delivery of LTP4

2.15 As outlined in paragraph 2.2, given the longevity of the plan we are proposing that LTP4 is managed as a live document. Partnership working is a critical approach underpinning the plan as responsibility for the delivery of the LTP rests not just with the County Council but with multiple organisations. It is proposed that the relationships with internal officers and partners established

throughout the LTP co-development process will be maintained and enhanced in order to support the ongoing delivery of the plan.

Modal Strategies

2.16 Further work is also being undertaken to either review or develop a series of mode specific strategies supporting the LTP4 which will provide a greater granularity to the policies and schemes included in the plan:

- Rail Strategy – updated draft strategy being finalised with key stakeholders and a public/stakeholder consultation is proposed after local elections in May 2025;
- Freight Strategy – new draft being finalised with key stakeholders and a public/stakeholder consultation is proposed after local elections in May 2025;
- Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) – An update on the BSIP progress was submitted to the Department for Transport in June 2024;
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – Work on updating this strategy will start in September 2024, with a public/stakeholder consultation is anticipated in summer/autumn 2025;
- Electric Vehicle Strategy – A draft strategy was developed to support the recently successful Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding application to enable on-street charge points to be delivered in the county.

Adoption of LTP4

2.17 Subject to Cabinet's approval of the draft final LTP4, Investment Plan and supporting documents, it will be considered for adoption at Full Council on 8 October 2024. Once the LTP4 has been adopted, we will share a copy of the final plan with DfT.

2.18 Should the government subsequently issue guidance on LTPs, we will review the plan against this guidance and agree with the DfT any identified updates required to our plan.

3 Conclusion and recommendations

3.1 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.

3.2 Over the last two years, significant progress has been made in developing, consulting upon and finalising a robust transport strategy for the county which, following the outcomes of stakeholder engagement and public consultation undertaken between 27 November 2023 and 25 February 2024, for the most part has been supported. The changes made to the draft final LTP4 strategy and Investment Plan in response to the public and stakeholder consultation are set out in paragraphs 2.6 and 2.9 respectively. We have also received cross party consensus on the draft final plan through ongoing engagement with the LTP4 Member Reference Group comprising members of Place Scrutiny Committee.

3.3 In view of the approach that we have used in developing the plan and the flexibility that this provides, we have been able to demonstrate that the plan can adapt easily to align to future changes in transport policy, including the emerging policy areas being proposed by the newly elected government and potential future funding streams.

3.4 With the longevity of the plan covering a 25-year period, and that the delivery of the plan does not wholly rest with the County Council but also with key stakeholders, we have set out the need to monitor the plan more closely. This will involve continuing with the successful relationships and collaboration developed with both internal officers and external partners during the development of the Plan, and specifically to maximise the opportunities to secure funding and enable scheme delivery.

3.5 Cabinet is recommended to approve the East Sussex Local Transport Plan 4 ahead of this being presented to the Full Council meeting on 8 October 2024 and to note the further work required to support LTP4, as outlined in paragraphs 2.13 – 2.16.

RUPERT CLUBB

Director Communities Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Lisa Simmonds
Tel. No: 07519 293 184
Email: lisa.simmonds@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 – draft final LTP4 Strategy
Appendix 2 – draft final LTP4 Investment Plan

EAST SUSSEX LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 (2024 – 2050)

Version 2

September 2024

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1 Foreword

We are pleased to introduce East Sussex's fourth Local Transport Plan (LTP4) 2024 - 2050.

The LTP4 strategy embraced a co-development approach with a range of stakeholders. It is underpinned by a robust evidence base and pursues an ambitious vision for the future focussed on 'planning for people and places'. It sets out our future direction for planning and providing the transport infrastructure, services and policy framework needed to achieve net zero targets, healthy places and support for a more equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economy within our coastal towns, local centres and villages in more rural areas.

Our plan has been developed with stakeholders across the county, from elected members, council officers and local planning authorities, seniors and young people, schools, and groups representing protected characteristic groups to transport operators, business representatives, and community transport partnerships. This broad and extensive engagement has resulted in a plan that reflects the transport aspirations of our residents, communities and businesses and will foster further partnership working with key stakeholders to help bring forward future transport schemes.

This plan is coming forward during a time of great change and challenge. Nationally, the Covid-19 pandemic has altered people's travel habits, and public services are under great financial strain. We are facing a cost-of-living crisis and a climate emergency that continues to impact all of our lives.

East Sussex is home to densely populated urban centres along its coast, local centres and large rural areas. Transport enhancements in all these areas are vital for the achievement of our goals, but we recognise that people in rural and urban communities need different things from the transport network. The plan therefore contains measures which are tailored to the different local contexts.

We also have an ageing population and people with physical and hidden disabilities - our plan will ensure that transport infrastructure and services and the public realm are accessible and that community amenities are made available to enable healthy ageing.

Our answers to the challenges we face are to:

- Maintain our existing transport networks for all users.
- Improve the convenience, comfort and cost of public transport, and enhance walking, wheeling and cycling facilities to provide people with greater choice when they travel.
- Plan places so that people are brought closer to the shops, schools, and jobs that they want to get to, reducing the need to travel long distances.
- Support the use of zero and low emissions vehicles, reducing transport's carbon footprint.

To demonstrate our ambition to deliver the strategy, our investment plan sets out the type of schemes, and the funding, timescales, governance, and partnership working required.

Implementing such an ambitious plan will have its challenges, but we owe it to future generations to develop a transport system that minimises carbon impacts, is inclusive and supports a prosperous East Sussex.

Councillor Dowling - Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Rupert Clubb - Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

2 Executive Summary

Purpose of the Local Transport Plan

2.1 Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are a requirement of the Transport Act 2000. The Transport Act states that plans must set out both overall strategy and plans for their implementation.

2.2 East Sussex's third LTP (LTP3) was adopted in 2011 and covers the period from 2011 to 2026. Since LTP3 was adopted, the policy context has changed significantly on a national, sub-national and local scale, leading to the need to review the existing LTP and develop a fourth LTP (LTP4).

2.3 Our policy review provides full details of the renewed context and need for a new LTP. Key changes include an increased emphasis on climate change, the need to decarbonise transport, and how the pandemic has impacted user needs and the way in which people choose to travel. Furthermore, transport accessibility, equity and inclusiveness, and the opportunities to support healthy lifestyles have become a priority for transport investment. LTP4 needs to reflect a changing policy context and current transport investment priorities.

LTP4 Approaches

2.4 We have taken a collaborative approach in developing LTP4, which has resulted in an ambitious and deliverable plan. Delivery of the plan will require partnership working with partners and communities and, crucially, funding from various sources. Underpinning our approach has been the goal of identifying the role that transport can play in improving social, environmental, and economic outcomes across both urban and rural areas within East Sussex, and connectivity across the East Sussex boundary and to the wider south east region.

Inclusive

2.5 **Our approach is inclusive** - The principle of inclusiveness is a fundamental element of the plan. This includes planning for people with both physical and hidden disabilities alongside other groups, including people of an older age, women, and Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on LTP4 to analyse and assess how the plan might impact differently on the identified groups of people, as above, and sets out the actions we can undertake when developing and delivering transport infrastructure, services and initiatives to eliminate or minimise any impacts.

Partnership working

2.6 **Our approach has been developed in partnership** - Partnership working is a critical element of this plan. Working with stakeholders across a wide range of modes, sectors, and policy areas, has been employed in the development of the plan. Responsibility for the delivery of the LTP rests not just with the County Council but with multiple organisations. Relationships established throughout the LTP co-development process will be maintained and enhanced to support and maximise the funding secured over the life of the plan to enable the vision and objectives of the LTP4 to be delivered.

Planning for 'People and Places'

2.7 **Our approach plans for people and places** - we will focus on enabling and encouraging integrated journeys and reducing the need to travel through land-use and planning policies that support sustainable travel. Encouraging and enabling inclusive and sustainable travel modes (walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport), adopting vehicles with cleaner fuels alongside the utilisation of emerging transport technologies will help to achieve the Council's net-zero ambitions.

2.8 **Our approach is vision-led and resilient to future uncertainty** - by embracing a 'planning for people and places' approach we have worked collaboratively with our stakeholder representative groups (councillors, officers, and local stakeholder representatives) to explore how different political, economic, social, technological, and environmental trends might evolve to create different versions of the future in 2050. This was undertaken using scenario planning.

2.9 A preferred future **'Completely Connected Communities'** was developed and informed the LTP4 vision. Importantly a vision led approach provides flexibility. Whilst the vision will stay constant during the timescale of the East Sussex LTP4 the policies and schemes identified within the strategy and investment plan can be updated, adjusted or adapted to take into account any policy changes and the availability of new funding streams that are brought forward over the life of the plan. Further details are included in Appendix A.

Vision, objectives, and outcomes

2.10 Our vision is for:

An inclusive transport system that connects people and places, is decarbonised, safer, resilient, and supports our natural environment, communities, and businesses to be healthy, thrive and prosper.

2.11 To realise our vision, we have identified the following objectives and corresponding desired outcomes:

Objective 1: Deliver safer and accessible journeys

- Outcome 1.1: Create enhanced and inclusive transport networks for all users
- Outcome 1.2: Contribute to reducing the number of casualties and collisions on our transport networks
- Outcome 1.3: Contribute to improving personal safety for all journeys
- Outcome 1.4: Improve interchange between travel modes
- Outcome 1.5: Improve access to key local services by all modes

Objective 2: Support healthier lifestyles and communities

- Outcome 2.1: Increase the proportion of walking, wheeling, and cycling journeys
- Outcome 2.2: Increase active travel and public transport journeys through education, training, travel behaviour change initiatives and information

- Outcome 2.3: Re-design road space to balance the needs of different road users, including encouraging people to walk, wheel, cycle and use the bus
- Outcome 2.4: Support reduction of emissions to improve air quality
- Outcome 2.5: Mitigate noise pollution through technology and design
- Outcome 2.6: Improve access to green spaces, public rights of way and leisure and health facilities

Objective 3: Decarbonise transport and travel

- Outcome 3.1: Increase the proportion of people travelling by walking, wheeling, cycling, public and shared transport
- Outcome 3.2: Facilitate the uptake of ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles for journeys, through the delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Outcome 3.3: Work with partners to decarbonise transport and tackle climate change
- Outcome 3.4: Support clean technologies and fuels that contribute towards the decarbonisation of transport

Objective 4: Conserve and enhance our local environment

- Outcome 4.1: Conserve and enhance our local and natural environment by mitigating negative impacts of transport design and delivery
- Outcome 4.2: Enhance and create attractive connected communities and public spaces
- Outcome 4.3: Support habitat connectivity and increase in biodiversity through the delivery of enhanced and new transport infrastructure and public spaces

Objective 5: Support sustainable economic growth

- Outcome 5.1: Facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people
- Outcome 5.2: Contribute to reducing deprivation and inequality through improved accessibility for all to employment, education, and training
- Outcome 5.3: Attract and retain businesses and a skilled workforce in the county
- Outcome 5.4: Enhance sustainable access to key visitor and cultural destinations
- Outcome 5.5: As a Local Highway Authority engage with our Local Planning Authorities to deliver sustainable and well-connected housing and employment growth identified in their Local Plans

Objective 6: Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

- Outcome 6.1: Improve journey time reliability for people and businesses

- Outcome 6.2: Enable transport journeys to be resilient, flexible, and adaptable and recover quickly from emergencies and events
- Outcome 6.3: Improve the condition of highway and other transport infrastructure and assets

Chapter themes, policies, and example schemes

2.12 Our strategy is centred around four key themes. Each chapter includes policies to achieve our objectives and priority scheme types that have been referred to in the accompanying investment plan.

Theme A: Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment

2.13 Supporting decarbonisation of the transport system and the way in which transport can support, protect, and enhance our natural and built environment.

2.14 Policies relating to this chapter include:

- Policy A1: Reducing emissions
- Policy A2: Future zero-emission vehicles and infrastructure
- Policy A3: Resilience and adaptation
- Policy A4: Biodiversity and natural capital
- Policy A5: Energy supply

2.15 Most schemes included in the plan seek to support the decarbonisation of transport, therefore a map of schemes has not been included in this chapter.

Theme B: Safer, healthier, and more active travel

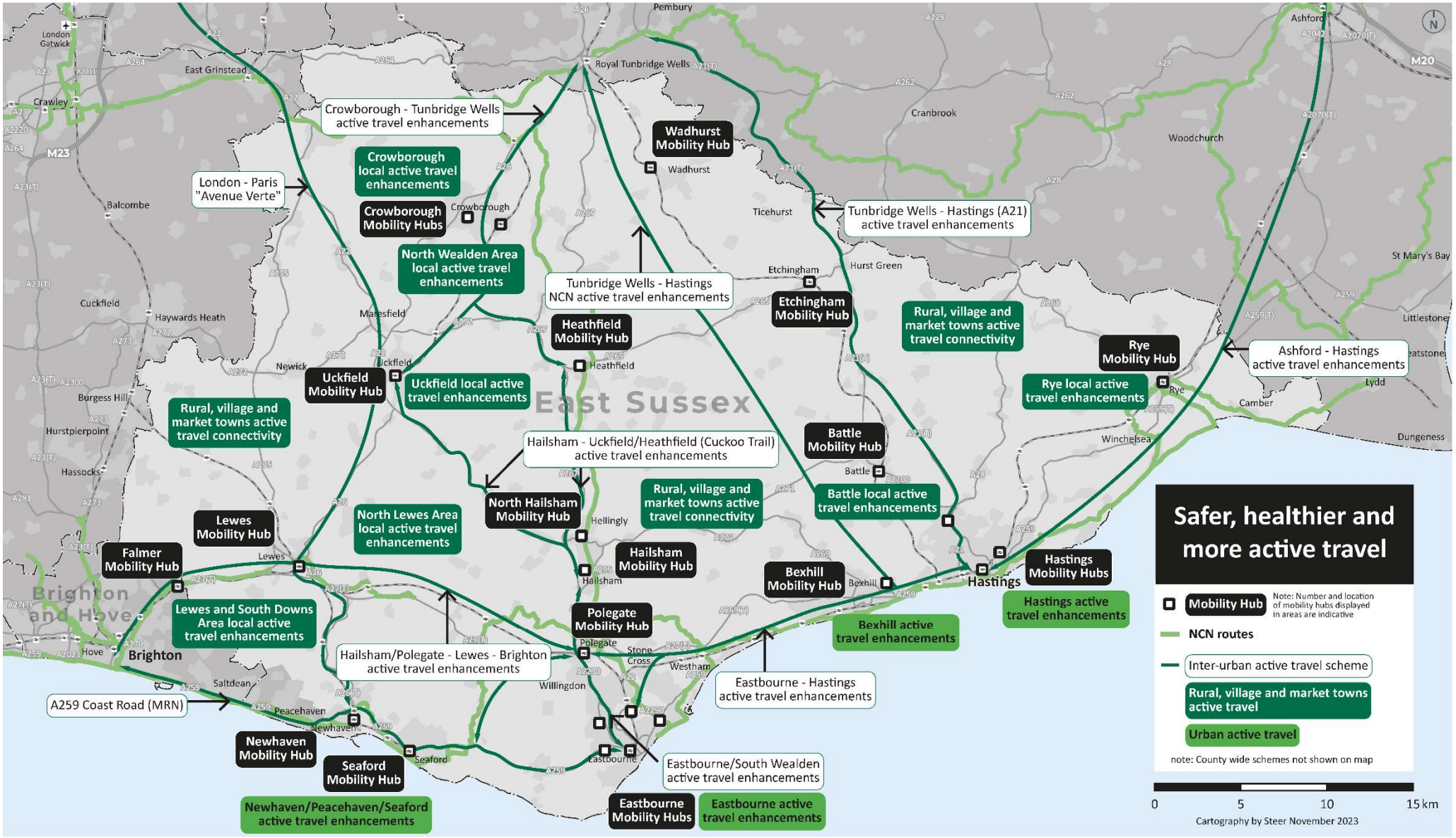
2.16 The capacity for transport investment to improve public health and individual wellbeing in our urban towns and local centres and villages in more rural areas. Schemes include active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling), improved connectivity, placemaking, public space enhancements, behaviour change programmes and mobility hubs.

Policies relating to this chapter include:

- Policy B1: Healthy lifestyles
- Policy B2: Active travel
- Policy B3: Road safety
- Policy B4: Placemaking
- Policy B5: Air quality
- Policy B6: Improved access to green and blue infrastructure
- Policy B7: Rights of Way

2.17 Example schemes from our LTP4 Investment Plan which supports the LTP and the delivery of Theme B, subject to funding being secured by East Sussex County Council and other partners, are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1: LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme B "Safer, healthier and more active travel"



Theme C: Integrated and accessible transport for all

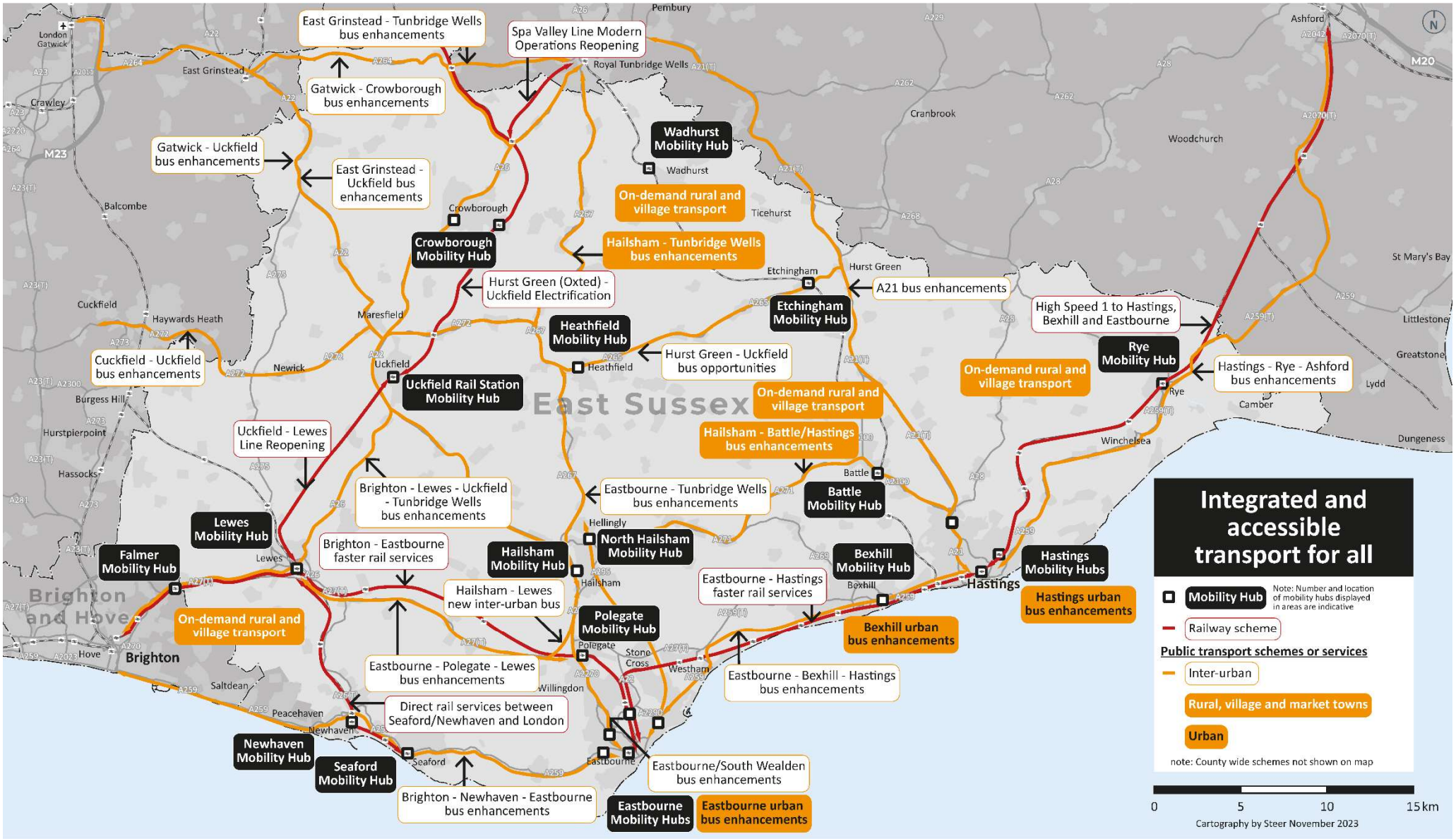
2.18 Bringing as many people as possible within ready access of a high quality, frequent and reliable public transport provision. We propose a suite of urban, inter-urban and rural bus service enhancements, as well as rail enhancements.

2.19 Policies relating to this chapter include:

- Policy C1: Inclusive access
- Policy C2: Bus and coach
- Policy C3: Rail
- Policy C4: Integrating transport
- Policy C5: Demand responsive (including taxi, private hire, and digital demand responsive travel) and community transport
- Policy C6: Public transport infrastructure

2.20 Example schemes from our LTP4 Investment Plan which support the delivery of LTP and Theme C, subject to funding being secured by East Sussex County Council and other partners, are presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2: LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme C "Integrated and accessible transport for all "



Theme D: Keeping East Sussex Connected

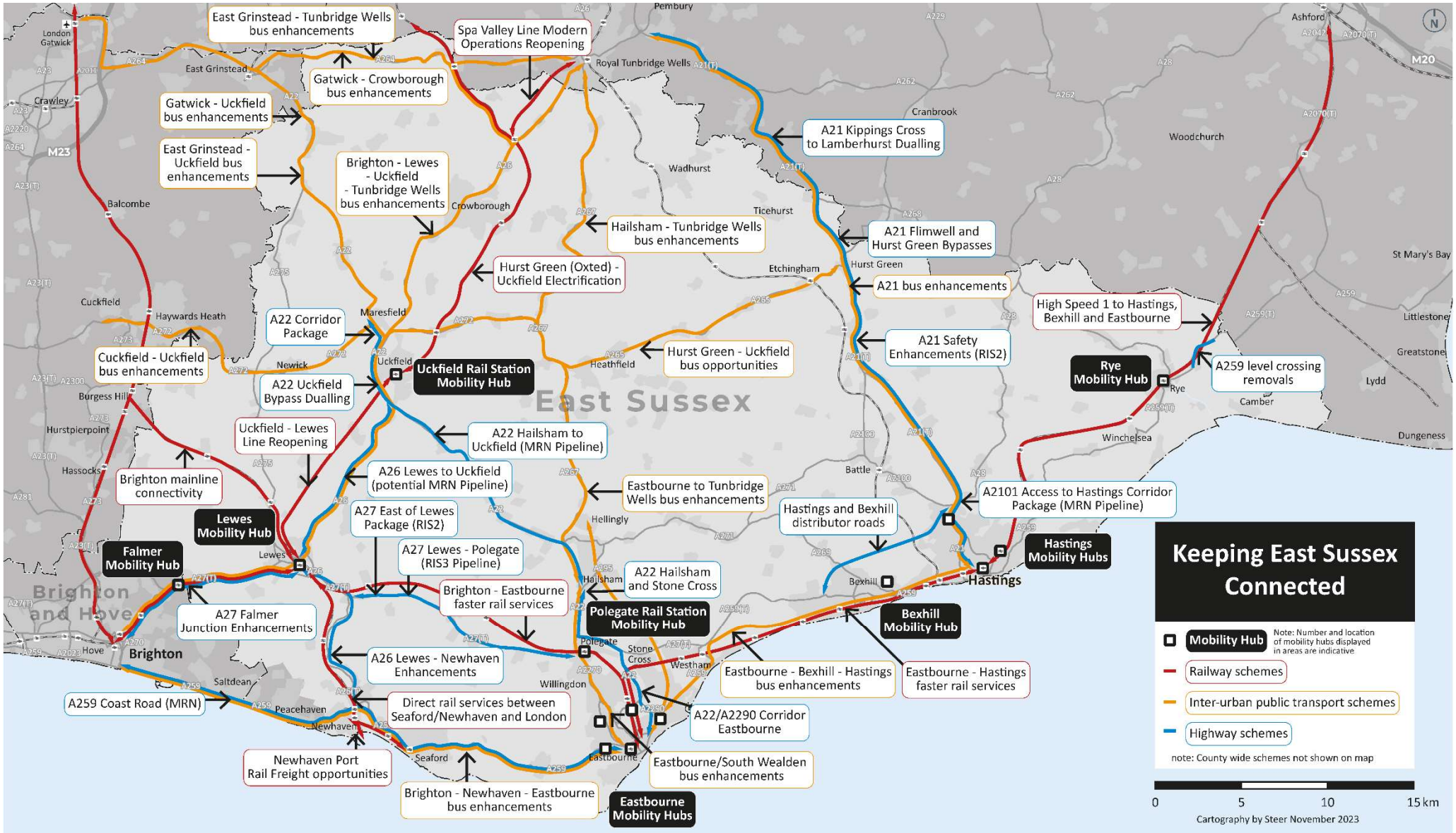
2.21 Supporting people and businesses in getting where they need to go, quickly and reliably. Specifically, longer distance highway, railway and bus schemes are of importance as well as freight.

2.22 Policies relating to this chapter include:

- Policy D1: Strategic connectivity
- Policy D2: Freight and international gateways
- Policy D3: The needs of business and the visitor economy
- Policy D4: Supporting sustainable development and development control
- Policy D5: Parking
- Policy D6: Highways maintenance and asset management

2.23 Example schemes from our LTP4 Investment Plan which support the delivery of LTP and Theme D, subject to funding being secured by the Council and other partners, are presented in Figure 3.

Figure 3: LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme D "Keeping East Sussex connected"



LTP4 Investment Plan

2.24 The delivery of our LTP strategy is supported by an ambitious Investment Plan. This sets out that we will require a combination of national regulatory and policy activity and funding supported by local policies and investment priorities that combine to achieve our ambitions and vision.

2.25 Partnership and collaborative working across multiple organisations responsible for delivering the different aspects of the plan will be critical. Together this aims to produce a step-change in transport provision, subject to funding being secured by East Sussex County Council and our partners. Investment priorities often are multi-modal and integrated across transport as well as other key policy areas, including digital, health and land-use planning.

2.26 With this being an aspirational strategy, setting out our ambitions for transport up to 2050, it will be used by the County Council and their partners to secure future funding. Therefore, as the plan is largely unfunded it does not include targets. The delivery of the LTP4 will be monitored using a set of indicators related to the LTP4 objectives, alongside the evaluation of specific schemes.

LTP4 Carbon Assessment

2.27 As part of the development of LTP4 an assessment of carbon impacts of interventions within the plan has been conducted via the following:

- **Scenario planning -** a quantitative assessment using Transport for the South East's South East Economy and Land Use Model (SEELUM) that estimated that a Local Transport Plan aligned with the 'preferred scenario' could reduce tailpipe emissions from between 19 and 30 percent beyond reductions in emissions under a 'Business as Usual' scenario in 2050
- **Multi-criteria assessment** - a qualitative assessment for sifting of policies and schemes for inclusion in the Local Transport Plan was conducted. Within this assessment all policies and schemes were assessed against the following criteria
    - Activity: impacts on vehicle kilometres
    - Efficiency: impacts on fuel consumption or zero-emission vehicles
    - Embedded carbon: impacts of construction / materials

2.28 A Carbon Assessment playbook was launched at the end of August 2024 jointly by several Sub National Transport Bodies, including Transport for the South East. The County Council will utilise the carbon assessment playbook during the early part of the Plan's delivery phase to acquire a better understanding of local emissions by scheme investment type and scheme level identified in the LTP4 Investment Plan. The County Council will publish the outcomes of these assessments on the LTP4 webpages, when they are available.

Modal Strategies

2.29 The LTP4 will be supported by a series of short modal strategies, with these either being updated to reflect LTP4 or being newly developed strategies. These are outlined below.

Strategies being updated

- Local Cycle & Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Rail Strategy and action plan

New strategy development

- Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy
- Freight Strategy

These will include identified schemes which are specific to each mode of travel, but also demonstrate the opportunities for integration between modes.

3 Introduction

East Sussex at a glance

3.1 An evidence base has been developed which provides the analytical foundation of LTP4 and ensures that the direction promoted in this strategy addresses the objective needs of the county. This section sets out summary findings of this evidence base.

Geographic context

The county of East Sussex is situated in the south east of England. It covers an area of 1,792 km^2 (692 square miles) and includes the administrative boroughs and districts of Hastings, Eastbourne, Lewes, Rother, and Wealden. It is classified as "Urban with significant Rural" in the six-fold classification. The districts and boroughs are:

- Eastbourne = "Urban with City and Town".
- Hastings = "Urban with City and Town".
- Lewes = "Urban with significant rural".
- Rother = "Largely rural".
- Wealden = "Mainly rural".

3.2 With the county classified as 'urban with significant rural' it highlights the requirement to consider the differing needs of the communities and businesses in East Sussex within urban and rural areas of the County, concerning transport connectivity within settlements but also to local centres and towns in East Sussex and cross boundary destinations.

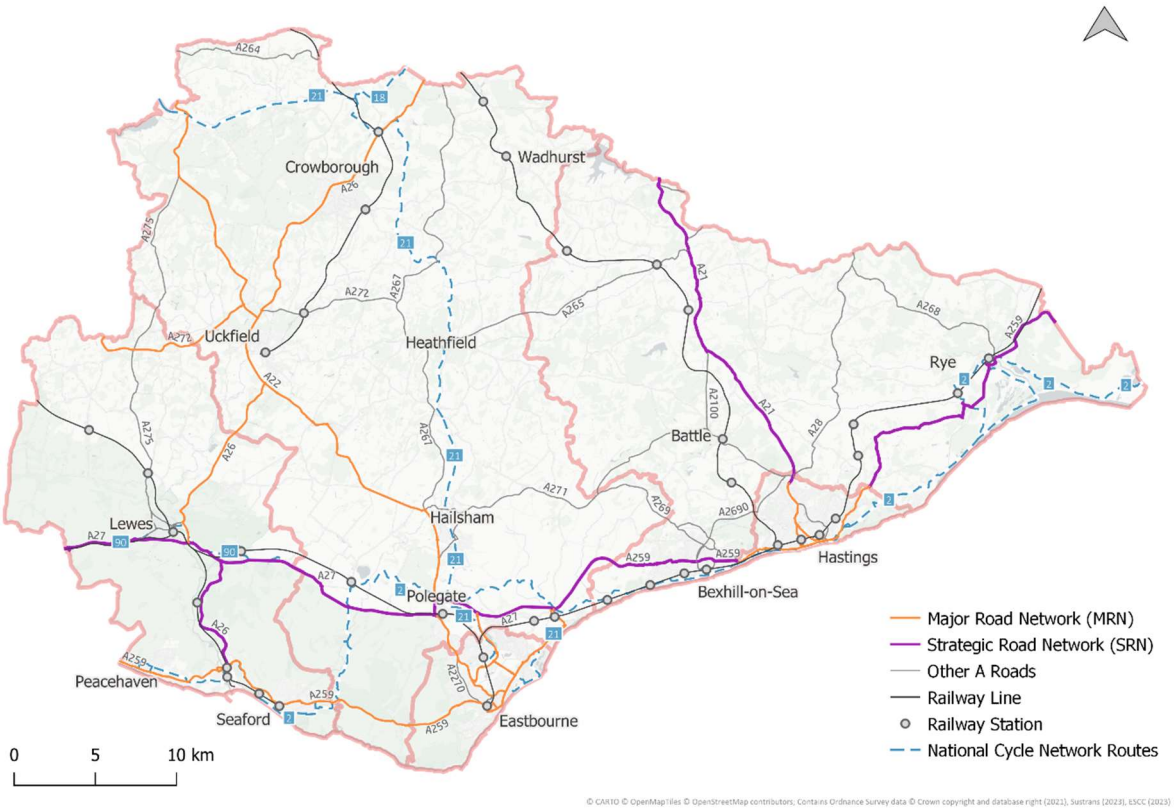
3.3 It is home to the eastern area of the South Downs National Park (south west of the county) and a large proportion of the High Weald National Landscape (across the north and east of the County).

3.4 East Sussex is located south of London, with Kent to the north and east, West Sussex and the city/unitary authority of Brighton & Hove to the west, and Surrey to the north west.

3.5 The map in

3.6 Figure 3.1 includes the County's major transport corridors including national cycle network routes, railway lines and stations, strategic road network, major road network and other A roads.

Figure 3.1: Main settlements and transport connections[i]



Population and demographics

3.7 Based on the Office for National Statistics (ONS) 2021 Census, the population in East Sussex is approximately 546,000, an increase of over 19,000 people (3.6%) since 2011, with population increases in each of its boroughs and districts.[ii]

3.8 The population is set to increase to 628,000 by 2035 (an increase of 15%[iii]). All borough and districts are also expected to continue to experience population growth:

- Wealden is expected to see the greatest increase in population at 22% with an additional 43,600 people
- Eastbourne is expected to see the smallest increase at 4% with an additional 4,100 people
- Hastings is expected to have 5,000 more residents (+5.4%), Lewes 11,200 (+11%) and Rother 12,100 (+12.5%)

3.9 This population growth increases the need for housing, accessible transport, access to jobs, healthcare, education and learning provision in addition to the creation of places where people are proud to live, work and visit.

3.10 Analysing this population growth by age bands shows that East Sussex has an ageing population.

- The population of those aged 0 to 17 is expected to increase by only 1% between 2020 and 2035
- The number of people aged between 18 and 64 is forecast to increase by 4%
- Those aged over 65 are projected to increase from around 146,100 in 2020 to 202,100 in 2035, an increase of 38%
- Wealden would see the largest increase in the number of people aged over 65, increasing from approximately 42,680 in 2020 to 62,600 in 2035, (47% increase)
- Wealden is also expected to see the largest increase in those aged 0 to 17 with a 13.5% increase expected by 2035, and those aged 18 to 64 with a 13.8% increase
- Those aged 0-17 in Eastbourne are expected to decrease by 11% from approximately 19,900 to just over 17,800 by 2035[iv]

3.11 The implications of an ageing population include ensuring there are viable alternative transport opportunities for those who may be unable to drive, to access key services and amenities that can be accessed by a range of transport (including non-car) modes.

Health and wellbeing

3.12 In East Sussex, 65% of adults are classified as being overweight or obese. **Lewes & Newhaven Air Quality Management Areas.**

3.13 In 2005, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared in Lewes town centre for nitrogen dioxide. In 2014, an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) was declared for the Newhaven gyratory (A259) around the town centre for nitrogen dioxide. Lewes-Eastbourne Council work in partnership with key partners, including East Sussex County Council to identify and deliver measures to improve air quality within the AQMA's.

3.14 Increasing physical activity through encouraging greater amounts of active travel (in place of vehicle travel) can support improving air quality and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

Employment

3.15 The number of East Sussex residents who are in employment (within or outside the county) in 2020 has increased by 8,000 since 2010 (from 176,000 employees to 184,000)[v].

3.16 However, employment opportunities are not evenly distributed across the county. Eastbourne and Lewes districts have higher numbers of jobs per working age resident suggesting there is a higher proportion of jobs available in these districts, whilst in Wealden, Rother, and Hastings we see a lower proportion of jobs for every working age resident.

3.17 There are 24,335 businesses in East Sussex (3,870 in Eastbourne; 3,140 in Hastings; 4,530 in Lewes; 4,130 in Rother; and 8,665 in Wealden)[1]. Delivery of transport improvements is an important part of increasing the attractiveness of East Sussex, as a choice of business

[1] 2021, East Sussex in Figures

location and enhancing strategic connectivity between our districts and boroughs will better connect people to these employment opportunities.

Travel to work journeys

3.18 Commuters in East Sussex largely travelled in private cars and vans (60%) prior to the pandemic[vi]. The next highest mode of travel was on foot at 12%. This data also shows us that a higher proportion of people worked from home in East Sussex (8%) before the pandemic, compared to England and Wales as a whole (5.4%). The higher rate of working from home after the pandemic provides an opportunity to pursue interventions to build well connected communities where residents can access goods, services, and opportunities without making long journeys.

Active travel (walking, wheeling and cycling)

3.19 35% of adults in East Sussex walked continuously for at least 10 minutes[vii] at least five times per week. This is above the national average of 31%. However, the proportion of adults cycling at least once per month has decreased from a peak of 15% in 2017 to 10% in 2021. This is below the national average of 13%. People are influenced by several factors in choosing if to cycle or walk for all or part of regular journeys, and this includes the availability and quality of infrastructure. The East Sussex Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out proposals to enhance existing or deliver new active travel infrastructure, extend networks and ensuring integration with other modes. This will contribute to supporting an increase in cycling and walking.

Bus passenger journeys

3.20 Bus passenger numbers in East Sussex decreased from 19 million in 2009/10 to 15 million in 2019/20 reflecting the declining national trend[viii]. Reasons for this national decline include the reduced bus funding from Local Transport Authorities[ix], reduced services and increasing fares. During the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions, bus passenger journeys in East Sussex fell a further 9 million to 6 million. Our Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) secured £41.4m in Government funding in July 2022 with the aim of improving passenger numbers to exceed pre-pandemic levels. This money has delivered bus service enhancements across the county and will also introduce bus priority measures on popular and congested bus routes. The plan will support the proposals of the BSIP and provide an opportunity to further deliver significant improvements for the bus network, both services and infrastructure. This will include bus routes parallel to which there is a rail route, in order to offer users choices at different costs and allow them to make their own 'cost vs. time' decisions.

Railway station use

3.21 East Sussex is home to 38 railway stations, most of which are in the county's main urban areas. In 2019/20, entries and exits at stations in the county reached a peak of 18.4 million[x], declining to 5.6 million in 2020/21 due to Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. In 2021/22, it demonstrated a considerable recovery to 13.6 million entries and exits.

3.22 During 2019/20 Eastbourne was the busiest station in the county with over 3.6 million entries and exits and 61,000 interchanges (changes between services). Lewes and Hastings were the next busiest stations with 2.6 million entries (and 508,000 interchanges) and

2.4m million entries and exits (65,000 interchanges) respectively. Bexhill and Polegate are the only other stations in the county to have over 1 million entries and exits with 1.5 million and 1 million respectively.

3.23 Passenger numbers are showing a positive recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic and there is opportunity to work with the train operating companies and Network Rail, which are likely to merge to become Great British Railways in the near future, to grow rail patronage, particularly on inter-urban trips.

Strategic highway journeys

3.24 Traffic volumes in East Sussex are highest along its major roads, some of which are managed by East Sussex (for example, A26 Lewes to Tunbridge Wells and A259 Peacehaven to Pevensey) and others by National Highways (namely the A21, A26 (Newhaven to Lewes), A27 and A259 Pevensey to the county boundary with Kent via Bexhill, Hastings, and Rye).

3.25 The high traffic volumes on these roads reflect their role in providing strategic connectivity within the county, to London and international gateways such as Gatwick Airport and the Port of Newhaven[2], and to other parts of the south east region. Demand (high traffic flows) along these corridors is similar during the morning and evening peak periods, however these roads face significant delays during peak periods due to high demand. There are opportunities to improve these routes to provide faster journeys for bus, safer routes for active travel users, to address safety concerns and improve journeys for all users.

Stakeholder and public engagement

Stage 1 - Scoping

3.26 As part of the development of the East Sussex LTP4 evidence base, engagement was held with local, regional and national stakeholders as part of stage 1 - Scoping. The purpose of early engagement was to understand:

- Stakeholders' priorities for travel and transport
- The key issues people encounter in relation to travel and transport
- What opportunities there are for improving travel across East Sussex

3.27 In order to understand these three key elements, the following targeted engagement was undertaken:

- Targeted engagement with East Sussex County Council members and officers and key local stakeholders (e.g. districts and boroughs, Transport for the South East, Network Rail, National Highways, South Downs National Park Authority, operators, active travel groups)
- Targeted young person's engagement with primary and secondary schools and further education colleges

[2] Other maritime transport has not been explicitly considered in the LTP due to a lack of ports and infrastructure elsewhere in East Sussex.

- Engagement with local senior groups and disability groups
- A public consultation via the Online Engagement Platform

Summary of priorities

3.28 The priorities identified during the early engagement have been summarised as follows:

Key stakeholders' engagement (East Sussex County Council members, East Sussex County Council officers, local stakeholders)

3.29 There were a range of issues and opportunities raised across three broad themes of:

- Area for intervention (e.g. EV charging, road safety)
- Supplementary documents (e.g. Investment Plan)
- Ways to develop the LTP (e.g. future proof)

Young persons' engagement

3.30 The key insights from the young persons' engagement highlighted that:

- Most students travel to school via sustainable modes and when walking, wheeling, scooting and cycling they dislike busy roads dominated by cars
- Students acknowledge that cars cause pollution but are modes they like to use
- Primary aged students prefer to travel on foot or by wheeling, scooting or cycling, more so than travelling by bus

Public online engagement

3.31 The two most important priorities highlighted by a short survey on priorities were:

- Safety, health and air quality
- Accessibility, equity and social inclusion

3.32 The key issues and opportunities identified by respondents on a map were:

- Issues: just over a half of all general comments related to public transport, and for specific comments congestion followed by a lack of transport infrastructure were the most common issues identified
- Opportunities: 60% related to public transport and a third (33%) concerned active travel infrastructure

4 Approach, vision, objectives, and strategy

Approach

Inclusive

4.1 Our **approach is inclusive** - The principle of inclusiveness is a fundamental element of the plan. This includes planning for people with both physical and hidden disabilities alongside other groups, including people of an older age, women, and Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been undertaken on LTP4 to analyse and assess how the plan might impact differently on the identified groups of people, as above, and sets out the actions we can undertake when developing and delivering transport infrastructure, services and initiatives to eliminate or minimise any impacts.

Partnership working

4.2 **Our approach has been developed in partnership** - Partnership working is a critical element of this plan. Working with stakeholders across a wide range of modes, sectors, and policy areas, has been employed in the development of the plan. Responsibility for the delivery of the LTP rests not just with the County Council but with multiple organisations. Relationships established throughout the LTP co-development process will be maintained and enhanced to support and maximise the securing of funding to enable the vision and objectives of the LTP4 to be delivered.

Planning for 'People and Places'

4.3 **Our approach plans for people and places** - we will focus on enabling and encouraging integrated journeys and reducing the need to travel through land-use and planning policies that support sustainable travel. Encouraging and enabling inclusive and sustainable travel modes (walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport), adopting vehicles with cleaner fuels alongside the utilisation of emerging transport technologies will help to achieve the Council's net-zero ambitions.

4.4 Our approach is vision-led and resilient to future uncertainty - by embracing a 'planning for people and places' approach we have worked collaboratively with our stakeholder representative groups (councillors, officers, and local stakeholder representatives) to explore how different political, economic, social, technological, and environmental trends might evolve to create different versions of the future in 2050. This was undertaken using scenario planning.

4.5 A preferred future 'Completely Connected Communities' was developed and informed the LTP4 vision. Importantly a vision led approach provides flexibility. Whilst the vision will stay constant during the timescale of the East Sussex LTP4 the policies and schemes identified within the strategy and investment plan can be updated, adjusted or adapted to take into account any policy changes and the availability of new funding streams that are brought forward over the life of the plan. Further details are included in Appendix A.

4.6 Our overarching LTP4 vision, objectives and outcomes have been informed by the above approach and the following three inputs:

1. **Evidence base** - a review of the policy landscape and analysis of data which demonstrates the current and future transport, social, environmental context. It also identifies key issues and opportunities that transport can support in addressing.

2. **Stakeholder and public engagement** - through a scoping stage (involving workshops with stakeholder representatives, infrastructure managers and operators, protected characteristic groups, and an online public consultation engagement period), we have obtained views on how transport can be enhanced, and how that can support the achievement of wider social, environmental, and economic goals. More detail on the stakeholder and public engagement process is set out in the previous section in Consultation Report Stages 1 & 2.

3. **Scenario planning** - a number of alternative future scenarios were developed to consider what East Sussex could be like in the future, with input from stakeholder representatives. Building on this work a preferred scenario, referred to as 'Completely Connected Communities' was developed which sets out how we want East Sussex to be by 2050 and which informed the LTP4 vision. This preferred scenario identifies the land use, telecommunications and transport planning characteristics, and the types of interventions that will be required to realise that preferred scenario. This can be found at Appendix A.

4.7 Informed by our extensive evidence base, outputs of public engagement, and co-design with our stakeholder representatives as a product of our scenario planning approach, in line with the relevant transport appraisal and other government guidance, we have developed a vision and a series of objectives and outcomes. These are set out below:

Our Vision

4.8 Our vision for transport in East Sussex is:

An inclusive transport system that connects people and places; that is decarbonised, safer, resilient, and supports our natural environment, communities, and businesses to be healthy, thrive and prosper.

Objectives

4.9 Six equally weighted objectives have been identified. Our plan has been developed to enable flexibility and adaptability towards different community needs, and emphasis on different objectives may change accordingly, including in response to any updates to national policies. The objectives are:

- **Deliver safer and accessible journeys**
- **Support healthier lifestyles and communities**
- **Decarbonise transport**
- **Conserve and enhance our local environment**
- **Support sustainable economic growth**

- **Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks**

Outcomes

4.10 For each objective several outcomes have been identified. These outcomes demonstrate what we are seeking to achieve through the delivery of each objective, with the inevitability that some of the outcomes support multiple objectives. .

Objective 1: Deliver safer and accessible journeys

- Outcome 1.1: Create enhanced and inclusive transport networks for all users
- Outcome 1.2: Contribute to reducing the number of casualties and collisions on our transport networks
- Outcome 1.3: Contribute to improving personal safety for all journeys
- Outcome 1.4: Improve interchange between travel modes
- Outcome 1.5: Improve access to key local services by all modes

Objective 2: Support healthier lifestyles and communities

- Outcome 2.1: Increase the proportion of walking, wheeling, and cycling journeys
- Outcome 2.2: Increase active travel and public transport journeys through education, training, travel behaviour change initiatives and information
- Outcome 2.3: Redesign road space to balance the needs of different road users, including encouraging people to walk, wheel, cycle and use the bus
- Outcome 2.4: Support reduction of emissions to improve air quality
- Outcome 2.5: Mitigate noise pollution through technology and design
- Outcome 2.6: Improve access to green spaces, public rights of way and leisure and health facilities

Objective 3: Decarbonise transport and travel

- Outcome 3.1: Increase the proportion of people travelling by walking, wheeling, cycling, public and shared transport
- Outcome 3.2: Facilitate the uptake of ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles for journeys, through the delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Outcome 3.3: Work with partners to decarbonise transport and tackle climate change
- Outcome 3.4: Support clean technologies and fuels that contributes towards the decarbonisation of transport

Objective 4: Conserve and enhance our local environment

- Outcome 4.1: Conserve and enhance our local and natural environment by mitigating negative impacts of transport design and delivery

- Outcome 4.2: Enhance and create attractive connected communities and public spaces
- Outcome 4.3: Support habitat connectivity and increase in biodiversity through the delivery of enhanced and new transport infrastructure and public spaces

Objective 5: Support sustainable economic growth

- Outcome 5.1: Facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people
- Outcome 5.2: Contribute to reducing deprivation and inequality through improved accessibility for all to employment, education, and training
- Outcome 5.3: Attract and retain businesses and a skilled workforce in the county
- Outcome 5.4: Enhance sustainable access to key visitor and cultural destinations
- Outcome 5.5: As a Local Highway Authority engage with our Local Planning Authorities to deliver sustainable and well-connected housing and employment growth identified in their Local Plans

Objective 6: Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

- Outcome 6.1: Improve journey time reliability for people and businesses
- Outcome 6.2: Enable transport journeys to be resilient, flexible, and adaptable and recover quickly from emergencies and events
- Outcome 6.3: Improve the condition of highway and other transport infrastructure and assets

4.11 The figure and table below show the relationship between outcomes and objectives and shows the multiple relationships that exist.

Figure 4.1: The relationship between outcomes and objectives showing the multiple relationships that exist.

Core | Support

Outcome	1. Safer and Accessible	2. Healthier	3. Decarbonise	4. Environment	5. Growth	6. Resilience
1.1 Inclusive Transport Networks	Core	Support			Support	Support
1.2 Casualty & collision reduction	Core	Support				Support
1.3 Personal safety	Core	Support				Support
1.4 Improved interchange	Core	Support				Support
1.5 Access to services	Core	Support			Support	Support
2.1 walking, wheeling and cycling journeys	Support	Core	Support			Support
2.2 increased active and public transport journeys	Support	Core	Support			
2.3 redesign road space	Support	Core	Support	Support	Support	Support
2.4 reduce emissions		Core	Support	Support		
2.5 mitigate noise pollution		Core	Support	Support		
2.6 improved access	Support	Core		Support		
3.1 walking, wheeling and cycling journeys	Support	Support	Core		Support	
3.2 Ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles			Core	Support		
3.3 decarbonise transport			Core	Support		
3.4 clean technologies and fuels			Core	Support		
4.1 Conserve and enhance local environment				Core		
4.2 connected communities and public spaces	Support	Support		Core	Support	
4.3 habitat connectivity and biodiversity			Support	Core		
5.1 efficient movement of goods and people	Support		Support	Support	Core	Support
5.2 reduce deprivation and inequality		Support			Core	
5.3 retain businesses and workforces					Core	
5.4 access to visitor and cultural destinations					Core	
5.5 Local Plan development	Support	Support	Support	Support	Core	Support
6.1 Journey time reliability					Support	Core
6.2 resilient, flexible and adaptable journeys					Support	Core
6.3 asset management				Support	Support	Core

Table 1: The relationship between outcomes and objectives showing the multiple relationships that exist.

Outcome	Main objective	Outcome supports objectives
1.1 Inclusive transport networks	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
1.2 Casualty & collision reduction	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
1.3 Personal safety	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
1.4 Improved interchange	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
1.5 Access to services	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
2.1 Walking, wheeling and cycling journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

Outcome	Main objective	Outcome supports objectives
2.2 Increased active and public transport journeys	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
2.3 Redesign road space	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
2.4 Reduce emissions	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment
2.5 Mitigate noise pollution	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment
2.6 Improved access	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
3.1 Walking, wheeling and cycling journeys	3. Decarbonise transport and travel	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

Outcome	Main objective	Outcome supports objectives
3.2 Ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles	3. Decarbonise transport and travel	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment
3.3 Decarbonise transport	3. Decarbonise transport and travel	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5
3.4 Clean technologies and fuels	3. Decarbonise transport and travel	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment
4.1 Conserve and enhance local environment	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 3. Decarbonise transport and travel
4.2 Connected communities and public spaces	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 5. Support sustainable economic growth 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
4.3 Habitat connectivity and biodiversity	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment	3. Decarbonise transport and travel
5.1 Efficient movement of goods and people	5. Support sustainable economic growth	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
5.2 Reduce deprivation and inequality	5. Support sustainable economic growth	2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities
5.3 Retain businesses and workforces	5. Support sustainable economic growth	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys
5.4 Access to visitor and cultural destinations	5. Support sustainable economic growth	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

Outcome	Main objective	Outcome supports objectives
5.5 Local Plan development	5. Support sustainable economic growth	1. Deliver safer and accessible journeys 2. Support healthier lifestyles and communities 3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks
6.1 Journey time reliability	6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks	3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth
6.2 Resilient, flexible and adaptable journeys	6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks	3. Decarbonise transport and travel 4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth
6.3 Asset management	6. Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks	4. Conserve and enhance our natural environment 5. Support sustainable economic growth

Overarching strategy

4.12 The following strategy principles are reflective of our approach, vision and objectives. These have been applied throughout the development of the strategy and will be integrated as part of transport scheme development and delivery. These are in alignment with the concept of Triple Access Planning. This concept encompasses consideration of spatial proximity in relation to land use, transport systems, and digital connectivity.

Embedding sustainable development

4.13 The LTP vision is embedded in the three components of sustainable development - economic, social, and environmental. This plan seeks a balance between these three components to deliver sustainable development.

4.14 These three components should be viewed in the context of East Sussex's characteristics, identified within the evidence base:

- We want our economy to be productive, which often requires efficient transport links, sustainable, and inclusive, placing economic opportunity at the heart of community renewal and prosperity. As reflected in the East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy, business is central to future economic prosperity so by helping businesses to be more productive we can help ensure economic gains are captured locally.
- There are areas of deprivation and health inequalities within the county. These tend to be persistent over time, reflecting a combination of limited access to opportunities for labour market progression and a range of complex factors linked with the housing market, access to services and health conditions. Therefore, any future schemes should also consider the circumstances of all in East Sussex, with specific attention given to aiding the most disadvantaged to access better jobs, reduce social isolation, increase physical activity and support health and wellbeing. Wider social outcomes, including quality of life outcomes, for residents should be considered in addition to economic gains.
- East Sussex is rich in environmental and historic assets, including the South Downs National Park, High Weald National Landscape, the coastline, Seven Sisters Country Park, Lewes Castle, and Rye's historic centre. Thus, any transport intervention should equally protect and enhance these assets and enhance visitor access.

4.15 Our LTP objectives are mutually supportive. Improving the environment with a particular focus on air quality will simultaneously stimulate better health outcomes for local people. However, these objectives may also conflict, such as infrastructure implementation degrading the environment. We must therefore mitigate transport's adverse impacts, make best use of existing infrastructure, and prioritise interventions and initiatives that will deliver a positive impact.

4.16 An inclusive package of interventions has been developed. These recognise the strong links between spatial, transport and digital infrastructure planning and delivery, and allows for accessibility of our residents to goods, services and opportunities to be enhanced.

Creating healthy places

4.17 East Sussex County Council and their partners will work with local planning authorities to realise a spatial strategy that supports healthy places, prioritising town centre and mixed-use developments, supporting the creation of more vibrant urban centres, and encouraging sustainable communities, which reduces the need for residents to travel long distances to access goods, services, and opportunities.

4.18 This approach is not only relevant to our largest towns, but also our local centres and connectivity between rural communities, where better access to services and opportunities can be provided through focusing development in existing areas where residents will be able to locally access vital goods and services. This will enable the development of healthy and thriving communities supporting greater quality of life.

Transport connectivity for all

4.19 In order to realise transport connectivity for all, it is necessary for local communities to be at the heart of the planning and design of the delivery of the LTP's interventions and policies. All schemes will be subject to engagement as part of each stage of their development, so that we can consider both the geographic context (i.e. urban/rural or the differing needs of those with protected characteristics.)

4.20 Our strategy recognises that the private car is currently the most used transport mode for making journeys in and around East Sussex. Spaces and lifestyles have evolved around and been shaped by car use, leading to car dominated environments. It is important to consider how we can improve people's mobility in our spaces, re-designing road space to balance the needs of all users (particularly prioritising those walking, wheeling, cycling, and using public transport) whilst maintaining and improving connectivity.

4.21 Our plan involves packages of interventions which provide all users with multiple choices for travel. Improving the provision and integration of rail, bus and/or active travel options (often referred to as 'greener transport') will ensure that there are attractive and reliable choices as alternatives to private car use, encouraging uptake of sustainable transport modes to facilitate day-to-day activity. Replacing car trips with those taken by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport will reduce congestion, improve air quality, improve safety, and support the creation of more attractive, healthy, and thriving communities.

4.22 Many of our core policies aim to encourage and enable walking, wheeling and cycling and/or public transport, including investment in infrastructure to support convenient, comfortable, and safer journeys, combined with demand management measures and travel behaviour change initiatives. Major projects will provide new fast, frequent, and competitive journey opportunities, such as:

- Urban active travel networks in our largest towns (for example, physically protect cycle lanes, where this is feasible)
- Further bus service improvements between Eastbourne and Tunbridge Wells via Polegate, Hailsham and Heathfield including introduction of bus priority enhancing rural and inter-urban connectivity

- Extending St Pancras – Ashford high speed rail services to Rye, Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne

The importance of digital connectivity

4.23 Improved digital connectivity enables remote access to goods, services, and opportunities, reducing the need to travel, relieving congestion on our roads and routes. This will allow repurposing and redefining of our public spaces providing support to our local high streets and helping them to thrive through public realm enhancements like those being undertaken in Eastbourne Town Centre.

4.24 Great success has been achieved over the past decade in delivering greatly enhanced connectivity. This has been achieved because of developments in the market and investment by telecoms operators, and through the rollout of the County Council's e-Sussex Superfast Broadband programme which ensured that the great majority of communities were able to secure superfast connectivity even though it was not viable for this to be delivered by the market alone.

4.25 As technology has advanced, East Sussex has seen rapid improvements in connectivity: just 4.3% of premises had gigabit-capable (1000 megabits per second (Mbps) or one gigabit per second (Gbps)) connections in October 2019, compared with 60.8% of premises now (2023).

Implementing a sustainable movement and place framework

4.26 To help guide the development of new transport schemes we have developed a user hierarchy that outlines how consideration will be given to the needs of different transport modes. This plan prioritises vulnerable users and 'active modes' over other users and forms of transport, as we believe that their benefits align closely with our objectives.

4.27 An explanation of the relationship between 'place' and 'movement' is provided in Figure 4.2,with place function relating to a location's community role and movement focused on how it facilitates travel by different types of users.

4.28 Considering place and movement in this way reflects the reality of the transport network and the differing needs it must serve. Different transport modes have varying strengths and weaknesses, meaning that certain modes are more appropriate or desirable for certain situations. We believe that considering place and movement function as part of our user hierarchy is the best way to deliver a transport network that provides good connectivity, whilst preserving the localities which it serves.

Figure 4.2: User hierarchy based on movement and place function

	Lower movement function	Higher movement function
Higher place function	**Urban centres** High societal value and often seen as the destination of journeys. Examples include Hastings Seafront and Uckfield Town Centre. User hierarchy: A. Walking B. Cycling and other non-motorised modes C. Public transport D. Goods vehicles E. Motor vehicles (zero/low emissions) F. Motor vehicles (higher emissions)	**Thoroughfares** Spaces or corridors of importance for strategic transport but located in a high place function. Examples include the A259 through Bexhill. User hierarchy: A. Walking B. Public transport C. Cycling D. Motor vehicles (zero/low emissions) E. Goods vehicles F. Motor vehicles (higher emissions)
Lower place function	**Everyday destinations** Locations where people reside or work, and often the origin of journeys. Most places are in this quadrant. Examples include rural villages, market towns and urban suburbs of our larger and coastal towns. User hierarchy: A. Walking B. Cycling and other non-motorised modes C. Public transport D. Goods vehicles E. Motor vehicles (zero/low emissions) F. Motor vehicles (higher emissions)	**Key corridors** Rarely considered the origin or end point of journeys but are fundamental to regional connectivity. Examples include the A21 and A27. User hierarchy: A. Public transport B. Goods vehicles C. Motor vehicles (zero/low emissions) D. Cycling and other non-motorised modes E. Walking (where permitted) F. Motor vehicles (higher emissions)

4.29 In spaces with a high movement and low place function, priority will be focused on the efficient movement of people and goods. Along strategic corridors, such as the A21 and the A27, the private car, commercial and heavy goods vehicles will be given higher priority. New or improved road infrastructure may be required in particular circumstances to ensure that strategic movements move efficiently and all road users have reliable choices for journeys. Sections of our strategic and major road network are also vital for the provision of frequent and reliable public transport services, with priority lanes, junctions and other measures for buses possibly being needed on specific corridors.

4.30 Consideration will also be given to ensuring walking and cycling infrastructure and routes can be accommodated as an integral part of the strategic and major road networks. Measures may include parallel segregated routes and safe junction crossings.

4.31 Whereas, in spaces with low movement but high place function, priority will be given to modes that complement that specific setting or location. For example, within town centres, people walking, wheeling and cycling and public transport will be given priority as these modes provide good access to these spaces.

4.32 There will be cases where a degree of judgement will be required to identify the most suitable user hierarchy for a given location relative to its movement and place functions and to provide access for specific user groups (for example, the provision of disabled parking). In these cases, a combination of local engagement and location-specific constraints will inform the definition of the user-hierarchy.

Recognising the different geography types of East Sussex

4.33 The best transport networks enable a mix of modes to operate effectively aligned to the geographical requirements of an area. In applying principles of the movement and place framework to the East Sussex context has led to the development of four general place and movement types with synergies to the Transport for the South East's Transport Strategy geographical approach that will guide different transport planning approaches:

Geography Type 1 – Regional long distance

4.34 This place and movement type accounts for journeys between our largest towns using higher speed main road and rail routes such as the A27, A26, A21 & A22 and the East Coastway/Marshlink, Uckfield line and Hastings-Tonbridge rail line. Our approach to strategic long-distance connectivity is focused on improvements to rail such as connecting HS1 to Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne, as well as selected highways interventions where they address safety concerns by separating strategic trips from local trips (for example, the dualling of the Uckfield Bypass and A27 Lewes to Polegate). Our inter-urban bus network is also important for the movement of people between our towns and rural communities and areas as well as cross local authority boundary trips.

Geography Type 2 - Moving east west along the coast

4.35 This place and movement type accounts for trips connecting our coastal towns – Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford, Eastbourne, Bexhill, and Hastings. Our plan is for rail and bus travel to work in tandem to deliver improved connectivity between these towns. Interventions to improve journey times on the East Coastway Line and

delivery of Sussex Coast bus related transit schemes will support this ambition and strategic interchange opportunities in each town between public and active travel networks.

Geography Type 3 - Urban coastal areas

4.36 This place and movement type accounts for journeys contained within our largest conurbations along the coast such as Hastings & Bexhill, Eastbourne, and Telscombe Cliffs Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford. We propose to focus on delivering comprehensive active travel and rapid transit networks connecting suburbs to local centres and deploying demand management measures such as parking restraint and traffic management schemes to promote journeys by sustainable modes.

Geography Type 4 - Rural and local centres

4.37 This place and movement type accounts for trips both within and between local centres (for example, Hailsham, Uckfield, Crowborough and Lewes) and within and between the villages, hamlets and farmsteads in the rural parts of the county. Our plan for these areas is the delivery of intra-urban and rural bus service enhancements such as the improvements between Hailsham and Tunbridge Wells, and Lewes, Hailsham and Eastbourne; extension of the existing Digital Demand Responsive Transit (DDRT) provision; and development of interchange opportunities in village and town centres. This is alongside measures to improve and enable safer active travel for short local journeys (for example, connections to Public Rights of Way and quiet routes in rural parts of the county).

4.38 Our Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) will consider how these geography types can be applied to treat network development as area-based, acknowledging that there are different requirements for improvements in urban coastal areas than in rural and local centres.

Travel behaviour change

4.39 Provision of high quality walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport options only goes so far to support sustainable travel patterns. Programmes and initiatives to provide information to potential users and raise awareness of new and existing sustainable transport options, challenge travel behaviours and empower people to make a change where knowledge or skills are key barriers.

4.40 Travel behaviour change initiatives need to be diverse and comprehensive according to communities needs, and link with infrastructure delivery, to tackle the various causes of single occupancy car journeys, particularly for short local journeys. for They may aim to effect transport mode shift or the re-timing, re-routing or reducing of existing trips, for example by encouraging increased car sharing and/or working from home. They may also aim to promote new transport infrastructure/services, for example with marketing campaigns, integrated ticketing and/or cheaper fares.

4.41 Effective engagement and communication with local and regional stakeholders is a prerequisite for travel behaviour change initiatives to be successful. Working with businesses, education providers, developers and other focal points in our communities will

be essential to influence journeys and support sustainable travel planning, minimising single occupancy travel to sites and maximising the use of sustainable modes. Additional support, such as cycle training for adults, may also be provided where necessary. Delivery of these measures will be subject to the Council, its partners and communities securing funding.

Aligning objectives and policies

4.42 The following chapters address our key challenges and set out the ambitions in more detail with each section including, as appropriate:

- A map of all the place-based investment priorities, and county wide policies, interventions and initiatives identified in the LTP4 Investment Plan which, subject to funding secured by the County Council and/or other partners, will support that ambition
- Commentary setting out how these mapped interventions or schemes as well as wider policy interventions will support delivery of the objectives
- Detail on each of the component policy areas

4.43 There are synergies between a number of the draft component policy areas in this plan to demonstrate the opportunities for integration between modes. This is together with links to existing specific East Sussex County Council Highways and Transport policies, which are not superseded by these policies. It is important to note that some existing East Sussex County Council Highways and Transport policies may be subject to review on adoption of this strategy.

4.44 The alignment of theme chapters to objectives and to policy areas is provided in Table 2 below. This sets out the structure of the next four chapters.

Table 2: LTP Chapter, Objective and Policy Summary

Chapter	Objective	Policy
Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment	Decarbonise transport	Policy A1: Reducing emissions
		Policy A2: Future and zero emission vehicles and infrastructure
	Conserve and enhance our local environment	Policy A3: Resilience and Adaptation
		Policy A4: Biodiversity and natural capital
		Policy A5: Energy supply
Safer, healthier, and more active travel	Support healthier lifestyles and communities	Policy B1: Healthy Lifestyles
		Policy B2: Active Travel
		Policy B3: Road Safety
		Policy B4: Placemaking
		Policy B5: Air Quality
		Policy B6: Improved access to green and blue infrastructure
		Policy B7: Rights of way
Integrated and accessible transport for all	Deliver safer and accessible journeys	Policy C1: Inclusive access
		Policy C2: Bus and coach
		Policy C3: Rail
		Policy C4: Integrating transport
		Policy C5: Demand responsive (taxi, private hire and Digital Demand Responsive Transport) and community transport
		Policy C6: Public transport infrastructure
Keeping East Sussex connected	Support sustainable economic growth	Policy D1: Strategic connectivity
		Policy D2: Freight and international gateways
		Policy D3: The needs of businesses and the visitor economy
	Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks	Policy D4: Supporting sustainable development and transport development control
		Policy D5: Parking
		Policy D6: Highways maintenance and asset management

5 Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment

5.1 In 2019, East Sussex declared a climate emergency[xi] in response to the need to address human-induced climate change and to achieve the goals of the 2015 Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty ratified by the United Kingdom in 2016 with the overarching goal to hold "the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels" and pursue efforts "to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels."[xii] This is aligned with the United Kingdom's legal requirement under the Climate Act to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG)emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.[xiii]

5.2 Transport is the largest sector for emitting GHG emissions, producing 24% of the UK's total emissions in 2020 (406 $MtCO_2e$)[xiv], with increases in the intensity and frequency of severe weather events already being felt across our region. The serious nature of such changes means our transport network needs to be more resilient and for East Sussex to play its part to prevent additional GHG emissions being released to avoid the even more severe impacts of climate change forecast by scientific experts.

5.3 The East Sussex Climate Emergency Road Map for 2022-25 sets out a county-wide target of reducing emissions by 13% each year.[xv] It also acknowledges the Council's influence on transport emissions in its role as a local transport and highways authority.

5.4 Only by addressing human-induced climate change will all other policies proposed in this Local Transport Plan be achievable. This initial chapter therefore focuses on schemes and policies that will support decarbonisation of the transport system and the way in which transport can support, protect, and enhance our natural and built environment.

5.5 Also important in addressing climate change is mitigating its impacts. Mitigation of the impacts of climate is covered through a number of the policies within this chapter, including A3: Resilience and adaptation, as well as in subsequent chapters including B6: Improved access to green and blue infrastructure.

Mitigating climate change through decarbonising transport

5.6 Transport decarbonisation is the process of reducing, and ultimately removing, greenhouse gas emissions produced as a by-product of transport infrastructure and operations. To achieve this objective, our approach is moving towards supporting a carbon free transport network during the lifetime of the plan. Achieving this ambition will help tackle climate change and limit the impacts on the planet. Our plan has been designed to achieve our own local targets and contribute towards wider, national decarbonisation targets. As part of this objective, we aim to:

- Increase the proportion of people travelling by walking, wheeling, cycling, public or shared transport
- Facilitate the uptake of ultra-low and zero-emission vehicles for journeys, through the delivery of supporting infrastructure
- Work with partners to decarbonise transport and tackle climate change

- Support clean technologies and fuels that contribute towards the decarbonisation of transport

5.7 The plan for decarbonising transport in East Sussex seeks to achieve a reduction in transport carbon emissions in three ways by:

- Promoting public transport and active travel to encourage modal shift from car based journeys
- Reducing the carbon impact of existing trips through supporting the roll out of electric vehicles and decarbonising public transport operations
- Reducing the need to travel by bringing people closer to goods, services and opportunities

Delivering an efficient transport network

5.8 We need to improve transport system efficiency. Through integrated land-use planning and transport demand management the need to travel and the length of the remaining necessary trips may be reduced.

5.9 Reducing the need to travel is not about reducing accessibility. It's about bringing people closer to the goods, services, and opportunities that they want and need without the requirement to travel longer distances. This scenario can be achieved through encouraging development to be focused on town centres and to be mixed use, and by encouraging enhanced digital connectivity to enable people to access what they need and want online where the goods or services are not available locally or can be accessed without the need to travel (for example, online medical consultations).

5.10 We have developed a package of interventions to support the creation of healthy sustainable communities. In both rural and urban areas, appropriate demand management measures will be used to enhance quality of place and increase safety, for example, through the delivery of a School Streets programme, area-based traffic management schemes, which re-design road space to support liveable towns and neighbourhoods and parking restrictions (particularly in town centres). To optimise the benefits of demand management measures we will work with local planning authorities to integrate land use, spatial and transport planning. Where possible we will support and facilitate investment by others, such as Government's "Project Gigabit" initiative, in future proofing our broadband and mobile digital infrastructure, ensuring that the whole county benefits from constantly evolving opportunities gained through digital transformation.

Promoting public transport and active travel

5.11 We aim to decarbonise transport through moving journeys from transport modes with greater carbon emissions such as cars towards walking, wheeling and cycling and using public transport.

5.12 These measures will help to encourage a move to public transport through the development and delivery of bus service enhancements across the county ensuring that more people are well served by reliable, frequent, and high-quality bus services. On

higher frequency routes, such as coastal routes (for example, Eastbourne - Seaford - Newhaven – Peacehaven - Brighton or Bexhill - Hastings) as well as our intra-urban bus routes (for example, parts of Eastbourne's Loop), highway congestion can present a barrier to faster journey times. Our proposals include the delivery of bus priority infrastructure, such as bus lanes and bus gates, to ensure the bus is an attractive mode for all types of trips.

5.13 Active travel infrastructure will be delivered, encouraging walking, wheeling and cycling for short and medium length trips. New public transport and active modes will be integrated through a network of interchange opportunities at the intersections of different parts of the transport network (walking, cycling, bus, rail, and road) allowing for easy connections and seamless, sustainable trips thereby increasing the competitiveness of public transport and active travel compared to the car.

Reducing the carbon impact of existing trips

5.14 Reducing the carbon emissions of transport modes and related vehicle technology is needed to decarbonise transport. Achieving this ambition will require partnership working as many of the key initiatives and opportunities to support this aim are not in the direct control of East Sussex County Council.

5.15 Supporting decarbonisation of transport involves working in partnership with transport operators to deliver the rollout of zero-emission vehicles in their fleets and across the county. Working together will ensure that the enhanced connectivity provided by our programme of bus service improvements does not generate increased carbon emissions. The East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan proposes to "*work closely to take advantage of any funding opportunities that may arise to introduce battery electric buses or hydrogen fuel cell buses*". Moving to a zero-emission fleet also has positive air quality impacts and will support delivery on air quality management objectives across the county and improve the health of individuals.

5.16 The rail network in East Sussex, while mostly electrified, includes two notable sections which are still serviced by diesel operations: the Oxted Line (Hurst Green (Surrey) to Uckfield) and the Marshlink line (Ore to Ashford). Electrifying both stretches of track will reduce the carbon impact of rail operations in East Sussex.

5.17 For trips where public transport and active travel are not an option, this plan seeks to accelerate the transition to a decarbonised fleet. This transition will be encouraged through delivery of on-street electric vehicle charging infrastructure by the County Council, and off-street provision including a network of charging hubs across the county via other partners as well as exploring opportunities to capitalise on newer fuels. This ambition extends to freight and buses,with hydrogen refuelling stations enabling even the largest highway freight vehicles to be decarbonised and buses in other local authority areas already being fuelled by hydrogen (i.e. Metrobus – Crawley). The Hydrogen Sussex Strategy[xvi] provides a route map for optimising the potential of hydrogen in supporting a decarbonised transport network and East Sussex will work with partners and stakeholders to identify locations where hydrogen production and distribution could take place.

Conserve and enhance our local environment

5.18 Our approach is to conserve and enhance our natural environment to promote sustainable active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling and horse riding) and enable access to green spaces for residents and visitors. We aim to:

- Conserve and enhance our local environment by mitigating negative impacts of transport design and delivery
- Enhance and create attractive and connected communities and public spaces
- Support habitat connectivity and increase biodiversity through the delivery of enhanced and new transport infrastructure and public spaces

Assets and infrastructure

5.19 East Sussex is home to many leisure and tourism assets and cultural heritage sites. Preserving these sites is essential to retaining the character and cultural heritage of the area, as well as supporting the visitor economy through encouraging efficient transport to those tourism sites. This plan will, in the first instance, make best use of adapting existing infrastructure, balancing the needs of different users and delivering improvements which have minimal impact on the local environment. Where infrastructure with more considerable environmental impact is required, we would ensure that assets are protected from the impacts of that construction.

Habitats and biodiversity

5.20 During construction and implementation of transport schemes, we will seek to minimize and mitigate the disruption caused to the environment and habitats, as well as support the connectivity of ecologically robust habitat trails and pathways. Infrastructure schemes will be rigorously assessed to safeguard habitats and increase biodiversity, examples may include through street greening and tree planting. As part of this plan, we have included safeguarding habitats and biodiversity net gain as key requirements in scheme assessment and the LTP has been subject to an independent Habitats Regulations Assessment.

5.21 Large infrastructure construction projects can limit the protection and preservation of key natural areas in our natural environment. To combat this, our networks will be designed with conservation and enhancement of the environment as a key consideration, accounting for new species along road verges, marine habitats along the coast and the natural landscape.

Delivering these objectives

We will deliver these objectives through the following policy areas:

- Policy A1: Reducing emissions
- Policy A2: Zero emissions vehicles
- Policy A3: Resilience and adaptation
- Policy A4: Biodiversity and natural capital

- Policy A5: Energy supply

Policy A1: Reducing emissions

Context

5.22 Under the Climate Change Act (2008), the UK Government has set a target for the UK to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. In East Sussex, transport accounts for 35% of CO_2 emissions – decarbonising transport is therefore a vital part of achieving net zero.

Issues/opportunities

5.23 Two thirds of journeys in East Sussex are under 5 miles, however more than 80 per cent of direct tailpipe emissions from highways traffic is generated from journeys over 12 miles in length. Many of these longer distance trips occur where a more sustainable option is not available or suitable. A journey between Uckfield and Etchingham, for example, takes approximately two times longer by public transport (one hour and requiring a change of bus) than by car (thirty minutes).

5.24 Interventions to enhance capacity, resilience, reliability, and connectivity provided by public transport will increase its ability to capture a greater share of longer distance trips reducing the number of private car trips taken and limiting carbon emissions from transport.

5.25 Delivery of infrastructure and networks that enables journeys under 5 miles by walking, wheeling, cycling or public transport in both urban and rural areas will support decarbonisation of these trips.

Component policy measures

5.26 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Reducing the need to travel by bringing goods, services and other opportunities closer to people through spatial planning and digital connectivity.
- Enabling and encouraging mode shift and choice from the private car to more sustainable transport modes such as walking, wheeling, cycling (including use of e-bikes) and public transport for short journeys or part of longer journeys.
- Supporting efforts to reduce carbon emissions from the public transport network through adoption of alternative fuels.
- Supporting people to transition to ultra-low and zero emission vehicles through the provision of suitable refuelling and charging infrastructure.

Policy A2: Future and zero emission vehicles and infrastructure

Context

5.27 Transitioning to zero emission vehicles is essential to reducing emissions. Department for Transport's *Decarbonising transport: a better, greener Britain* (2021) sets out a commitment to decarbonisation through mode shift and a transition to zero emission vehicles. It recognises the opportunity and challenges that this transition presents and makes several commitments including support for the delivery of zero emission buses, working towards phase out dates for the sale of all new non-zero emission HGVs as well as petrol and diesel phase out dates for new vehicles.

Issues/opportunities

5.28 The arrival of micromobility modes such as e-bikes has increased the range of trips that people can reasonably make through active travel modes as well as making them accessible to wider range of users. Roll out of e-bike and other future mobility type schemes can provide a zero -emission alternative to the private car for short and medium trips.

5.29 In January 2022 there were 136 (off-road) public charge electric vehicle points in East Sussex, an increase of 76.6% over a two-year period. This increase is supporting a take-up of and use of electric vehicles. Increasing the availability of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, particularly on road in residential areas which have limited off-street parking and more rural areas where there is relatively low availability, can better support residents to transition to electric vehicles.

5.30 Adoption of electric cars in East Sussex is relatively low. In March 2024, 2.2% of the cars and light goods vehicles registered in East Sussex were either battery electric or plug-in hybrid models, lower than the UK (3.9%) and South-East (5.2%) averages. Charging point availability is also relatively low. 373 charging points were available in July 2024, significantly less than in Kent (955), Surrey (894) and West Sussex (736).

5.31 East Sussex is part of the Hydrogen Sussex group which seeks to raise awareness and develop opportunities for clean hydrogen as a key energy source in the transition to net zero carbon emissions. They have recently published their strategy which presents a blueprint for harnessing the potential of hydrogen to power zero emissions vehicles.

5.32 We acknowledge that the cost of zero-emission vehicles is relatively high and therefore difficult for operators and local authorities to meet alone. We will work with public transport operators to support their transition to zero-emission buses. Support could include submissions for funding to secure infrastructure or zero-emission vehicles, through to collaborative working to re-charge electric vehicles at the start, beginning or mid route.

Component policy measures

5.33 Whilst more detail is provided in our Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, in summary the policy measures focus on:

- Supporting the delivery of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the County to for all users; communities, businesses and visitors.
- Utilising new zero emissions transport fuels and technologies as they become available.
- Working with bus operators to rollout zero emissions vehicles through Enhanced Partnerships (EP's), a statutory partnership between a local authority and their local bus operators, setting out how they will work together to deliver the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) outcomes in their local geography.
- Supporting the continued development of active travel networks and transport interchange facilities (mobility hubs) to encourage the use e-bikes and micromobility modes.

Policy A3: Resilience and adaptation

Context

5.34 The impacts of climate change being experienced in the UK include hotter, drier summers with more intense storms and rainfall, potentially increasing the risk of flash flooding. This is alongside milder and wetter winters. Both bring more extreme weather events; and contribute to global rising sea levels – all of which are significant for East Sussex. While exact impacts are difficult to forecast, East Sussex will be susceptible to both water shortages and flooding in the future.

Issues/opportunities

5.35 Highways, pavements, and other active travel routes are subject to a number of risks such as:

- Subsidence, heave and landslips due to coastal erosion, drought and lower water tables
- Surface damage due to extreme heat in the summer, erosion from intense localised storms in the summer, freeze/thaw in the winter and flooding
- Extreme weather flooding of active travel infrastructure and highways.
- Potential future sea level rises and coastal flooding affecting existing road infrastructure.

5.36 Railway infrastructure may suffer from:

- Buckling of railway tracks due to excessive heat
- Impacts from adverse weather (e.g. flooding or landslips) as well as from potential future sea level rises and coastal flooding

5.37 A Climate Change Risk and Vulnerability Assessment (CRVA) for East Sussex was undertaken in 2024. This assessed climate risks facing East Sussex under three scenarios: present day, 2 degrees (temperature rise) and 4 degrees. The individual risks assessed under these scenarios were drawn from the UK national climate risk assessment, ensuring risk alignment between national and local level.

5.38 The report outlined the risks facing the county, with the key risks for transport being:

- **Surface water flooding** is prevalent across East Sussex, with hotspots in Eastbourne, Hastings and Bexhill. Heavy rainfall is projected to become 20-25% more intense under a 2°C warming level, or 40-45% under a 4°C warming level. This is expected to have an adverse impact on the likelihood of surface water flooding, albeit with some uncertainty around how heavy rainfall changes the likelihood of a flood event.
- **River flooding** affects road and rail infrastructure in flood plains. Risk in East Sussex is associated with the county's five main rivers and their tributaries: Adur, Ouse, Medway, Rother and Cuckmere. The likelihood of river flooding is expected to increase, with peak river flows projected to increase by 27-37% (2080s, approximately 2°C scenario), or up to 62-107% (approximately 4°C scenario).
- **High temperatures** can cause road melt, buckling of railway lines, etc. Taking the example of road melt, the likelihood of temperatures exceeding that linked with an increased risk of road melt is projected to increase from the baseline of 12 per year (1981-2010) to 29 days per year under 2°C and 65 days under 4°C scenarios.
- **Cascading failures** are a domino effect of increasing failures due to positive feedback mechanisms. For a county council, one example could be highway flooding causing a succession of failures in services such as domiciliary care, school transport, etc. Transport is a frequent starting point for cascading failures, and the risk of serious incidents increase in line with climate risks.

5.39 In building a transport network capable of serving all, it will be important to respond to these risks. This will include designing transport infrastructure that is resilient to natural disasters (for example flood-proofing) and adapting existing infrastructure to tackle the negative impacts of climate change for people (for example, public realm improvements and development of healthy streets which include consideration of measures such as provision of urban greening (vegetation and trees - providing shade, benches and materials which are reflective of heat etc.) and securing appropriate levels of funding to support these changes.

5.40 To mitigate the impacts of flooding in the County, specifically Eastbourne and South Wealden a new six-year project called the Blue Heart was established in 2021, This will provide an understanding of the local water catchment and how it works. It will communicate the risk of flooding to the communities of Eastbourne and south Wealden.

5.41 The project will mitigate the impact of flooding caused by climate change through technology to manage and monitor water levels in Eastbourne and south Wealden. This will involve the development of a smart integrated water management system that gives warning of heavy rainfall, will calculate the most the optimum response and issue flood warnings and alerts where necessary. This technology will trigger watercourses, ponds and lakes to release water so they are ready to contain incoming storm water. Homes and businesses will benefit from better flood mitigation.

Component policy measures

5.42 In summary, policy measures will focus on:

- Ensuring the design of transport infrastructure is resilient to the physical impacts of climate change (flooding, heat etc.)
- Improvements to existing transport infrastructure to consider the impacts of climate change through surface water flooding, river flooding, high temperatures and cascade failures on people and infrastructure
- Assessing the transport network and places at risk especially along the coast where there are key corridors of movement (i.e. A259) vulnerable to coastal erosion as well as potential sea level rises and coastal flooding to identify, with partners, potential mitigation options.
- Incorporating climate change projections into road and active travel infrastructure design and maintenance plans as well as other key strategic transport infrastructure projects
- Utilising new technologies to improve climate resilience as they become proven and available
- Identifying opportunities to pilot emerging technologies to support more effective resilience and adaptation

Policy A4: Biodiversity and natural capital

Context

5.43 Biodiversity net gain is a strategy to ensure that when land is developed there is contribution to the recovery of nature. It is a way of making sure the habitat for wildlife is left in a better state than it was before development. These requirements apply from November 2023 for residential and commercial developments and will be extended to 'Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects' – which include large road and railway schemes – by no later than 2025. Wildlife habitats are present across East Sussex including woodlands, marshes, heathlands, meadows, and coastal areas as well as the county's network of rivers and ponds. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the main law followed for the protection of wildlife in Great Britain, with particular emphasis on conserving biodiversity, natural habitats, flora, and fauna[xvii].

Issues/opportunities

5.44 Transport has an important role to play in the enhancement of our environment and managing negative impacts on biodiversity in addition to people's experience of our environment:

- Balance the management of vegetation in terms of providing value as natural capital (i.e. verges), alongside reducing any impacts on safety for all users (i.e. removal of overgrown vegetation impacting sightlines).
- Prioritising transport interventions which minimise land take and increases in traffic such as active travel routes can enhance biodiversity, landscape, geodiversity and the quality of water and soil.

5.45 Such interventions can also enhance people's access to and experience of the natural environment increasing public health and personal well-being. More detail is provided in Policy B6: Improving access to green and blue infrastructure.

5.46 There is a need to ensure consideration of the emerging East Sussex and Brighton & Hove Local Nature Recovery Strategy, which maps, plans and prioritises action for nature locally, especially for improving, expanding and better connecting areas for wildlife on the ground. This will also include identifying opportunities to reduce light pollution from our transport network, supporting policies in relation to 'Dark Skies', specifically in relation the High Weald National Landscape and the South Downs National Park in East Sussex.

Component policy measures

5.47 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Implementing the correct and timely use of Strategic Environmental Assessments and Habitat Regulation Assessments for all transport schemes where required
- Achieving material biodiversity net gain in the delivery of transport schemes
- Implementing integrated planning and travel demand management approaches
- Enforcing developers' adherence to central government requirements for biodiversity net gain
- Supporting delivery of flood risk management strategies

Policy A5: Energy supply

Context

5.48 Over the coming decades, road vehicles will move from petrol and diesel fuelled engines to zero emission technologies. Scenarios for the Government's 2023 'Decarbonising Transport'[3] strategy suggest that between 30 to 47% of car miles will be driven by zero emission vehicles by 2030, and almost the entire national fleet of cars, vans and HGVs will be zero emission by 2050. For cars and light vehicles, battery electric systems are expected to dominate. Public EV infrastructure for such vehicles will be provided by a mix of partners – East Sussex County Council for on street provision in residential areas with no off-street parking as well as town centre locations, alongside our District & Borough Councils and other public/private organisations (e.g. Network Rail/Great British Railways, NHS Trusts, supermarkets, private car park operators) for off street parking. However, for heavy vehicles there is currently no single clear technological pathway – battery electric, hydrogen, and e-fuels (which are synthetic liquid fuels made by reacting hydrogen with captured CO_2), may all have roles to play.

5.49 Facilitating this change will require new infrastructure to supply transport energy. By 2050, distribution networks for liquid fossil fuels will be largely redundant, and new systems established that use electricity, hydrogen and/or e-fuels as the energy carrier.

[3] Transport decarbonisation plan - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

During the transition period, ensuring secure, accessible supplies of both legacy diesel/ petrol and zero emission energy will be crucial.

5.50 Rail and maritime transport are also expected to decarbonise. In East Sussex, much of the rail network is already electrified. However, there are notable exceptions in the coastal line east of Hastings (Ore) to Ashford and the Uckfield branch line. The Government's stated ambition[4] is to remove all diesel-only trains from the network by 2040, using a combination of rail electrification and battery/hydrogen trains. For shipping, there are currently no clear decarbonisation pathways, with hydrogen and e-fuels two potential options.

Issues/opportunities

5.51 By 2050, it's anticipated that nearly every road vehicle will be zero emission. Current expectations are that the vast majority will be battery electric. This will require a huge increase in the number of charging points - public, business, and domestic – to ensure all vehicles have opportunities to charge.

5.52 Where households have off-street parking, most of their charging is likely to take place at home. In East Sussex, 62% of households have off-street parking[5] (or the possibility of off-street parking). This is considerably higher than most urban authorities, for example Brighton & Hove has 46%.

5.53 There is a great deal of uncertainty around technology pathways for heavy road vehicles. Hydrogen and e-fuels are possible solutions; however, battery technology is advancing rapidly and may become viable for heavy vehicles, including freight and buses. Similar uncertainty affects zero emissions shipping, with no clear technology pathways at the time of writing. This uncertainty makes planning difficult and risks funding being wasted on technological dead ends.

5.54 The electricity distribution network is an increasingly essential means of providing transport energy. Pressures on the network are mounting, and current issues include high costs for upgrading electricity supplies to support (for example) installation of commercial vehicle charging and rapid chargers for light vehicles. Significant upgrades to the system will be needed to support the electrification of transport, and (outside of transport) to electrify heat supply and allow distributed renewable generation to be connected to the grid.

5.55 As electric vehicles become dominant, the costs of supplying and distributing petrol and diesel will be split between fewer and fewer users. This could lead to increasing cost and lower availability of petrol and diesel, or even a total collapse as the distribution business becomes uneconomic. This may negatively affect residents and businesses who are unable to switch to electric vehicles.

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[4] Great British Railways (publishing.service.gov.uk)

[5] Source- RAC Foundation Cars parked 23 hours a day (racfoundation.org)

Component policy measures

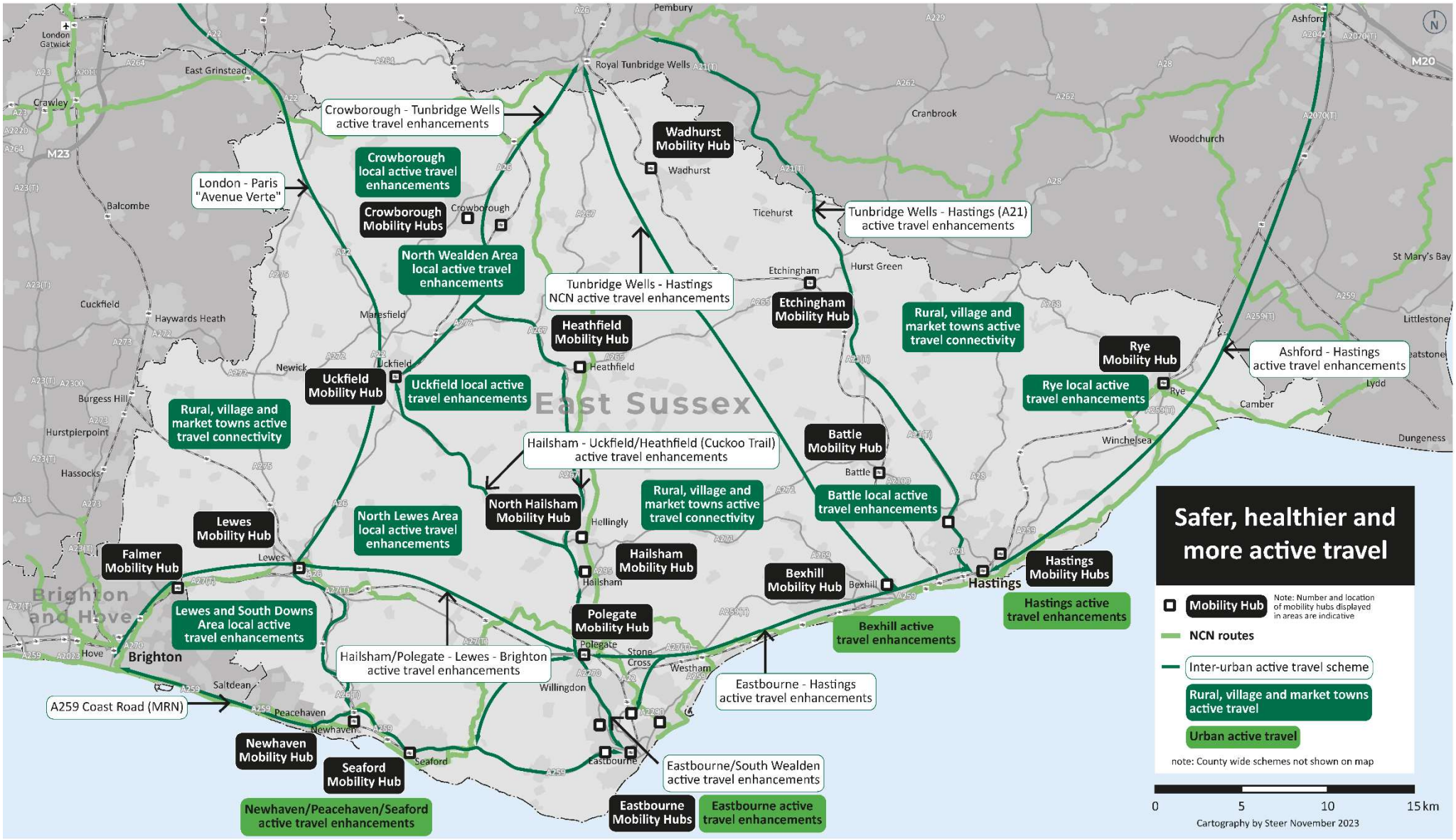
5.56 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Improving electric vehicle charging infrastructure availability by implementing an electric vehicle charging strategy
- The County Council will work with key stakeholders, including the energy network operators, the emerging Regional Energy Strategic Planner function of OFGEM and the DESZ-funded South East Net Zero Hub, to determine the optimum power supply options and phasing that will facilitate the transition from fossil fuelled transport.
- Improving the availability of electric vehicle charging and/or zero emission fuels at Council operated sites, to facilitate the use of zero emission vehicles
- Working with District and Borough Councils to ensure that anticipated electric vehicle charging demand is integrated into Local Plans and positively provided in new development sites.
- Supporting pilot projects on hydrogen, e-fuels and other zero emission technologies for heavy vehicles and shipping, working with partners such as Hydrogen Sussex
- Working with Network Rail/Great British Railways and train operators to support projects that remove diesel only trains from the county's rail network
- Monitoring the availability of petrol and diesel fuels and, if necessary, developing fuel availability strategies

6 Safer, healthier, and more active travel

6.1 In this chapter, we focus on the capacity for transport investment on infrastructure and within places to improve safety and increase health for communities and individual wellbeing across our urban and rural areas.

Figure 6.1: : LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme B "Safer, healthier and more active travel"



Supporting safer, healthier lifestyles and communities

6.2 This plan will improve safety for all journeys and through the provision of transport to reduce health inequalities and enhance health and wellbeing through increased physical activity opportunities and the design of healthy places. These opportunities include walking, wheeling, and cycling being the natural first choice for everyday short journeys or as part of longer journeys, improving local connectivity to key services, reduced emissions which improve air quality and providing easy access to nature and greenspace. This plan will:

- Increase the proportion of walking, wheeling and cycling journeys,
- Increase active travel and public transport journeys through education, training, travel behaviour change initiatives and information,
- Redesign road space to balance the needs of different road users, including integrating infrastructure to support people to walk, wheel and catch the bus,
- Support reduction of vehicle emissions to improve air quality,
- Mitigate noise pollution through technology and design, and
- Improve access to green spaces, public rights of way and leisure, health and community facilities.

Road Safety

6.3 This plan sets out our responsibilities for improving road safety, particularly to reduce casualties and the perception of safety to enable safer journeys on our networks for all users.

6.4 Similar to the majority of County Councils, has a higher number of road traffic collisions that result in someone being killed or seriously injured (KSI's) than the average for England. East Sussex County Council has a statutory duty to undertake studies into collisions and to take steps to both reduce and prevent them.

6.5 A challenge that the county faces is that many of our roads were designed and constructed prior to modern standards, where safety is a key consideration of design. Hence, many of our roads are narrower, have more bends, have vegetation close to the road and different junction designs compared to more recently constructed roads (e.g. Bexhill-Hastings Link Road or new developments).

6.6 Improving road safety requires a partnership approach, and we will continue to work with our key partners within the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership to deliver innovative road safety education and training, alongside modern safety standards to be incorporated into the design and maintenance of our transport interventions and networks.

Supporting Healthy Lifestyles

6.7 This plan will provide a shift towards supporting better health for all by supporting healthy lifestyles, specifically contributing to address health inequalities and disparities in public health across the County.

6.8 Walking, wheeling, or cycling for everyday journeys provides one of the most inclusive ways of enabling people to integrate more physical activity into their daily lives. The number of people using active travel modes nationally for short and medium trips has grown, which is also reflected in local walking trips in the County - 35% of adults in East Sussex walked continuously for at least 10 minutes[xviii] at least five times per week) compared to 31% nationally. However, the proportion

of adults cycling at least once per month has decreased from a peak of 15% in 2017 to 10% in 2021. This is below the national average of 13%.

6.9 Health inequality is a key factor in life expectancy. Hastings has the lowest life expectancy for both males (78 years) and females (81.8 years) compared to the rest of England, East Sussex and the south east. This is likely linked to deprivation levels, as 40% of residents in Hastings borough live in areas defined as amongst the most deprived 20% of areas in England. This is the highest amongst the districts and boroughs in East Sussex and the 31st highest (out of 296 local authorities) in England. The biggest causes of death between the most and least deprived areas of East Sussex are circulatory diseases, cancers, and respiratory diseases.

6.10 Obesity is also a key factor in health and life expectancy. In children, obesity amongst reception age children is most prevalent in Rother (23.5%), higher than the national average. In year 6 children, obesity is most prevalent in Hastings (38.4%), approximately 1% higher than the national average. In adults the levels are highest in Eastbourne, 68.3% of adults are classified as overweight or obese.

6.11 In terms of overall health Rother has the highest proportion of individuals in 'very bad' health and Hastings has the highest proportion of individuals in 'bad' health. Hastings has the highest proportion of inactive adults (27.3%), while Lewes has the highest proportion of active adults (71.9%) followed by Wealden. The East Sussex whole-system healthy weight plan 2021-2026 has been developed to address these issues and will be delivered in conjunction with East Sussex LTP4, and more specifically y the East Sussex LCWIP.

6.12 This plan will directly support healthy lifestyles through:

- **Enabling more active travel** - greater priority towards integrated active travel infrastructure complemented by travel behaviour change initiatives in both urban and rural areas to support local connectivity.
- **Design of places** - delivering improvements to public places and the public realm within these, with our partners, incorporating quality design, which is attractive, welcoming, safer for all and resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- **Creating healthy places** - greater integration between transport planning, health and spatial planning to create places to enable people to live well, as referred to in Homes England's 'Building for a Healthy Life Toolkit'. This provides clear consideration towards integrated neighbourhoods, developing distinctive places and creating streets for all.

More Active Travel

6.13 This plan will improve connectivity to enable people to travel by walking, wheeling and cycling, making it a natural choice for short journeys to access key services, such as employment, education or GPs, in both urban and rural areas.

6.14 The county is also fortunate to be home to the South Downs National Park to the south, High Weald National Landscape in the north and picturesque stretches of coastline. Having these environmental assets in East Sussex makes the county a very desirable and attractive place to live, work and visit. As funding is available our plan will deliver enhanced active travel infrastructure (including access for people horse riding), integrating with public transport to enable more people to access these environmental assets and spaces sustainably supporting health and quality of life.

6.15 New infrastructure will be designed to be inclusive and accessible as possible and practicable. It will be delivered across the county and connect with cross boundary routes as reflected in Transport for the South East's Active Travel Strategy, to increase participation in active travel trips within and between our urban town centres and our rural and local centres, integrating with other modes across county boundaries (particularly rail and bus and at transport interchanges (mobility hubs)), and bringing more people within reach of an active travel network.

6.16 East Sussex County Council and our key partners ambition for Active Travel is reflective of DfT's Gear Change strategy, published in July 2020, which sets out a bold vision for cycling and walking, and outlines DfT's plans to revolutionise active travel. It focuses on the need for:

- Healthier, happier and greener communities
- Safer streets
- Convenient and accessible travel, and
- Ensuring active travel is at the heart of transport decision-making.

6.17 Complementary to this is the DfT's second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2), published in March 2023. This sets out an ambition for 'walking, wheeling and cycling to be the natural choice for shorter journeys, or as part of a longer journeys'. In turn this is supported by a series of objectives to increase the percentage of short journeys in towns by walking and cycling, increase walking activity, doubling cycling activity and increasing the percentage of children walking to school.

6.18 This plan, including the policies and the accompanying Investment Plan, demonstrates East Sussex County Council and our partners commitment to increasing active travel and reflects the vision and aims in DfT's Gear Change and CWIS2.

6.19 Changes to the Highway Code in 2022 emphasised the relative importance of active travel, establishing a hierarchy of road users based on those most at risk in collisions, giving pedestrians priority when crossing junctions and giving cyclists priority over other road traffic when going straight ahead at junctions.

Local Authority Active Travel Performance and Commitment to Improvement

6.20 To drive up the standards of active travel infrastructure delivered by local authorities, Active Travel England was established in August 2022. They are responsible for the allocation of active travel funding, monitoring of performance, approval and inspection of schemes, provision of training, good practice and knowledge sharing. They also inspect local transport authorities and review major planning applications.

6.21 East Sussex County Council has a local authority active travel capability rating of 1.The rating is based on an authorities leadership towards active travel, ambition (in terms of LCWIP development) and a track record of delivery of active travel schemes that will support the objectives set out in CWIS2. This influences the amount of funding that local authorities are allocated.

6.22 This plan, and more specifically the East Sussex LCWIP, demonstrates the County's and our partners ambition for raising our active travel capability rating across the three key areas that ATE assess.

- **Political leadership for active travel** – With a high priority attributed to active travel for both urban and rural areas, within a county wide multi modal transport strategy this demonstrates strong political leadership for active travel which will provide a golden thread into scheme delivery.
- **LCWIP Development** – A robust commitment for more active travel is included in this plan with a commitment to review the East Sussex LCWIP in 2024/25 to ensure alignment with this plan and which will include an emphasis on developing, subject to funding availability, a robust pipeline of deliverable active travel schemes.
- **Scheme delivery** – A commitment to the design and delivery of high-quality active travel schemes, that will consider the latest government guidance on infrastructure design (LTN 1/20) alongside the latest ATE active travel design tools.

Design of active travel infrastructure and places

6.23 People are influenced by several factors in choosing to walk or cycle for all or part of regular journeys. These are often influenced by the design, quality of infrastructure provided and perception of safety.

6.24 Our first Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) adopted in September 2020 sets out our early ambition for the types of active travel infrastructure schemes we proposed to bring forward. To reflect our ambitions in this plan for active travel, the updated LCWIP will reflect the East Sussex LTP4 approach for active travel and consider new national policy, guidance and tools in relation to active travel.

6.25 To encourage an increase in walking, wheeling and cycling, we will deliver inclusive active travel infrastructure and the segregation between modes, where feasible and where space is available in both urban and rural areas. As set out in Policy B2, this will take into consideration the LTN 1/20 guidance for cycle infrastructure design, emerging Active Travel England rural active travel guidance and the outcomes of stakeholder and public engagement.

6.26 From a policy perspective the design of our streets and public spaces will reflect those that enable the creation of 'active environments' and a sense of place, including walkable communities, providing active travel routes, providing high quality streets and spaces, as referred to in Sport England's Active Design principles. (See Policy B2 for further details.)

6.27 At a scheme development level the County Council has adopted Lucy Saunders' 'Healthy Streets' approach with the overarching aim of 'Making streets healthy places for everyone'. As outlined in Policy B4, it focuses on assessing how people experience being on streets and includes a series of ten 'Healthy Street Indicators, which are assessed to drive a change in how streets and places are designed and ultimately how they will look and feel.

6.28 Importantly active travel schemes, especially with improvements to places, will need to be resilient to the impacts of climate change through consideration of measures such as provision urban greening (vegetation and trees) providing shade, benches and materials which are reflective of heat etc.) as outlined in Policy A3.

Consulting and engaging with communities on Active Travel Schemes

6.29 Equality and inclusion provide a golden thread throughout our plan, For active travel it considers the influences or barriers on travel behaviour, especially people with protected characteristics,

the differing needs of our urban or rural communities and consideration towards health and economic disparities in the county.

6.30 Equality and inclusion do not apply solely to the design and delivery of schemes and initiatives. With a 'planning for people and places' approach, inclusive engagement will be a key driver in this plan. Proactive and inclusive engagement will be integrated from the outset of scheme development to enable those who do not usually participate to have a voice. The county and their partners (including the voluntary sector) will bring together communities and/or stakeholders to co-design particular types of schemes that they want to see come forward within their areas, subject to the availability of funding (for example school streets).

Travel behaviour change

6.31 Complementing the delivery of active travel infrastructure schemes with initiatives and training to demonstrate that walking and cycling can be convenient, quick, safe and reliable for everyday journeys, can help transition peoples travel behaviours towards using more active travel.

6.32 East Sussex County Council and their partners have experience of delivering 'Active Travel Programmes' working with schools, businesses and communities to deliver walking and cycling initiatives. Previously delivered initiatives include cycle and e-cycle hire schemes, supported walking and cycling projects such as Sustrans Active Steps, the development of active travel maps with Living Streets and the East Sussex County Council Bikeability scheme.

6.33 Travel behaviour is often complex and influenced by several factors including people's daily habits, the stage of their life and accompanying time pressures, attitudes to travel and crucially structural factors, such as availability, accessibility, location and cost of infrastructure. This plan will work with partners and communities to seek funding to develop and deliver programmes, which enable people to feel more confident and able to walk, wheel and cycle more for local journeys or as part of longer journeys.

Healthy Places

6.34 This plan provides a basis for East Sussex County Council, the District and Borough Councils, the South Downs National Park Authority (SDNPA) and other key partners to integrate transport planning, health and spatial planning to create places to enable people to live well.

6.35 This partnership work is strengthened through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which sets out how the Public Health Team within the County Council and all East Sussex Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will work together to deliver the County Council's statutory public health responsibilities and LPAs duties to deliver relevant elements of the National Planning Policy Framework through the planning system, with transport being a key element of this.

6.36 Part of this is the use of 'Health Impact Assessments' at an appropriate stage of the development process, which assess the health impacts of a development on people and their environment. This will reinforce opportunities for sustainable and active travel to be included as part of development.

6.37 We will work in partnership with developers and the district and boroughs to seek the adoption of design codes which reflect various national guidance and toolkits in relation to the design of active travel infrastructure and places. These include the Homes England Building for a Healthy Life Toolkit (and its companion guide - Streets for a Healthy Life), Sport England's Active Design principles, DfT Manual for Streets, DfT LTN 1/20 and Healthy Streets. This will enable us to work

with LPA's and developers to realise a spatial strategy that embraces the development of healthy places.

Enhanced air quality and reduced noise pollution

6.38 Poor air quality not only impacts our local environment but also the health of our residents and visitors. To support districts and boroughs in delivering Air Quality Action Plans, improve respiratory health of our residents, and reducing noise pollution, the LTP includes a range of interventions to reduce the need to travel longer distances, to encourage a change of journeys from car to sustainable and active travel modes and to improve the energy efficiency of transport through transition to transport operations that are run on cleaner fuels, all of which reduce motorised travel pollution. This is set out in more detail in Chapter 5 'Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment'.

Delivering these objectives

6.39 We will deliver these objectives through the following policy areas:

- **Policy B1: Healthy Lifestyles**
- **Policy B2: Active travel**
- **Policy B3: Road Safety**
- **Policy B4: Placemaking**
- **Policy B5: Air quality**
- **Policy B6: Green and blue infrastructure**
- **Policy B7: Rights of Way**

Policy B1: Healthy Lifestyles

Context

6.40 Public Health England's 'Everybody Active, Everyday' sets out an evidence-based approach to drive a step change in public health. It identifies the following key action areas.

- Active society: creating a social movement and changing people's attitudes.
- Moving professionals: activating networks of expertise and persuading people to be more active.
- Active environments: creating the right spaces that encourage being active
- Moving at scale: interventions that make us active.

6.41 Active travel is the healthiest mode of transport. Those who walk, wheel and cycle as a mode of transport benefit from 'incidental' exercise. Active travel is one of the easiest ways to build in daily activity to our lives, improving both physical and mental health. Physical inactivity is responsible for one in six UK deaths (equal to smoking) and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually (including £0.9 billion to the NHS alone)[xix]. This improved connectivity can support access for all including vulnerable groups, and people in more deprived areas reducing health inequality and creating more attractive socially cohesive communities.

Issues/opportunities

6.42 Repurposing and redefining public spaces and the public realm can help to create environments which are health promoting and encourage healthy lifestyles, reducing health inequalities.

6.43 Creation of places that are well designed, attractive, safe, and inclusive improves connectivity and walkability, reduces social isolation and improves community cohesion and enables more sustainable use of the built and natural environment.

6.44 Active travel participation is growing nationally, and this was evident during the Covid 19 pandemic. Locally whilst walking is above the national average and cycling below, there are opportunities to increase the proportion of active travel journeys through continuing to improve active travel infrastructure and integration between modes, training and initiatives and travel behaviour change programmes.

6.45 Provision of active travel infrastructure both within and between our coastal towns, local centres, connectivity to cross boundary active travel routes and within rural villages can improve access to education, training, and employment, supporting sustainable economic growth, whilst also encouraging more people to travel by active modes for more healthy lifestyles.

6.46 Active travel can also provide fast and convenient options for short sections of longer journeys. For example, from home to a railway station or bus stop. This allows people to build incidental exercise into their daily routine.

6.47 With the development of housing and employment sites through the development and delivery of local plans, we need to ensure that they are safe, easily accessible and navigable by people walking, wheeling and cycling, thereby supporting better connected, accessible and liveable neighbourhoods and helping to create quality environments for people to thrive.

Component policy measures

6.48 In summary policies will focus on:

- Reducing physical inactivity through active travel infrastructure, education, training, initiatives, behaviour change programmes and promotion and targeting this towards people who will benefit most.
- Reducing air pollution through supporting zero and low emissions transport options and the greening of infrastructure.
- Improving public spaces and public realm to improve safety.
- Increasing access to employment, education, and training.
- Increasing access to health care and leisure and community facilities / amenities.
- Ensuring East Sussex County Council, Local Planning Authorities in East Sussex and developers work in partnership to ensure development incorporates high quality walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure that importantly connects into wider active travel networks and integrates with other transport infrastructure (including bus and rail).
- Planning and delivering transport options that increase climate change resilience in ways that promote population health and reduced health inequalities, including by taking a system-wide approach with partners.

Policy B2: Active travel

6.49 This policy sets out the ambition for active travel (walking, wheeling, cycling) and consideration to horse riding where applicable in the County. The County Council and their partners want to make walking, wheeling and cycling part of people's everyday lives and for it to be the natural choice, as it benefits people's health, the environment and our economy.

6.50 If we can enable people to be physically active it helps delay the onset of many health conditions, especially as we age, alongside the crucial benefits to mental health. It helps to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions, improving air quality and makes our villages and towns healthier and more vibrant places to live.

6.51 ~~As outlined in paragraph 1.19~~ We also know that the availability of active travel infrastructure and the quality of the design are key drivers for enabling people to choose more walking, wheeling and cycling in both our urban and rural areas.

6.52 This policy is reflective of our current and future proposals for the East Sussex LCWIP. It demonstrates East Sussex County Council's and our partners commitment to increasing active travel, reflecting the vision and aims DfT's Gear Change and the second Cycling & Walking Investment Strategy and importantly raising our national active travel performance rating.

6.53 We propose an ambitious and inclusive programme of active travel schemes and initiatives across the county that balances the needs of all users, especially more vulnerable users, where feasible and practicable. Our proposals include exploring opportunities to enhance existing and new active travel networks and the redesign of road space, where possible whilst also balancing other needs, to create conditions that make all people feel safer and more comfortable walking, wheeling and cycling.

6.54 We propose to provide connected active travel routes, which are safer, continuous, direct and attractive alongside walkable communities in our key urban areas including Newhaven, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings and local active travel enhancements in our local centres including Lewes, Uckfield, Crowborough, Battle and Rye, as well as in our villages. This is alongside considering opportunities for improving connectivity between these areas, for example inter-urban routes between major towns (such as Hailsham – Uckfield) or connectivity from villages to key service centres, such as Ringmer to Lewes.

6.55 Where an active travel route runs parallel to a major road, the scheme will be designed to consider the opportunities for segregation, (where feasible), between active travel routes and the main carriageway enhancing safety and improving the experience of walking, wheeling, or cycling (for example the National Highways active travel improvements alongside the A27 between Polegate and Firle). By improving active travel facilities, we will seek to enhance the 'liveability' of our local environment and reduce safety concerns by exploring the opportunities for modal segregation.

6.56 The LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design Guidance considers the principles of design at all stages including journey origins to destinations, safety, junctions design, crossings, cycle parking, signage and wayfinding. Whilst these standards will be considered as part of East Sussex County Council scheme designs, we will require other parties to also consider these, including developers. The implementation of these standards will be dependent on-site specifics when particularly needing to balance the competing needs of all road users with highway space often limited in many areas of the county. We will also consider the emerging ATE Active Travel Rural guidance when this becomes available.

6.57 The East Sussex LCWIP 2021 to 2030 sets out a plan to improve walking, wheeling, and cycling infrastructure, initially focused on the key towns located on the coastal strip and our local centres, as well as the rural parts of the county. It includes a list of prioritised schemes for delivery by East Sussex County Council and key partners. It will be a supporting document to the LTP and will be subject to review in 2024/25. With the aim of accelerating the delivery of active travel schemes in the County, this review will include the following:

- review of current and proposed networks and the inclusion of more area based active travel opportunities,
- the opportunities to align the LCWIP with other key strategies, particularly with the East Sussex County Council Bus Service Improvement Plan, Asset Management Strategy and district and borough local plans, and
- review the processes and funding opportunities associated with the delivery of active travel schemes.

6.58 The East Sussex LCWIP also identifies the importance of complementing the delivery of active travel infrastructure schemes with initiatives that help people incorporate more walking and cycling into their everyday lives. This plan will support future applications for funding to enable East Sussex County Council, other key partners and communities to deliver active travel initiative programmes which provide cross policy benefits.

Issues/opportunities

6.59 There is a need to increase the proportion of people walking and cycling. Currently 35% of adults in East Sussex walked continuously for at least 10 minutes[xx] at least five times per week, nationally this is 31%. The proportion of adults cycling at least once per month has decreased from a peak of 15% in 2017 to 10% in 2021. This is below the national average of 13%.

6.60 High-quality cycle routes can transport high volumes of people through a relatively limited amount of road space, making them very efficient within urban environments. Most journeys to work in East Sussex are within 5km so there is potential for a greater proportion of residents to walk, wheel or cycle for their commute, where space is available for the delivery of segregated cycle routes.

6.61 Greater integration of active travel networks with other modes will provide a sustainable last-mile option for rail and bus users, in many cases removing the need to drive to a station or access a bus stop, enhancing accessibility opportunities for all journeys.

6.62 Ensuring access to micromobility solutions for all users, including those with reduced mobility and families through implementation of shared bike, e-bike, and other future mobility schemes can increase participation in active modes by sections of the population who are less likely to currently use these modes.

6.63 Ensuring the LCWIP is reflected and developed further as part of the development and delivery of local plans so that development sites are sustainably located and fully consider walking, wheeling and cycling accessibility within and to and from the site.

6.64 Ensuring active travel is considered as part of network and area-based schemes.

Component policy measures

6.65 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Reviewing and delivering the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan which includes a robust pipeline of deliverable active travel schemes for networks and places and ensuring a balance of schemes to support walking, wheeling and cycling.
- Planning, designing, delivering, and maintaining new and enhanced high quality infrastructure to support more walking, wheeling and cycling that considers national infrastructure guidance and best practice. (as outlined in Manual for Streets, DfT LTN 1/20 and Healthy Streets)
- Promoting safer, more accessible, and quicker travel by active travel modes integrating with public transport.
- Integrate active travel infrastructure and initiatives with other strategy documents (i.e. East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan, Local Planning Authorities Local Plans, TfSE's Transport Strategy and the TfSE Active Travel Strategy) to increase the opportunities to secure funding to deliver these types of measures.
- Providing high-quality inclusive public spaces and public realm as part of placemaking schemes.
- Delivering walking and cycling initiative programmes which support travel behaviour change with key local partners and communities alongside identifying opportunities for the funding of these.
- Review the East Sussex Sustainable Modes of Travel Strategy (SMOT) to enhance the promotion of sustainable travel to school.

Policy B3: Road safety

Context

6.66 This policy recognises our responsibilities regarding improving road safety, particularly to reduce casualties, and enable safer journeys on our networks for all users.

6.67 Nationally, the Department for Transport Road Safety Statement 2019[xxi], sets out an approach to improve road safety, with an emphasis on the need to reduce casualties. This includes:

- increasing road safety education and training,
- ensuring that vehicles are safe for drivers, passengers, and other highways users, and
- making sure that our highways are designed and maintained with safety in mind.

6.68 Locally the delivery of this approach is co-ordinated by the Sussex Safer Roads Partnership and brings together the highway authorities of East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Brighton and Hove City Council. This is alongside Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service, West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and National Highways.

6.69 In more recent government documents, including the second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy, published by the DfT in 2023, which identifies "*tackling road safety and personal safety concerns, which may influence levels of walking, wheeling and cycling*" as one of its key investment priorities. This is reflected in the East Sussex Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and is a key consideration during designing schemes.

Road Safety in East Sussex

6.70 Similar to the majority of County Councils, East Sussex County Council has a higher number of road traffic collisions that result in someone being killed or seriously injured (KSI's) than the average for England. For the three year period 2017-2019 the average rate of KSIs for England was 43.2 per 100,000 population, compared to a rate of 73.7 for Hampshire, 72.0 for Cambridgeshire 68.1 for East Sussex and 59.7 for West Sussex.

6.71 Therefore, the focus for East Sussex County Council is fundamentally to:

- meet our obligations under section 39 of the Road Traffic Act, which puts a "statutory duty" on local authorities to undertake studies into road traffic collisions, and to take steps both to reduce and prevent them,
- reduce crash sites and casualties, and
- deliver measures to support vulnerable road users

Understanding how to reduce crashes and save lives - East Sussex County Council Road Safety Programme

6.72 Recent evidence of our commitment to study, identify and deliver road safety solutions are reflected in East Sussex County Council innovative programme Understanding how to reduce crashes and save lives: the East Sussex Road Safety Programme | East Sussex County Council.

6.73 Following identification, that the county had a higher-than-average KSI rate, in the Public Health Outcomes Framework, an evidence-led programme was developed. This tested the effectiveness of a variety of behavioural interventions to change the behaviour of road users with the aim of reducing the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI's) within identified priority groups.

6.74 National evidence which underpinned the programme indicated that the vast majority of KSI's and over 90% of collisions resulted from driver carelessness or error. Therefore, the programme developed and implemented trials to improve road safety through behavioural interventions alongside targeted infrastructure and speed management schemes at high-risk sites.

6.75 The trials during the programme resulted in several positive outcomes including, a significant reduction in speeding re-offending by 23%, and reductions in the average number of crashes and casualties per annum at identified and treated high-risk sites of 49% and 61%. A second phase of this programme is currently being developed.

Casualty Reduction Programme

6.76 The Council's current approach to casualty reduction, based on national best practice, is to identify sites or routes that display a disproportionate number of crashes and identify appropriate measures to reduce crashes. These are prioritised for inclusion in the capital programme.

Lower Speed Limits including 20mph Speed Limits & Zones

6.77 To be effective, speed limits need to be set at a level which appears reasonable to a driver and be reflective of the environment through which the road passes. The introduction of a lower speed limit will not automatically slow traffic down. It is nationally recognised that most drivers travel at the speed they consider to be safe for the conditions of the road, based on their assessment of the local environment. There are several factors that are taken into consideration when assessing a length of road for a speed limit, with the predominant factors being the

character and appearance of the road, the level of visible frontage development and the average speed of traffic using the road.

6.78 The delivery of lower speed limits including 20mph speed limits and zones in the County is done in accordance with East Sussex County Council adopted Policy PS05/02. This reflects national guidance and best practice for setting speed limits.

6.79 The policy allows for lower speed limits, including the introduction of 20mph speed limits/zones, to be considered where they are likely to be self-enforcing. The introduction of a 20-mph speed limit can be achieved with signs alone on roads where the mean (average) speed of traffic is below 24mph. On roads where mean speeds are higher, appropriate traffic management/calming measures would need to be introduced to enable them to be self-enforcing.

Issues/opportunities

6.80 Similar to the majority of County Councils, East Sussex has a higher number of road traffic collisions that result in someone being killed or seriously injured than the average for England.

6.81 Numbers of KSIs on our rural A and B class roads are higher than the England average and perform poorly compared to roads built to modern standards. This is predominantly due to them being of poorer quality in terms of design (width, bends, junction layouts and roadside furniture/trees being present).

6.82 Between 2015 and 2020 in East Sussex, there were 10,624 casualties reported from 7,738 accidents. Of these casualties, 1% were fatal, 24% serious and 75% slight. Targeted site/route specific engineering measures, such as schemes which develop self-explaining roads can support a reduction in the numbers of collisions and severity of casualties that result from those collisions.

6.83 Sussex Safer Roads Partnership delivers a number of campaigns including events focussed around reducing drink driving, set expectations of drivers to pass safely around vulnerable highways users (for example, pedestrians, wheelers, and cyclists) and encouraging vulnerable highways users to wear bright clothing to increase their visibility. These campaigns will continue to increase awareness of transport safety issues and encourage people to do what they can to keep themselves and others safer.

6.84 In line with our transport user hierarchy set out in the overarching strategy chapter (chapter 4), active travel infrastructure which separates pedestrians, wheelers and cyclists from other highway users can help to enhance safety (both perception and actual) will be included as part of designs, where deliverable, to help to remove one of the key barriers to active travel participation[),xxiixxiii] There may be barriers to this to overcome, such as people being deterred from active travel due to the negative impact of fear from perceived and actual poor road safety.

6.85 In alignment with the East Sussex County Council Asset Management Strategy prioritisation will be given towards the maintenance of the existing highway assets to provide a transport network which is as safe as possible for all users.

6.86 With SSRP Partners we will continue to embrace a 'Vision Zero' approach (based on the belief that no death or serious injury is acceptable on roads). The system requires coordination of multiple agencies (of which East Sussex County Council is one) to work together in partnership to improve road safety.

Component policy measures

6.87 In summary policies will focus on:

- Taking a multi-agency approach to improving road safety.
- Committing to continuous and comprehensive monitoring and evaluation of key road safety indicators in partnership with Sussex Safer Roads Partnership.
- Supporting improvement in road user behaviour through road safety engineering, education, training, and publicity programmes.
- Minimising risk to all road users through early Road Safety Team engagement at the design stages of any highway improvement schemes and development work.
- Fulfilling our statutory duties under S39 of the Road Traffic Act 1988 to reduce collisions and injury on our road network.
- Working as one council to promote sustainable transport and identify opportunities for reducing dependency on car-use.

Policy B4: Placemaking

Context

6.88 Placemaking is about creating quality environments to enable people to thrive whether it be to live, work or play in urban or rural areas. It is focussed on the design of high-quality streets, spaces and neighbourhoods, enabling interaction between people and providing an environment for walking, wheeling and cycling to be the natural choice. Public spaces need to be accessible, safer and inclusive for all people to accommodate how people use these spaces in different ways (for example children, disabled people, and older people) and enable the whole community to improve their health and wellbeing.

6.89 To capture this, co-design is an important element of placemaking. This helps strengthen the connection and understanding between people (communities, businesses etc.) as part of the design process and ensures that all user needs are considered as part of the places that they use and share.

6.90 This co-design approach has successfully been used with stakeholders in the plans to improve movement and access in Eastbourne Town Centre with the removal of traffic from the town centre, moving towards creating a more 'liveable town'. As part of the scheme design work East Sussex County Council employed an independent access auditor to assess the scheme design to consider accessibility needs for both people with physical and hidden disabilities. This enabled a series of recommended improvements to the design to be developed and working in partnership with the county council and the local disability group to agree changes to the design.

6.91 A similar co-design approach has also been used in the development of School Streets schemes and wider measures to support safer and more accessible journeys to school, providing benefits which are twofold for the school and wider community.

6.92 We understand the overwhelming evidence which indicates that the wider determinants of health are influenced by our physical environment, access, traffic, and the impact that this has on our health behaviours. This is alongside the wider benefits to businesses from more attractive and welcoming environments. So, this plan will embrace the need for people friendly streets and places with attractive walkable environments providing easy access and opportunities for

interaction. In the design of our streets and public spaces East Sussex County Council and our partners are committed to adopting the 'Healthy Streets' assessment framework, with the overarching aim of 'Making streets healthy places for everyone'.

6.93 The Healthy Streets assessment focuses on assessing how people experience being on streets. It includes a series of ten 'Healthy Street Indicators, which are assessed to drive a change in how streets and places and designed and ultimately how they will look and feel:

- Everyone feels welcome
- Easy to cross
- Shade and shelter
- Places to stop and rest
- Not too noisy
- People choose to walk and cycle
- People feel safe
- Things to see and do
- People feel relaxed
- Clean air

6.94 Consideration must be given to the fact that some areas of the public realm in East Sussex are of a historic nature or are within areas with environmental designation. Examples include historic centres of Rye, Maresfield and Lewes, the South Downs National Park, the High Weald National Landscape, and the seafronts in Seaford, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings. Guided by the principles outlined in 'Streets for all: South East'[xxiv], there is a need to ensure that public spaces are appropriately maintained and managed to retain the historic character of the county whilst allowing for contemporary needs. This includes respecting designated Conservation Areas. However, this approach, with the replacement of non-standard materials will be dependent on available funding. This also links to policy D4: Supporting sustainable development and development control.

6.95 It will also be critical that these approaches are integrated through our partnership work with LPA's and developers to enable well designed development and the opportunities to create high quality public spaces and infrastructure as part of this. This will be supported through the use of Health Impact Assessments at all stages of local plan development and delivery, which has been adopted by East Sussex County Council and the LPAs within the County.

Issues/opportunities

6.96 There is an opportunity through public space enhancement to increase accessibility, attractiveness and reduce barriers and severance to encourage greater uptake of active travel modes, improve connectivity, social cohesion and increase permeability.

6.97 Public space enhancements will provide opportunities for social interaction reducing social isolation and creating community cohesion.

6.98 Introduction of natural features such as tree planting and other greening measures can improve mental health, provide shade, and support better adaption to climate change.

6.99 Working with developers, well designed developments present the opportunity to create new public spaces or enhance the existing public realm.

6.100 Working with partners to ensure whole life scheme maintenance costs are considered to ensure that these are affordable.

6.101 Working with disabled access groups as part of scheme development (especially development of public spaces) to ensure accessibility needs are considered as part of the design.

6.102 Adopt a Healthy Streets approach to street and place design with the overarching aim of 'Making streets healthy places for everyone'.

6.103 Creating streets and places where people feel welcome, relaxed, and safer.

Component policy measures

6.104 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Working with appropriate partners to provide public spaces where practicable and a public realm that is maintained, safe, well designed, inclusive, and accessible for all users.
- Ensuring other transport schemes enhance the public realm.
- Ensuring that the maintenance of the public realm is appropriately prioritised within the funding available.
- Redesigning streets within urban areas where feasible to provide opportunities to create more space for improved public realm.
- Reducing perceived risks to crime through enhancements to public realm including lighting, natural surveillance, and clear signage.
- Undertake access audits for key public space and town centre schemes to enable accessibility needs of disabled people to be included as part of scheme design.
- East Sussex County Council and partners public space schemes to be assessed using the Healthy Streets assessment tool and other key ATE guidance.
- Plan and deliver places to increase climate change resilience in ways that promote population health and reduced health inequalities, including by taking a system-wide approach with partners.

Policy B5: Air quality

Context

6.105 In April 2023, the Government published its Air Quality Strategy for England, outlining legally binding international targets already adopted to reduce emissions of five of the most damaging air pollutants (fine particulate matter, ammonia, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxide, non-methane volatile organic compounds) by 2030. The strategy sets out the comprehensive action that is required and introduces new legislation to create a stronger and more coherent framework to tackle air pollution. Local authorities are empowered to control major sources of air and noise pollution, in line with the risk they pose to public health and the environment. There will also be a requirement for Local Authorities to establish Air Quality Strategies regardless of whether they have Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) within their areas on not.

Issues/opportunities

6.106 East Sussex has two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), both in Lewes District - Lewes town centre and A259 Newhaven ring road and town centre. Supporting residents to use sustainable and active modes can reduce the levels of emissions and particulates, enhancing air quality in these areas and throughout the county. This will notably address particulates from brakes, tyre and road wear and tear, which occur even in zero emission vehicles.

6.107 Air quality in these AQMAs has been improving considerably[xxv], in response to actions taken as part of Air Quality Action Plans. With substantial population growth forecast for the area we are likely to see an increase in demand for travel to, from and within the area. The lessons learnt from our successful Air Quality Management Areas will help to mitigate against any risk of worsening air quality caused by this increased transport demand.

6.108 Delivering interventions which reduce vehicle mileage, shift journeys to sustainable modes such as walking, cycling and public transport and improve the transport infrastructure and vehicle fleet to enable sufficient uptake of lower emission transport modes can all be deployed to support achievement of these Air Quality Management Plan objectives.

Component policy measures

6.109 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Investigating the potential for traffic management schemes in the centres of our largest urban areas.
- Reducing the need to travel by higher polluting transport modes through better, integrated spatial and transport planning.
- Promoting less polluting forms of travel (for example, active travel, public transport, and electric vehicles) for people and goods movement.
- Assisting Local Planning Authorities in the development and implementation of Air Quality Strategies and Action Plans to ensure agreed targets are met.
- Harnessing improvements to vehicle technology, including the use of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles and fuels.
- Further developing our School Streets programme to restrict vehicle access outside schools at drop off and pick-up times, thereby reducing levels of pollutants in their vicinity.
- Working with partners and communities to co-develop, seek funding and deliver travel behaviour change programmes, to support walking, wheeling and cycling.

Policy B6: Improved access to green and blue infrastructure

Context

6.110 Access to green and blue infrastructure provides multiple benefits to health and wellbeing, but also to environmental management and the climate. This plan identifies the opportunities of integrating this as part of the design of infrastructure and places.

6.111 Green and blue infrastructure is defined by the National Planning Policy Framework (2021) as '*A network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate*'. The infrastructure includes natural and human-made features such as open spaces, woodlands, meadows, footpaths, the sea, rivers, canals, and historic parks.[xxvi]

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Framework (2023) provides a further point of reference as to what good quality green infrastructure should look like.

6.112 The Chartered Institute of Highways and Transportation suggests "*Green and Blue Infrastructure can play an important role across our highway network in promoting healthy and safe communities, as well as helping to deliver net zero targets, adapting to climate change, and conserving and enhancing the natural environment.*[xxvii]"

6.113 In terms of places, the 'Building for a Healthy Life' – A Design Toolkit for neighbourhoods, streets, homes and public spaces highlights the need to 'Create places that are well integrated to wider natural surroundings, as well as 'connecting existing and new habitats, safeguarding existing or creating new movement corridors for nature as part of design and connections with the wider highway network'.

6.114 Green infrastructure to improve biodiversity is being integrated into wider town centre improvement schemes which include enhancing the quality of the public realm. This is alongside developing sustainable access to nearby green spaces.

Issues/opportunities

6.115 Incorporating green and blue infrastructure in new or existing transport networks can influence flood management, carbon reduction, noise and air pollution supporting many objectives of this LTP include decarbonisation, health, and resilience.

6.116 There is an opportunity to integrate green and blue infrastructure in the planning of new developments from the outset to help develop more sustainable and healthy communities.

6.117 Enhancing green and blue infrastructure can create or enhance major economic and tourism opportunities.

6.118 Enhanced access to green and blue infrastructure can support health and wellbeing benefits.

Component policy measures

6.119 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Providing enhanced access by sustainable modes to the natural environment and green spaces (green infrastructure) as well as waterways and the sea (blue infrastructure).
- Managing and improving the existing Rights of Way network through our Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Considering the needs of land management, flood prevention and resilience, conservation, heritage and concern about rural crime and anti-social behaviour in the management and improvement of access to green spaces and waterways (blue infrastructure).
- Establishing formalised systems to include green and blue infrastructure within existing highway networks and planned improvements, especially at the crucial stages of planning, design and delivery, adoption and maintenance.

Policy B7: Rights of Way

Context

6.120 Having access to the natural environment supports people's health and wellbeing. East Sussex has an extensive Public Rights of Way (PRoW) network, which extends for a combined distance of around 2,000 miles.

6.121 Rights of way are official public highways across privately owned land[xxviii]. These can include the following:

- **Footpath** – for walking, running or wheeling,
- **Bridleway** – for cycling, walking, wheeling or horse riding,
- **Restricted Byway** – for any transport without a motor and wheeling, and
- **Byway open to all traffic** (BOAT) – for all transport.

6.122 Both the county council and landowners are responsible for maintenance of the rights of way networks. Public access may also be permitted along permissive routes, but landowners reserve the right to withdraw access at any given time. [xxix]

6.123 The County Council is currently reviewing its 'Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP)'. The ROWIP sets out the County Council's plans to improve our public rights of way network and access to the countryside. We have a duty to review the plan every ten years. The review is at an early stage and we are engaging with the East Sussex Local Access Forum, a statutory group of experts who provide access advice to the County Council, to develop the next Plan. This will align with key county and partners strategies in regard to environment, transport, health, economy and spatial planning.

Promoted rights of way routes in East Sussex

6.124 There are a number of promoted rights of way routes in the county. These include:

- **The South Downs Way** - this 100-mile National Trail walking route follows ancient paths across the South Downs from Eastbourne to Winchester
- **The Cuckoo Trail** – This 14-mile surfaced path follows the former 'Cuckoo Line' railway track through the Sussex countryside and stretches from Heathfield to Shinewater Park in Eastbourne passing through Horam, Hailsham and Polegate. It is mostly traffic free and is a safe route for walkers and cyclists of all ages, forming part of the National Cycle Network – route 21
- **Forest Way Country Park** - The Forest Way runs between East Grinstead (in West Sussex) and Groombridge, it is approximately 10 miles long and is used for cycling, walking, wheeling, horse riding and the quiet enjoyment of the countryside
- **Wealdway** – an 81 mile walk from Gravesend to Eastbourne which passes through the Ashdown Forest and past the Long Man of Wilmington
- **1066 Country Walk** - This 31-mile walk runs from Rye to Pevensey, exploring sites linked to the Battle of Hastings.
- **Saxon Shore Way** – a 163-mile path that starts in Gravesend in Kent and finishes in Hastings which traces the shoreline as it was in Roman times
- **Sussex Ouse Valley Way** - A 42-mile continuous path, starting near the source of the River Ouse at Lower Beeding in West Sussex to Seaford Bay in East Sussex
- **Circular walks** of various lengths across the County

- The South East England Coast Path National Trail (SEECP), part of the **King Charles III England Coast Path**) is due to be fully open by 2024/25. At present the parts of the Shoreham-by-Sea to Eastbourne and Camber to Folkestone sections in East Sussex are open to the public.

Issues/opportunities

6.125 Our network of public rights of way (PRoW) provides off-road routes between settlements. Building on this network, primarily through ongoing maintenance and access improvements can provide better routes for walking, wheeling, and cycling avoiding the main highways network. In alignment with the East Sussex LCWIP and Rights of Way Improvement Plan, this enhances the safety and attractiveness of these modes for inter urban trips allowing people of all abilities to feel comfortable using them for leisure and commuting purposes. Enhancements as part of development, Section 106 and CIL funding can also assist in funding the delivery of these improvements, where public rights of way pass through or near development sites.

6.126 We are responsible for surface repairs, provision of surface vegetation clearance, maintenance of bridges, appropriate signposting, and provision of steps[xxx]. Ensuring that PRoW's are well maintained can help encourage use of the routes, safeguarding the safety and enjoyment of journeys taken on them.

6.127 The County Council works closely with landowners, ensuring they are aware of their legal obligations with regards to PRoW. This helps to ensure that the network remains open and accessible to the public.

6.128 PRoW identified as a key element of our local visitor economy and providing connectivity to cultural and tourist sites.

6.129 Greater promotion of PRoW in relation to supporting access to the natural environment and the growing evidence towards supporting mental health alongside physical activity.

6.130 The role of spatial planning in protecting the existing access to PRoW alongside enhancing public access as part of development of housing and employment activity.

6.131 Greater opportunities to integrate access to PRoW using public transport.

6.132 Close links will be developed between this Plan and the RoWIP, which is currently under review.

Component policy measures

6.133 In summary policies measures will focus on:

- Developing a network which is accessible and encourages healthy lifestyles.
- Integrating new development into the ProW network while maintaining or enhancing access.
- Making available high quality, definitive information, maps, and records on the network.
- Working with landowners to help balance public access and land management needs.
- Ensuring access to ProW is inclusive and working with landowners to provide access to all where possible.
- Promoting the provision of accessible transport information.
- Enable and encourage sustainable access to the PRoW network by walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport in association with travel demand measures.

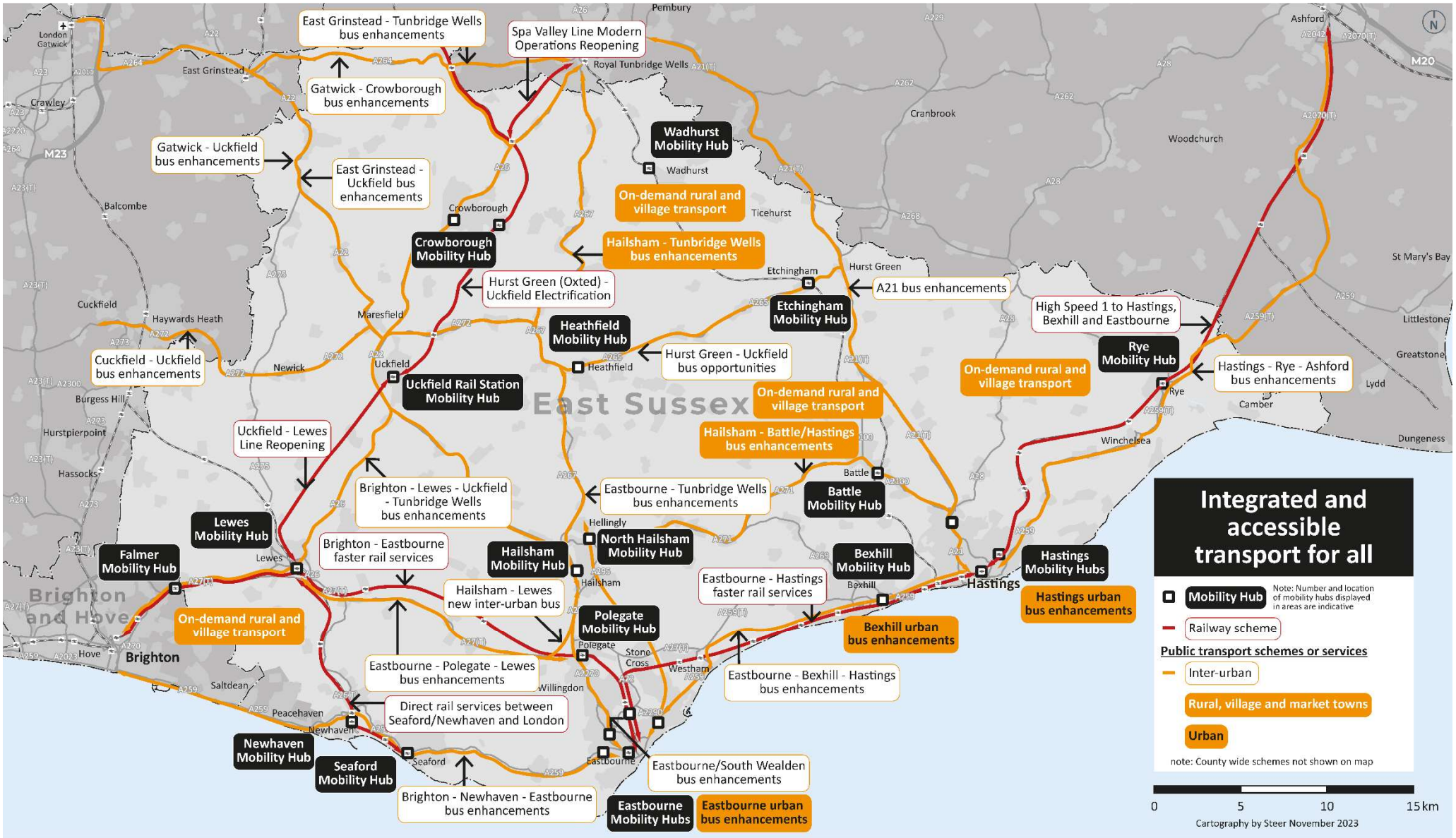
- Ensure alignment of ROWIP with key county and partners strategies regarding the environment, transport, health, economy and spatial planning.

7 Integrated and accessible transport for all

7.1 This chapter is about the opportunities for integrating infrastructure and services to improve all aspects of the public transport passenger experience to enable seamless and accessible journeys The aim is to focus on ensuring that as many people as possible can readily access high quality, frequent and reliable public transport provision. This is alongside access to local active travel networks to ensure people have travel choices, as outlined in chapter 6 – Safer, healthier and more active travel.

7.2 An integrated transport network, along with attractive ticketing arrangements, will also support accessibility, therefore we propose improved interchange between modes of travel (mobility hubs) at busier interchange locations to support seamless journeys. We recognise that access to the car is essential for some journeys, especially in more rural areas of the County, so we need to support communities in enabling access to options for cleaner fuels or energy sources.

Figure 7.1: LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme C "Integrated and accessible transport for all "



Integrated and Seamless Travel

7.3 We propose an integrated transport network that allows as many residents as possible to the make the trips they need to make by public transport by making services affordable and accessible. We also recognise the importance of improved connectivity between the first and last mile part of journeys (i.e. walking from home to/from the bus stop or cycling to the railway station) and that these can be barriers to using available public transport services. We aim to:

- Create and enhance an inclusive transport network for all users
- Improve interchange between travel modes
- Improve access to key local services (including education, training, employment and health services) by all modes

Accessing and using the bus and rail transport network

7.4 The plan delivers a network and service provision that is responsive to and accommodates users with different needs, including some of whom may be using wheelchairs, pushchairs, use other mobility aids or have hidden disabilities.

7.5 The County Council's long-term aspirations for bus service improvements are set out in the East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) adopted in October 2021 and the BSIP update dated September 2024. The BSIP has the following mission:

"Our mission as a local transport authority and bus operators is to ensure that East Sussex residents and visitors enjoy the highest possible quality bus services that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice, reduce congestion and make a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation."

7.6 The BSIP has targets relating to:

- Faster journey times
- Improved reliability and punctuality of services
- Increased patronage and passenger satisfaction
- More households with access to a bus service, and within 30, 60 and 90 minutes of a town centre

7.7 Digital Demand Responsive Travel fulfilment targets. Whilst the BSIP sets out a longer-term vision for the county's bus offer, funding and partnership working is required to ensure successful long-term realisation of the BSIP. As outlined in the BSIP update in September 2024, short-term funding has delivered the following improvements to grow bus patronage:

- Running of more frequent bus services across East Sussex
- Making bus services faster and more reliable with our investments in bus priority, including bus lanes and changes to traffic signals

- Improving bus stop infrastructure and real time information provision
- Lowering fares with new ticket products
- Making public transport provision more comprehensive, especially in our rural areas with demand responsive 'Flexibus' services.

7.8 Further details on the specific projects being delivered are included in the BSIP Update September 2024.

7.9 In the longer term the shared mission of East Sussex County Council and the bus operators remains to ensure that East Sussex residents and visitors enjoy the highest possible quality bus services that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice, reduce congestion and make a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation.

7.10 East Sussex is working in partnership with bus operators to deliver a bus network that works for our residents and visitors through the mechanism of the statutory East Sussex Enhanced Bus Partnership Plan.

7.11 Complementing the network of commercial and supported bus routes and the Digital Demand Responsive Transport (Flexibus service), East Sussex also has community transport providers in specific geographic areas. These provide services where there is no public transport or the needs of users are not met by other public transport offer. However, community transport providers consistently express concerns about their limited capacity for expansion. Many of these providers heavily rely on the dedication of specific individuals, and the sector faces challenges in recruiting volunteers to sustain its services. Accessing and using the railway network

7.12 The development of this plan will include a review of our East Sussex Rail Strategy. We will support infrastructure and service enhancements such as:

- Faster East Coastway line (Hastings, Eastbourne, Seaford and Lewes to Brighton routes) services
- Extending High Speed 1 services into the county, via Ashford, to Rye, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne
- Reinstatement of the Uckfield -Lewes Line and potential electrification or other power solutions for the Uckfield to Hurst Green section of the current Uckfield line

7.13 Together these present a step change in connectivity across much of our county, bringing more people closer to a wider range of rail journey opportunities.

7.14 Some changes have recently been realised on the rail network in the county:

- Newer and longer trains operating on the Sussex Downs Line (Seaford – Lewes - Brighton route)
- Improved timetables for trains on the East Coastway line, providing a more even service, with improved connections at Lewes for services to/from Seaford and London (via the Brighton mainline)

With the establishment of Great British Railways (GBR) in the near future, which will bring together rail infrastructure improvements and the delivery of services, the County Council will work in partnership with GBR and other key partners to bring forward improvements to both rail services and infrastructure.

7.15 Across the county, a number of railway routes are covered by the Southeast Community Rail Partnership (SCRP), who lobby for improvements to rail services and support local community groups and operators to improve the station environment, support community activity including use of station space (e.g. Friends of Bishopstone Station), encourage the use of rail and host events to promote rail. Particularly supporting access to the railway and local stations in rural parts of the county, the current SCRP line groups within the county are:

- 1066 Line (Hastings to Tonbridge)
- Marshlink Line (Hastings to Ashford International)
- Sussex Downs Line (Seaford – Lewes – Brighton)
- Uckfield & East Grinstead Lines (Uckfield to Oxted, and East Grinstead to Oxted)

7.16 SCRP are also developing proposals to formally extend the community rail line from Lewes to Eastbourne and forward to Hastings to join up the Marshlink and 1066 lines at Hastings.

Accessing and using walking, wheeling and cycling and wheeling networks

7.17 The East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) sets out proposals to introduce a network of walking and cycling routes in East Sussex. The LCWIP will consider the different context and challenges of different parts of the county (e.g. rural and urban) to provide local and longer-distance connectivity by walking, wheeling and cycling. A review of the East Sussex LCWIP will commence in late 2024. This review will incorporate the opportunities for active travel to be improved as part integrated journeys (i.e. walking, wheeling or cycling to a bus stop or rail station or mobility hub).

7.18 Accessibility to walking, wheeling and cycling routes is important for health and wellbeing. Our approach and policies are presented in chapter 2 Safer, healthier and more active travel.

Accessibility and inclusive transport

7.19 Transport provision (services or networks) is an important factor influencing how people can access the services they need or want to get to, including healthcare, education, training, employment and leisure. For this reason it is critical that the County Council and their partners across the key sectors of health, employment and skills, business and leisure, culture and tourism continue to work in partnership to ensure that people can get to the places that need or want to go to.

7.20 Public spaces need to balance the needs of a broad range of users, some of whom use spaces in different ways. Therefore, physical accessibility to buses, trains and their stops or stations, is just as important as geographic accessibility. Spaces and public

transportation vehicles, in addition to walking, wheeling and cycling routes need to be accessible to all users and not present a barrier to travel.

7.21 Our BSIP includes proposals for all buses to have audio-visual announcements, dementia friendly floors, and the introduction of a wheelchair taxi guarantee scheme.

7.22 Similarly our LCWIP requires that all new active travel infrastructure considers Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 and ATE's Active Travel Design Guidance (guidance provided to local authorities on delivering high quality active travel infrastructure), where deliverable. This is to ensure it enhances safety for walkers, wheelers and cyclists. The design of public space and public realm schemes need to be subject to access audits to make them as inclusive as possible.

7.23 The rail network already advises which stations have step-free access and how users can book any required assistance at stations[6]. We will continue to work with Network Rail/Great British Railways and train operators to make all our stations fully accessible.

Seamlessly integrated journeys

Networks & journey interchange (including mobility hubs)

7.24 When we undertake journeys there can be a number of components within, for example:

- Walk from home to the bus stop, take the bus into town, walk to the shops
- Cycle from home to the railway station, take the train to the next town and cycle into the office
- Wheel from the office to station, take the train to a town three stops away, before catching the bus to the next village, before wheeling to client's office
- Walk from the house to get into your car (parked on the street), drive to a car park in the nearest large town before walking to the theatre.

7.25 The plan will implement measures to integrate our bus, rail, walking, wheeling and cycling transport networks to deliver seamlessly integrated journeys. Integration of our networks is important to enable all users to complete their first/last mile journeys (for example getting between your home and the bus stop, or between the railway station and your place of work or the shops).

7.26 To support seamless integrated journeys we will support the delivery of high-quality public spaces and transport infrastructure where people can change transport modes. We propose a network of improvements to interchange (mobility hubs) opportunities in rural and urban areas, between different modes, to enhance experiences of using and connecting with public transport and expand the catchment areas of bus stops and railway stations.

7.27 These improvements may include bus stop enhancements (e.g. adding shelters, real time passenger information and seats) or the addition of cycle stands or car club parking. The

[6] Please refer to the National Rail's interactive station access mapping and information at https://accessmap.nationalrail.co.uk/

improvements to interchange will be designed to suit the different place and movement characteristics, the local environment and reflect the needs of local users (including demand).

7.28 In addition, we are working with partners to review and improve public transport timetables, to have more buses or trains per hour between key destinations along main corridors (e.g. inter-urban bus services) which also serve the rural settlements along these routes between destinations, and with higher frequencies during the evenings and weekends.

Ticketing

7.29 To further encourage use of sustainable transport we will work with operators, and Government, to improve ticketing integration, for example expanding on our multi-operator bus ticket offer, to ensure that the mechanism for paying for transport and services is transparent and intuitive. Proposals include introduction of affordable and attractively priced smart ticketing to allow all public transport services to be paid for in the same way, particularly for journeys requiring both rail and bus.

7.30 By improving provision across the board from integrated ticketing, better information and improved interchange facilities, a readily available transport system will be created which allows users the flexibility to choose the transport services that work best for them. We will introduce strategic interchange opportunities to integrate bus, rail and active travel and to deliver complete end-to-end journeys for all users by non-car modes, ensuring access to vital public services, employment and leisure.

7.31 This plan will also encourage affordable cost of travel and we will work with partners to deliver cost effective fares for journeys within urban parts of the county as well as for rural/urban trips.

Cars as part of seamless integrated journeys

7.32 We recognise that access to the car may be essential for some journeys (i.e. making the transport network inclusive in the absence of reliable and suitable alternatives). This plan seeks to address the challenges of unsuitable or absent alternatives and provide opportunities to demonstrate how the built environment and transport services are inclusive, thereby, providing the option to enable people to travel using sustainable modes.

7.33 As we deliver on addressing these challenges, there may be times we need to focus on placemaking and/or specific modes (i.e. giving priority to other modes) or managing demand (e.g. limiting or restricting parking, redesigning road space to prioritise people walking, wheeling and cycling, or amending the cost of parking) to meet our objectives and outcomes of the plan.

Delivering these objectives

We will deliver these objectives through the following policy areas:

- Policy C1: Inclusive access

- Policy C2: Bus and coach
- Policy C3: Rail
- Policy C4: Integrating transport
- Policy C5: Demand responsive (taxi, private hire and DDRT) and community transport
- Policy C6: Public transport infrastructure

Policy C1: Inclusive access

Context

7.34 In 2020 DfT published its Inclusive Transport Strategy for achieving equal access for disabled people. This has the following key themes:

- Raising awareness of the obligations on transport operators
- Ensuring that transport staff (frontline and managerial) understand the needs of disabled people
- Ensuring that transport operators provide travel information in formats that all passengers can easily access
- Ensuring that vehicles, stations and streetscapes are designed, built and operated so that they are easy to use for all
- The future of inclusive transport - ensuring that technological advances and new business models provide opportunities for all

7.35 In the south of the county the East Coastway rail route connects major towns including Lewes, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings. The bus network connects a number of the major towns, in doing so providing access to/from rural areas in between, though provision is sparse where public transport use has traditionally been poor. The voluntary, community and social enterprise sectors play an important role in keeping people and places connected in these areas through community support activities.

7.36 Everyone should be able to access the travel mode they want for their journey where practical. Improved access to our transport networks will help improve social inclusion, through access to employment, education, and training regardless of where you live in the county.

Issues/opportunities

7.37 Increasing the travel options available and publicity of their availability can help achievement of accessibility, equity and social inclusion goals by extending people's ability to access the places they need and want to go to a range of services, including health, education, training and employment and leisure.

7.38 Six of the 38 railway stations in East Sussex have the top accessibility rating of A (Buxted, Eastbourne, Eridge, Hastings, Seaford, and Uckfield).[xxxi] Therefore, there is considerable opportunity for improvement of the accessibility of facilities at the other railway stations to help increase the number of disabled people who can safely use railway services in the

county. Network Rail currently have a competitive national Access for All approach to fund or part-fund accessible. However, East Sussex County Council will work in partnership with GBR in the future to address accessibility at rail station.

7.39 Working with operators there is an opportunity to increase the affordability of public transport, for example, with the help of continued Government funding for lower bus fares. However, the Council is limited in that it does not have powers to directly influence the affordability of public transport.

7.40 Reducing the cost of providing bus services through the introduction of bus priority is also key, as this saves the need for more buses and drivers due to increased traffic delays. Working in partnership with the bus operators, these operating cost savings would be passed on to service users through improved services and better value fares, particularly in our most deprived areas.

7.41 There are also areas of deprivation in our rural areas and local centres including Hailsham, Rye and Eastern Rother where there are areas amongst the most deprived in East Sussex (using indices of multiple deprivation). By improving interchange between modes (mobility hubs) and enhancing bus services in between rural and local centres can support better access to health, education and skills facilities can help to address deprivation.

Component policy measures

In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Promoting accessibility improvements to physical transport infrastructure
- Improving access to employment, education, health, social care, retail, social destinations and other key services
- Promoting the provision of accessible transport information across key sectors including health, employment and skills, business and leisure, culture and tourism.
- Working with operators to make public transport more affordable and better value for money
- Working in partnership with bus operators to reduce bus operating costs through the introduction of more bus priority measures, with savings passed on to service users
- Working with community transport providers and groups (e.g. Southeast Community Rail Partnership) to make access to transport as widespread and inclusive as possible

Policy C2: Bus and coach

Context

7.42 In 2020, the government announced £3bn of new funding to improve buses services and infrastructure across England towards London standards and published '2021 a new National Bus Strategy (NBS) - Bus Back Better'. East Sussex submitted a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) to the DfT at the end of October 2021, which made the case for and included interventions to achieve high quality bus services across the county that provide a frequent and comprehensive choice and improve journey time reliability and

punctuality of buses. These can be achieved through, amongst other measures, better scheduling of services and bus priority infrastructure that will in turn make a significant positive contribution to better air quality, decarbonisation, the local economy and accessibility (to services) improvements.

7.43 East Sussex is a popular tourist destination, with many of our visitors arriving by coach as part of coach holidays, especially within Eastbourne.

7.44 The county has previously been part of commercial national coach networks, though these connections have been lost in recent years. Those wishing to travel by coach need to travel to Brighton, West Sussex (A23 corridor – Hickstead or Gatwick) or Kent for coach connections towards London and other destinations.

Issues/opportunities

7.45 We secured £41.4m of BSIP funding in July 2022. The BSIP funding will improve bus services through to April 2026, reduce fares and simplify ticketing, and deliver infrastructure improvements (including bus priority measures, bus stops and real time information provision), targeted at supporting increased usage of bus for short, medium and long-distance trips. This includes supporting operators to adapt to and accommodate changes in travel demand, e.g. increased working from home and changes in leisure travel.

7.46 Our plan proposes a step change in bus frequency throughout the day and on weekends on our high demand inter-urban corridors and in urban conurbations, where possible, enabling a turn up and go service for all users. This will help to increase competitiveness of inter urban bus journey times and reliability with private car.

7.47 In rural areas, Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) referred to as 'Flexibus' is currently funded through the BSIP until March 2026. This will mean that nearly every resident has access to a bus service. Work continues to optimise the DDRT provision in East Sussex, to try and deliver DDRT services in the most needed areas beyond the BSIP funding and ensuring that these services can be provided cost effectively (i.e. achieve value for money).

7.48 Mobility as a Service (MaaS) is a term used to describe digital transport service platforms that enable users to access, pay for, and get real-time information on, a range of public and private transport options. These platforms may also be linked to the provision of new transport services (UK Parliament, 2017)[7]. Innovative Mobility as a Service (MaaS) principles will be explored and delivered when it can be done in an effective manner both in terms of cost of delivery and the benefits.

7.49 This provision makes transport more integrated and a key part of MaaS. Introducing integrated ticketing means that the resultant cost should be reduced / less than the combined price to all users. It also fosters technical and operational innovation to improve the efficiency of services such that the whole region has access to high quality, rich and

[7] Mobility as a Service (MaaS) in the UK: change and its implications (publishing.service.gov.uk)

accurate public transport information that will in turn allow for the network to be enhanced and continuously improved.

7.50 Bus delay analysis, using improved data systems in partnership with the bus operators, is expected to be an increasingly powerful tool to review feasibility options and potential interventions. These solutions may be a range of interventions including:

- Operational adjustments to bus timings and routes to improve punctuality and reliability
- New ticketing and payment schemes that reduce passenger boarding delays
- Changes to roadside parking schemes to reduce highway pinch points, including enforcement improvements
- Introduction of priority for buses at traffic signals
- Review of bus priority opportunities at pedestrian crossings and traffic signals to reduce undue delays to buses and ensure pedestrian safety
- Introduction of traffic light control at roundabouts where there are significant delays to buses
- Changes in bus stop design, including carriageway re-profiling and longer bus stop clearways, to reduce delays caused to buses in entering and exiting bus stops
- New bus lanes, including bus gates, to speed bus journey times and improve reliability.

7.51 Where operational savings will be realised through bus priority measures, the bus operators have committed through the Enhanced Partnership to re-invest these savings into service enhancements and/or better value fares.

7.52 There may be opportunities to reintroduce commercial coach services to East Sussex, providing an alternative mode of travel by which residents and visitors can access the county. Working with partners to ensure there is suitable coach pick-up and drop-off spaces at key destinations, in addition to providing adequate coach parking. Alongside investment in inter-urban and rural bus services, this will improve important cross-boundary links with neighbouring counties such as West Sussex.

Component policy measures

7.53 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Supporting the continued development of urban and key corridor bus networks by working in partnership with bus operators to improve frequency, punctuality, reduced cancellations and frequency
- Delivering significant improvements to the public transport network within our urban areas to support growth and deliver a step change in accessibility
- Supporting measures to better manage demand for road space following the provision of high-quality public transport infrastructure

- Supporting opportunities to reinstate commercial coach operations into the county and ensuring provision is made of coach pick up/drop off and parking at key destinations in East Sussex.

Policy C3: Rail

Context

7.54 Rail, in East Sussex, transports large volumes of people quickly, safely, efficiently, and with less impact on the environment due to a largely electrified network, with the exception of the Oxted Line from Hurst Green (Surrey) to Uckfield and the Marshlink line between Ore and Ashford. Rail services are more effective in carrying concentrated flows of passengers between town and city centres at higher speeds than bus and private cars.

7.55 However, rail is much less competitive for shorter door-to-door journeys. The East Sussex Rail Strategy focusses on how rail can better facilitate the two key strategic, longer-distance movements:

- East-West along the south coast, using the East Coastway and Marshlink lines, connecting Brighton, Newhaven, Seaford, Lewes, Polegate (which provides a rail hub for Hailsham and other nearby villages), Eastbourne, Bexhill, Hastings and Rye.
- Between East Sussex and London, with an ambition of closing the gap between service provision and journey times such that Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings to London are comparably competitive to Brighton to London.

Issues/opportunities

7.56 The County rail network serves the majority of our main urban areas. With improvements to frequency, journey time and reliability, rail could be more competitive with private car for inter-urban trips.

7.57 Pre-pandemic rail in East Sussex was based on a 'commuter railway', where higher peak time fares are charged. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, leisure rail travel has recovered strongly, whilst commuter and business travel remains below pre-pandemic levels. An increase in leisure travel provides an opportunity to cater for an expanded and new rail market and needs to consider the different requirements and expectations of this market.

7.58 The strategy focuses on partnership working to, reinstate former railway lines such as the Uckfield – Lewes line, upgrade existing rail alignments such as the Marshlink and utilising technology such as dynamic signalling to support faster, higher capacity and more frequent services, particularly on the Coastway lines.

7.59 There is emerging railway reform and emerging policies through the establishment of Great British Railways which will focus on maximising railway performance and reliability, whilst making railways easier to use; rolling out accessibility improvements at stations; integrated ticketing and improved industry response during disruption to increase the perceived attractiveness of rail.

7.60 Rail is expensive to construct, maintain, and operate, and this is reflected in fare levels which mean that travelling by train can be more expensive than travelling by car. Fixed

infrastructure can also be difficult and expensive to modify, and services are susceptible to disruption which can discourage its use.

Component policy measures

7.61 We will be updating the East Sussex Rail Strategy in 2024. In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Supporting measures to deliver a more reliable, integrated, passenger friendly rail network
- Facilitating improvements to stations to improve the experience of travelling by train
- Exploring options to expand/reinstate the rail network to link to new settlements, corridors and growth areas to improve journey times to and from East Sussex as well as provide network resilience
- Supporting frequency and journey time enhancements on our rural and intercity rail links to improve connectivity and capacity (for both leisure and business travellers)

7.62 Policy D1: Strategic Connectivity also captures improvements to the rail network.

Policy C4: Integrating transport

Context

7.63 Public transport, including bus, rail, and demand responsive transport along with active travel is most effective, and attractive to the public , when seamless, easy-to-use and attractively priced. Poorly integrated public transport services deter their use amongst residents and visitors, making it difficult to understand which service to use, where to change buses or onto other services, or the best way to pay for journeys.

7.64 Campaign for Better Transport's *Integrated transport: A new generation of interchanges* states that *"an integrated transport network with reliable and well-positioned interchange points requires clear long-term policy supported by meaningful planning attached to investment decisions"*.[xxxii] Our aim is for a transport network that enables seamless trips - a faster and more reliable strategic network paired with improvements to first/last mile connectivity.

Issues/opportunities

7.65 The strategy emphasises a series of strategic urban and rural interchange opportunities in key locations in East Sussex, enabling interchange between rail and bus services, active travel corridors, and could accommodate shared mobility solutions such as e-bike hubs and Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) – Flexi-bus. These strategic interchanges will be co-located at key locations (e.g. railway stations such as Polegate, or locations where several identified inter-urban bus routes intersect such as Lewes and Uckfield) enabling longer-distance trips across the county and beyond for residents of East Sussex and visitors.

7.66 East Sussex's BSIP[xxxiii] and TfSE's Strategic Investment Plan sets out ambitions to integrate ticketing between operators and transport modes as well as to improve timetable co-ordination and integration between different services and modes.

7.67 Whilst all bus operators in the county offer contactless payment, they do not all provide tap on tap out services or fare capping for contactless payments. Our complementing policy measures focus on working with partners to deliver simplified fares and ticketing across East Sussex and neighbouring areas, and integrating bus and rail timetables to reduce end-to-end journey times and achieve a vision of seamless multi-modal connectivity which delivers an attractive, competitive journey time against private vehicles.

Component policy measures

7.68 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Encouraging the rollout of smart ticketing and value for money fare options across all modes of transport, working towards seamless multi-modal ticketing
- Delivering improvements to major transport interchanges to help deliver a seamless transport network
- Delivering intermediate and smaller scale interchange improvements (mobility hubs) in rural and local centres

Policy C5: Demand responsive (including taxi, private hire and DDRT) and community transport

Context

7.69 Taxi, private hire, Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT) – Flexibus and community transport provision is an important service for individuals across East Sussex, forming an integral component within our transport ambition. This summarises our approach to rural mobility, adopting Mobility as a Service (MaaS) principles which promote integrated DDRT which feeds into strategic interchange locations that allow access to the wider public transport network. This will also incorporate private taxi hire and specialist transport provision, with a focus on connecting people to services, including healthcare, education, retail and leisure facilities across the region.

7.70 'Digital platforms' will enable transport providers to fully optimise transport provision, especially where providers' data is shared. The incorporation of several transport resources from standard buses to private taxis is likely to play a crucial role in the cost effectiveness and value for money of transport provision and is seen as a significant opportunity that needs to be captured as early as possible.

7.71 Community transport is non-profit making transport provision. In East Sussex, these range from local car lift schemes intended to meet a particular need, such as access to a doctors' surgery, to minibus dial a ride and local bus services. Some rely exclusively on volunteers, whilst others employ paid staff.

Issues/opportunities

7.72 Taxi and private hire provide a vital service to rural populations where public transport provision may still not be frequent and timely for connecting people to key services such as healthcare and education as well as for protected characteristic groups who are not able or feel uncomfortable accessing public transport.

7.73 A challenge is the availability of taxi services in rural areas, and at peak times when capacity is reduced due to taxi's working on school transport runs.

7.74 Though our BSIP has delivered bus service enhancements across all days of week and day time and evenings, in some locations public transport may still not be available outside of regular hours of operation. Therefore, taxi and private hire play an integral part in the meeting and fulfilling demand of customers and staff of the night-time economy.

7.75 To serve one-off major events or surges in tourism demand in the summer months, specialist transport may play a role in adding capacity and resilience to our network.

7.76 Transitioning taxi, private hire, demand responsive and community transport vehicles to electric vehicles (EV) would considerably reduce the carbon and air quality impact of these trips.

7.77 Community transport providers may have limited capacity for significant expansion. The providers are often reliant on the efforts of key individuals and volunteers, though providers will pursue every possible means to take on additional services as the need arises.

7.78 The guidance in the Bus Services Act 2017 specifically suggests deploying publicly funded DDRT services to transport passengers from isolated villages to bus stops and transport hubs where they can connect to commercial bus services and complete their journeys, which keeps costs down both for the DDRT service and the commercial bus operator. On community transport, the guidance recommends that local authorities encourage community transport operators to integrate services into the wider public transport network. These are all policies which we will continue to pursue.

Component policy measures

7.79 In summary policy measures for demand responsive and community transport will focus on:

- Introducing incentives for taxi and private hire operators to electrify their fleet
- Supporting the introduction of taxi only electric vehicle charging points on the road
- We will continue to pursue the community transport principles noted in the DfT's guidance relating to the Bus Services Act 2017. This includes helping and encouraging community transport operators to run DDRT services
- Assisting community transport operators to increase their service provision where they wish to do so, with help in seeking funding opportunities, training, knowledge sharing and assistance with recruitment and seeking volunteers
- Working with operators and drivers to ensure training for drivers is provided to support improved accessibility, comfort and quality of service, and safety and security

Policy C6: Public transport infrastructure

Context

7.80 The quality and availability of public transport infrastructure is a key element of supporting journeys made using public transport and in the delivery of seamless, comfortable and accessible journeys. The following partners have responsibility for delivering and maintaining different parts of public transport infrastructure:

- East Sussex County Council – bus priority measures (including bus lanes, bus gates and priority for buses at traffic signals), raised kerbs at bus stops to provide bus access for disabled users, bus stop markings (including bus stop clearways to ensure raised kerbs are accessible), real time information (screens at stops and other key locations), bus stop poles and flags, and cycle parking
- District, Borough, Town and Parish Councils – shelters and seating at bus stops and cycle parking (if located on land they own)
- Bus operators – bus flags and timetable information boards
- Network Rail/Great British Railways and train operators –including access to, from and around stations and cycle parking (on their property)
- Train operators – supported assistance at stations

Issues/opportunities

7.81 The County Council and bus operators view bus priority as not only as a tool to improve journey punctuality and reliability of buses, but vital in providing for faster services to provide another choice to travelling by car. The range of partners involved in public transport infrastructure provides an opportunity to work together to deliver consistent facilities at bus stops, based on a hierarchy of user needs.

7.82 As appropriate, and where budgets allow, transfer responsibility of infrastructure assets to one owner to allow coordinated overall control of the maintenance, repair and provision of bus stop infrastructure (e.g. one organisation responsible for everything at a bus stop).

7.83 Bus delay analysis, using improved data systems in partnership with the bus operators, is expected to be an increasingly powerful tool to review feasibility options and potential interventions. These solutions may be a range of interventions including:

- Operational adjustments to bus timings and routes to improve punctuality and reliability
- New ticketing and payment schemes that reduce passenger boarding delays
- Changes to roadside parking schemes to reduce highway pinch points, including improvements in enforcement
- Introduction of priority for buses at traffic signals
- Review of pedestrian crossings and traffic signal priorities to reduce undue delays to buses

- Introduction of traffic signal control at roundabouts where there are significant delays to buses
- Changes in bus stop design, including carriageway re-profiling and longer bus stop clearways, to reduce delays caused to buses in entering and exiting bus stops
- New bus lanes, including bus gates, to speed bus journey times. Where operational savings will be realised through bus priority measures, the bus operators have committed (through the enhanced partnership) to re-invest these savings into service enhancements and/or better value fares
- Work with rail operators to increase the number of accessible stations in the county, with the aim of making all accessible to all users

Component policy measures

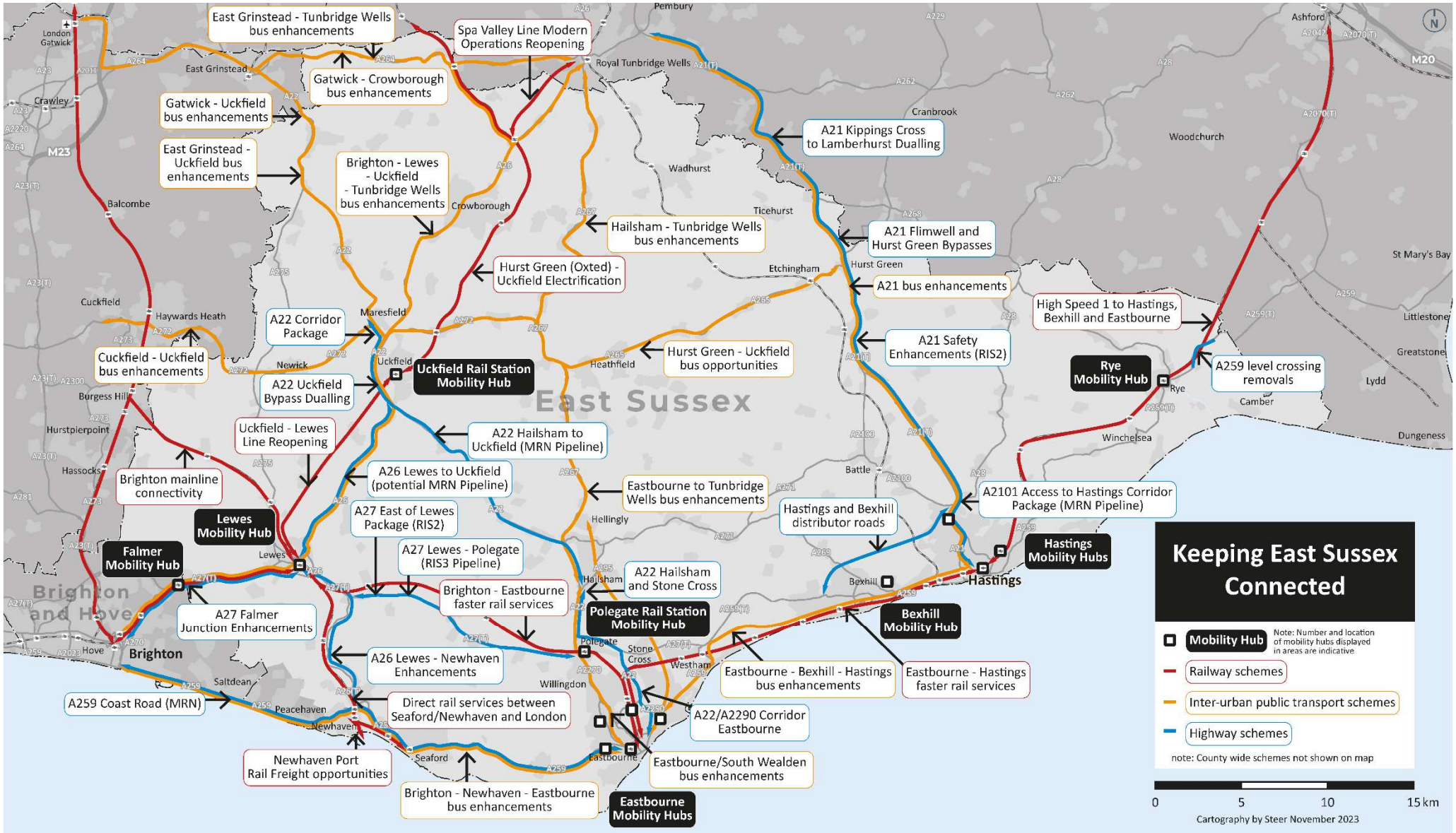
7.84 In summary policy measures relating to public transport infrastructure will focus on:

- Introducing appropriate bus stop infrastructure, depending on the location of the stop and user demand and needs
- Supporting Network Rail (and Great British Railways once in place) and the train operating companies with making stations within the county fully accessible to all users
- The County Council and the bus operators will work together to improve the ability to capture rich and accurate data and analyse it effectively to make better informed decisions on improvements and identification of schemes as well as supporting business cases including value for money.

8 Keeping East Sussex connected

8.1 In this chapter, the primary focus is about supporting people and businesses in getting where they need to go, quickly and reliably - specifically, longer distance highway, railway and bus schemes are of importance as well as freight.

Figure 8.1:LTP4 Investment Plan key schemes for Theme D "Keeping East Sussex connected"



Support sustainable economic growth

8.2 Our aspiration is for shared prosperity, fairness and environmental enhancements contributed to by a high-quality transport network. We aim to:

- Facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people
- Contribute to reducing deprivation and inequality through improved accessibility to education, training and employment
- Attract and retain businesses and a skilled workforce in the county
- Enhance sustainable access to key visitor and cultural destinations
- Engage with our Local Planning Authorities to deliver sustainable housing and employment growth identified in their Local Plans

Facilitating strategic passenger and freight movements

8.3 Given our highest populated communities are located on the coast, east-west connectivity to, for and through these communities is important to the county. This connectivity faces many transport challenges including uncompetitive rail journey times between key urban centres and a highway network that is constrained by single carriageway routes (for example, A27 and A259) which increases journey times when demand for these routes is high.

8.4 Similar highway constraints are seen on north-south routes serving primarily local centres such as Uckfield, Crowborough, and Heathfield as well as rural communities. The A21 and A22 both serve a strategic north-south function but also pass through the centre of local communities (for example, Hurst Green on the A21, Halland and Lower Dicker on the A22). This limits the certainty of journey times provided by the route and can present safety issues within the villages and towns it passes through. Full north-south rail alternatives are confined to the eastern (Hastings – Tonbridge line) and western sides (Brighton mainline) of the county, with a connection north from Uckfield, also serving Buxted, Crowborough and Eridge, towards London.

8.5 Our multi-modal strategy ensures focus is given to speeding up services on the East-Coastway line (running from Brighton to Lewes and then on to Eastbourne, and Hastings), leveraging advances in technology to run more frequent services, targeted infrastructure improvements to overcome bottlenecks at key railway junctions, and utilising bus-based mass transit for some intra-urban trips and active travel for local trips. A key challenge will be minimising disruption to highway trips at level crossings, particularly on busy sections of line (for example, Hampden Park in Eastbourne, Polegate High Street).

8.6 Strategic and local highway improvements will be targeted where they also accommodate and enhance bus and/or active travel provision through, for example, delivering bus priority and/or segregated active travel corridors. In addition, highway improvements will also be targeted on where there are safety concerns requiring a need for intervention, or where highways are required to support strategic freight movements.

Growing service and employment catchments

8.7 The largest employment sites are located in the urban areas along the coast. However, residents in rural communities currently have limited access to these employment opportunities with public transport between rural areas and urban coastal areas often being infrequent or providing slow or unreliable journey times. There are opportunities to improve provision of transport to access employment, education or training helping to maintain and grow a skilled workforce and thriving local economy.

8.8 Enhancements to rail services focused on these major centres as well as inter-urban bus service improvements will ensure that residents of this area can more sustainably access employment and education. Bus service enhancements on the A21 will improve public transport connectivity between rural locations along this route to Hastings, where employment opportunities are greater, but also where there are onward rail and bus connections to other major towns.

8.9 By investing in a joined up transport network, we want economic opportunities to be available to all and to provide employers with the biggest possible opportunity to attract the required talent. Not only that, since the pandemic attendance at workplace premises is likely to be a hybrid set up (84% of the workforce nationally still attend the workplace during the working week) so East Sussex employers still have a need for workers who can get to them within a reasonable commuting time.

Tourism

8.10 East Sussex has a range of tourist and cultural destinations that require connectivity to thrive. East Sussex welcomes tourists from all areas of the UK and abroad; enhancements to strategic transport infrastructure will support a growth in visitor numbers and improve the visitor experience, therefore extending stays and encouraging repeat visits to the benefit of our economy.

8.11 Our plan includes interventions to enhance connectivity from beyond the county including linking Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne by high speed rail through upgrades to the Marshlink line (Hastings-Ashford) and improvements at Ashford International to enable access to the HS1 link (Ashford - St Pancras) alongside improvements to bus services from Gatwick Airport to the County. Equally, we propose interventions to support sustainable access to key tourist destinations including bus service improvements and active travel linking to the South Downs National Park and High Weald National Landscape.

Strengthen the resilience of our transport networks

8.12 A transport system that is more capable of recovering from unexpected disruptions (including events caused by climate change), reducing transport delays will realise this objective. We aim to:

- Improve journey time reliability for people and businesses
- Enable transport journeys to be resilient, flexible, and adaptable and recover quickly from emergencies and events
- Improve the resilience of highway and other transport infrastructure and assets

Reducing disruption and delay

8.13 Our strategy captures the latest plans by Network Rail in their Rail Network Enhancement Pipeline. We continue to support the reinstatement of the railway between Uckfield and Lewes to provide an alternative railway route from London to the south coast, providing resilience to the Brighton main line, whilst also supporting local connectivity between communities in East Sussex along the line and Lewes. We also propose extending HS1 to Rye, Hastings, Bexhill, and Eastbourne via the Marshlink line (Ashford - Hastings), which will improve journey times between these coastal communities and London and connectivity to Kent, in addition to providing a viable attractive alternative to reach the East Sussex coast during periods of disruption on the rail network.

8.14 Some of the improvements to improve services to/from East Sussex occur outside of the county. For example, a series of capacity enhancements on the Brighton Main line and remodelling of the rail network in the East Croydon area will increase the number of services that can be accommodated between London and the South Coast (including to East Sussex), whilst also providing more resilient and reliable journeys during any disruption.

8.15 The major roads in East Sussex carry both strategic (longer distance) and local traffic, which can cause considerable delays in and around urban areas where speeds and/or volumes of traffic are constrained and impact the effective operation of local buses. This plan proposes several highways interventions to separate these strategic and local trips to support faster journey time and safety. The Uckfield Bypass will reduce congestion on this section of the A22, whilst also enabling opportunities to improve public transport and active travel journeys within Uckfield. Also included in the plan are further improvements to the A27 corridor between Lewes and Polegate as well as junction improvements to the A22 at Hailsham and Polegate/Stone Cross.

Flexibility and choice

8.16 To provide flexibility and choice, the Council will need to work with partners and stakeholders to provide a range of transport choices for residents and visitors, enabling them to pick the one that best suits their needs. Allowing users to plan their journeys both ahead of travel and 'live' (for example, during any disruption), we can increase consumer perception and confidence in travelling using public and integrated transport.

Emergency and events

8.17 Our plan is for a transport network that is more resilient to incidents and the impacts of a changing climate, collisions and other events that disrupt our transport networks, as referred to in Chapter 5 – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment. Resilience ensures alternatives for users during periods of disruption (either by same or alternative modes) and networks that can accommodate future growth and changing travel needs and patterns.

8.18 We will work in partnership with Network Rail (and Great British Railways once formally established), National Highways, Sustrans and Transport for the South East in ensuring the strategic transport network in and serving the county continues to develop, evolve, and expand to future travel needs. At a local level we will work with local communities and

stakeholders to minimise inconvenience on local communities during periods of disruption. By designing a transport network fit to face any issues, we aim to provide reliability to improve consumer service and retention.

Delivering these objectives

8.19 We will deliver these objectives through the following policy areas:

- Policy D1: Strategic connectivity
- Policy D2: Freight and international gateways
- Policy D3: The needs of business and the visitor economy
- Policy D4: Supporting sustainable development and development control
- Policy D5: Parking
- Policy D6: Highways maintenance and asset management

Policy D1: Strategic connectivity

Context

8.20 East Sussex is poorly connected to the rest of the country, relative to other areas in the south east, by both road and rail. Supporting inclusive socio-economic growth, means we need to overcome the correlation that exists between the areas with the poorest strategic connectivity and the most deprived areas of East Sussex.

8.21 By improving local (within East Sussex and its immediate environs) and regional (within the south east) strategic connectivity to/from areas of the county which are most deprived, we can continue to build towards a future where all members of our community contribute to, and benefit from our area's growth and success.

Issues/opportunities

8.22 The East Coastway line performs a dual function of serving local and shorter distance trips between Brighton, Lewes, Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings, as well as connecting these settlements to the West Coastway line (Brighton to Portsmouth/Southampton) and Kent (via the Marshlink line). This means the two-track railway can serve neither purpose effectively as faster, regional services are held up by stopping, local services, or slowed down by having to call at additional stops.

8.23 Passenger numbers on the Brighton mainline have recovered from considerable reductions brought about by reduced transport demand during the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2022 the average numbers of passengers standing on services in the AM and PM peaks are only 1.8% less than the level that was seen in 2019.[xxxiv]

8.24 The alternative radial rail links towards London, the Uckfield line (which terminates short of the south coast) and the Hastings - Tonbridge line, have relatively slow line speeds with several local stops albeit these stations provide vital connectivity to jobs and services particularly for smaller rural settlements and their hinterlands.

8.25 The current condition and discontinuous nature of the strategic and major road network around East Sussex falls short of the standard needed to fulfil this role on carrying longer distance and strategic traffic. The A21, A22 and A27 all pass through several villages and cause significant severance, noise, and air quality issues for local residents, and visitors travelling to/from the south coast.

8.26 The A259 between Brighton and Eastbourne serves as an alternative in the event of disruption on the A27 corridor. However, this means traffic is diverted onto this coastal road which is ill-equipped for the high volume of traffic and affects its function of carrying both intra- and inter-urban trips for the communities of Telscombe Cliffs, Peacehaven, Newhaven, Seaford, East Dean, Friston and Eastbourne along the A259 which also traverses through the protected landscape of the South Downs National Park.

8.27 There are multiple issues with rail level crossings on the strategic road network in East Sussex, particularly along the A259 between Rye and Brenzett where the road and Marshlink railway cross and conflict at the Star and Guldeford crossings. The A259 also has several steep inclines, tight bends, including the tight Ferry Hill hairpin bend at Winchelsea, which poses significant safety risks.

8.28 Maintaining, enhancing or introducing cross-border bus connectivity to our neighbouring authorities and their communities, for example links to Brighton, Gatwick, and Tunbridge Wells.

8.29 Work with coach operators to reintroduce coach services to the county, as part of nationwide coach networks, connecting the county to large parts of the country by coach.

Component policy measures

8.30 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Supporting improvements on regional and national corridors to improve connectivity to the rest of the UK and abroad for freight and passengers
- Explore options to expand the strategic transport network to link to new settlements, corridors, and growth areas
- Supporting measures to deliver a more reliable, integrated, passenger-friendly rail network
- Supporting measures to deliver a safer highways network that serves the needs of active travel, mass transit, freight, and new mobility as well as motorists

Policy D2: Freight and international gateways

Context

8.31 Transport for the South East published its Freight, Logistics and Gateway strategy in May 2022 which identifies a series of strategic actions, interventions, and measures, designed to deliver the following objectives:

- Improve operational efficiency and capacity of the freight and logistics sector
- Grow the size of, and employment within, the sector

- Improve connectivity to/from the south east's international gateways
- Reduce safety risk to other road users produced by freight transport, by reducing the likelihood of conflict between strategic freight movements and local, active travel movements
- Integrate logistics into place-making process through integration with planning policy and cultivating and harnessing better data from the sector
- Reducing environmental impact of sector by achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, as well as reducing air pollution associated with freight transport
- Reducing wider environmental impact of sector including impact on communities, noise levels, and informal lorry parking

8.32 Our strategy will capture these principles and safeguard our region's prosperity through holistic freight and logistics planning, incorporating innovative rail and last mile solutions to ensure freight movements to and from East Sussex are optimised and decarbonised. This will enable the economy of East Sussex to thrive and be a growing contributor to the wider UK economy.

Issues/opportunities

8.33 Cross-boundary movements are central to the movement of freight in East Sussex. Located either at the boundaries of the county or just outside are London Gatwick Airport (located to the north west of East Sussex) and the Port of Newhaven (located in the south of the county). These are international gateways which serve both international passenger and freight markets and there are opportunities to improve public transport connectivity, beyond that which is currently provided via the Brighton Main line and Seaford branch line (for rail) and the strategic road network (for vehicular access). Improvements would enable a greater proportion of residents to sustainably access these gateways.

8.34 The potential expansion and growth (i.e. Northern Runway plans) of London Gatwick Airport in particular provides opportunities for economic and employment growth for East Sussex and the region, albeit this is balanced against the impacts that such growth will have on the environment and local communities (e.g. noise, air quality) in the county as well.

8.35 The south east of England hosts several major international freight gateways of national significance, with East Sussex being in proximity to Dover and Folkestone (Channel Tunnel) to the east and therefore being within reach of the continent and Southampton to the west. It is projected that freight and passenger movements across the channel to Europe will continue to grow. There are continued economic opportunities for East Sussex to thrive into the future.

8.36 The A259 east of Hastings, which connects East Sussex with Kent, is not suitable for carrying high volumes of road freight on HGVs due to the poor alignment including narrow sections of road, sharp bends and steep hills, for example Ferry Hill at Winchelsea. As strategic freight movements conflict with local traffic, the likelihood and severity of collisions rises. Road safety data provided by the Department for Transport suggests that

when compared to the national average, East Sussex has a higher percentage of fatal (East Sussex 2% and England 1%) and serious collisions (East Sussex 24% and England 18%). Furthermore, the presence of HGV movements on local roads discourages active travel usage as users have to navigate narrow road space with oversized vehicles.

8.37 Road freight links between East Sussex and the rest of the country is also poor, disrupted by congestion on many strategic road corridors, most notably the need to bypass London via the M25 which slows down the movement of HGVs carrying freight to and from the rest of the country.

8.38 There is also a lack of resilience for freight routes, particularly a lack of alternative/diversionary road and rail routes for several critical freight links.

8.39 There is limited freight services and parking in the county. Whilst there is some lorry parking at the Cophall services near Polegate for HGVs there are no driver welfare facilities and often HGV drivers find themselves parking in laybys alongside the strategic & major road network or on-road in Industrial Estates overnight.

Component policy measures

8.40 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Promoting rail freight, including the transfer of road freight onto rail
- Promoting sustainable urban freight distribution for first mile/last mile freight journeys to and from key town centres and industrial estates
- Improving road freight facilities, with focus on reducing conflicts between strategic freight movements and local, active travel movements
- Explore opportunities to improve lorry parking and driver facilities
- Supporting improvements to public transport services to the Port of Newhaven and Gatwick Airport

8.41 A Freight Strategy for East Sussex will be developed as part of this LTP. It will expand on the component policy measures mentioned above beyond the level of detail currently included in the Investment Plan. The county's Freight Strategy will be subject to separate public and stakeholder consultation.

Policy D3: The needs of businesses and the visitor economy

Context

8.42 The provision of a transport network that supports the needs of businesses is a critical element of our plan. This is specifically to support transport connectivity to improve links to existing markets and unlock new markets and ensure journey reliability for goods and people to help our businesses to be more productive. This will ensure that economic gains are captured locally.

8.43 A new East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy will be adopted in Autumn 2024. It will provide a framework for partners to collaborate in the medium and short term through a shared vision for East Sussex. It will promote and enable shared understanding of East

Sussex's strengths, challenges and opportunities, and will provide the strategic backing for competitive funding bids to unlock increased funding from central government.

8.44 The Sussex Visitor Economy Initiative (SVEI)[xxxv] was established in September 2020 in partnership between East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, initially in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The strategic partnership is working with public and private sector partners to harness the opportunities that cross-county collaboration brings. It aims to support sector recovery, resilience, and growth, and to raise the profile of Sussex as a national and international visitor destination.

8.45 With a range of nationally and internationally significant tourism destinations such as Cuckmere Haven and the Seven Sisters, cultural destinations such as Glyndebourne and the seaside towns, and a hinterland that includes the High Weald National Landscape and the South Downs National Park, tourism and cultural industries are an important consideration in planning the future transport provision in East Sussex.

8.46 The East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) secured its Visit England accreditation in 2024 and joins a network of LVEPs which create a new and more efficient national strategic infrastructure for visitor economy management. The strategic partnership is working with public and private sector partners to harness the opportunities that cross-county collaboration brings. It aims to support regenerative sector recovery, resilience and growth, and to raise the profile of Sussex as a national and international visitor destination. The LVEP's vision and priorities are captured in its Strategy for Growth and includes supporting regenerative practices, improving accessibility, improving data capture and a growth target of £2.5bn.

8.47 To further support this, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council are launching Experience Sussex to maximise the impact of the Sussex brand, in particular to high spending overseas visitors. Culture East Sussex is developing a refreshed East Sussex Cultural Strategy which will reinforce the value of the visitor economy in supporting cultural visitor destinations viability and supporting the quality of life and health outcomes of our residents. Data capture to inform investment and the marketing of our key unique selling points such as Wine Tourism and Sussex Bay aims to achieve growth target. This will not be achievable without the fit for purpose transport infrastructure to ensure an environmentally responsible, accessible approach to growth.

8.48 International gateways in and around East Sussex are key to both the needs of business and the visitor economy. These include London Gatwick and other London airports and ports such as Newhaven, Dover and Portsmouth.

Issues/opportunities

8.49 Often those who rely on public transport cannot easily access the county's cultural, leisure and tourism offer.

8.50 Rail travel for leisure purposes has recovered from pandemic travel restrictions more quickly than commuter or business demand. Enhancements to rail service provision can

help to capitalise on this recovery allowing more people to access visitor destinations within East Sussex in a sustainable way.

8.51 Businesses value reliability and resilience from a transport network. Bus service improvements which increase frequency and operating hours of services and on the most congested routes, introduction of bus segregation, can help to deliver a public transport network which the workforce and businesses can rely on, stimulating choices regarding business location.

8.52 Work to maximise the potential of international gateways will be informed and complemented by future plans, for example the Newhaven Port Masterplan Refresh published in September 2024.

Component policy measures

8.53 In summary policy measures will focus on:

- Investing in our rail and highway networks to allow our businesses to trade and workers to travel easily across the country and abroad.
- Improving local connectivity to bring firms and workers in our towns closer together, especially in rural areas, to promote jobs, growth and increased prosperity for both local businesses and local people.
- Improving connectivity to international gateways, to large centres in the county and wider region, as well as local communities.
- Delivering an integrated transport network navigable by visitors.
- Delivering sustainable transport connectivity to tourist destinations.
- Supporting access to education and training opportunities.

Policy D4: Supporting sustainable development and development control

Context

8.54 The population of East Sussex is forecast to grow by 70,000 by 2035[xxxvi]. A significant level of residential development as well as development of commercial sites for employment and other civic amenities and facilities is required to accommodate this growth and to meet housing needs from the current level of population.

8.55 Future development in the county will be guided by Local Planning Authorities' Local Plans and their vision-led approach, where we will ensure that the key principles of LTP4 are embedded within the respective Local Plans (and any subsequent reviews). Development is likely to come forward through a combination of town centre densification, urban extensions, suburban developments, and sensitive rural development. It will also be informed by Health Impact Assessments and using the Healthy Streets framework.

8.56 The presence of the South Downs National Park in the south of the county and the High Weald National Landscape to the north, as well as the sea provides quality of life for people living and working in the County, but also results in constraints to the location of development and delivery of infrastructure to support this.

8.57 The County faces several transport based challenges around car ownership, dependency, and congestion on key corridors. As such, a key aim is to reduce the distance's that people need to travel and to encourage higher levels of walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport journeys.

8.58 With sustainable development underpinning the National Planning Policy Framework, Active Travel England's requirement for development sizes (over 150 residential units or sites having area of five hectares or more) to assess the merits of walking, wheeling and cycling as part of development proposals and this plan having a greater emphasis on the opportunities to increase active and sustainable travel, consideration of this as part of development proposals is fundamental in influencing the development of healthy places.

8.59 Local Planning Authorities have responsibility, through policies set out in their Local Plans and other development plan documents, to set the requirements that developers must adhere to in contributing to accommodating travel demand and the mitigation of impacts of developments on the transport network. The Local Plan framework, along with this Local Transport Plan, will provide the context for enhancements to transport infrastructure and the identification and collection of development contributions.

Issues/opportunities

8.60 There is a need to better connect existing and future housing to jobs, effectively bringing more of the population 'closer' to employment opportunities. This will spread the benefits of future economic growth more evenly, and benefit businesses who will have a wider range of potential employees to select from.

8.61 Developments to the transport network can help to 'unlock' sites for future housing by providing new and improved connectivity to existing urban areas.

8.62 Future population increases could load more journeys onto the network, potentially worsening congestion, but if a co-ordinated land use/transport planning approach is pursued which focusses development within established urban areas then this can help to reduce these increases in transport demand (alongside other measures to improve travel choices and encourage walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport). The network is particularly sensitive to increased demand as vehicles are now often larger than originally intended in older road designs, such as country lanes.

Component policy measures

8.63 To contribute to the achievement of sustainable development we will work in partnership with Local Planning Authorities to:

- Actively manage patterns of growth to promote sustainable transport use
- Ensure that strategies and investments for supporting sustainable transport are aligned
- Transport issues are considered from the earliest stages of plan making and development proposals
- Encourage early and ongoing engagement with developers on transport impacts, transport infrastructure to be delivered and/or funded to support development

- Ensure developments maximise opportunities to deliver new and/or enhance existing pedestrian and cycle links
- Secure development contributions for strategic and local infrastructure
- Deliver and/or secure, through development, strategic transport and complementary connectivity infrastructure
- Deliver and/or secure, through development, public transport service and infrastructure provision

Policy D5: Parking

Context

8.64 Every journey made using a car or by cycle starts and ends with a parking space, either in a designated public or private space, 'bay', 'rack' or an informal location.

8.65 Parking is an important part of our transport network for both vehicles and bicycles. Being able to travel easily to key locations is a fundamental part of our society and quality of life, and for many of our journeys, this requires parking. However, as a demand management tool, availability and pricing of on- and off-street parking for vehicles has the ability to incentivise alternative journey options.

8.66 Cycle parking is of equal importance and the provision of secure, quality, and safe parking at key destinations supports seamless and integrated journeys.

8.67 National policy for vehicle parking is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework[xxxvii], specifically with regards to the setting of parking standards. It states, "*If setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development, policies should take into account:*

- *The accessibility of the development*
- *The type, mix, and use of the development*
- *The availability of and opportunities for public transport*
- *Local car ownership levels*
- *The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles*

Issues/opportunities

8.68 Parking plays a vital role in demand management. There are opportunities to manage demand through parking design, controlled provision and the cost of this, and enforcement supporting reduction in congestion, influencing travel behaviour towards more sustainable travel models, reductions in carbon emissions and improvements in air quality.

8.69 Repurposing parking space can enhance the public realm and creation of public spaces providing space for cycle parking, parklets, active travel infrastructure, or greening balanced with the needs of providing inclusive access. This can better support achievement of wider socio-economic outcomes.

8.70 The number of organisations that influence parking policy, provision and enforcement is complex:

- **Central government** - sets the National Planning Policy Framework
- **County Council/local highway authority** - as the local highway authority, publishes Parking Guidance for new development along with the provision of a parking calculator to establish the level of parking provision for new residential development. Also provides on-street parking controls and charging; often comments on parking as a statutory consultee to development applications; and can oversee Park & Ride provision.
- **Local Planning Authorities** - sets parking standards (i.e. permitted volumes of parking) in their Local Plans and ultimately decides whether to consent to the amount of parking permissible as part of development sites; operates public off-street parking (which they might outsource to a third party operator) and enforce off-street parking controls
- **Developers** - assess the likely need and ultimately build parking provision as part of their development sites
- **External partners** - provide off-street parking which support the overall parking stock. Partners include shopping centre operators and Network Rail
- **Police** - responsible for some on-street parking enforcement where civil parking enforcement (CPE) not in place (currently only Wealden do not have CPE)

8.71 The level of parking provision provided as part of development will be influenced by:

- the accessibility of the development
- the type, mix, and use of the development
- the availability of and opportunities for public transport
- local car ownership levels
- the need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles

Component policy measures

8.72 In summary parking policy measures will focus on:

- Promoting parking design that is safe, secure and considers the parking needs of all road users
- Repurposing existing parking spaces that encourage more sustainable travel behaviours and promote a better quality of life in our communities
- Working with key partners to ensure the provision of cycle parking as part of wider schemes and at key destinations

- Reducing parking provision to manage demand and encourage more walking, wheeling, cycling and public transport journeys
- Investigating parking technology and implications of disruptive technology to improve management and use of on & off-street parking stock
- Working with Local Planning Authorities to promote the benefits of controlled parking enforcement in parts of the county in which it is not currently in place
- Exploring opportunities to enhance coach and HGV parking in the county

Policy D6: Highways maintenance and asset management

Context

8.73 Maintaining and managing the assets that form our transport network – roads, public transport infrastructure, cycle routes, footpaths (streets), street lighting, road signs and other infrastructure is an essential part of keeping our residents and visitors moving and is important to our prosperity and growth. A well-maintained and managed network helps ensure that our journeys around the area are safe, reliable, and efficient, at all times and in all weather conditions.

8.74 The East Sussex Highway Asset Management Strategy and supporting policy aims to deliver a more efficient and effective approach to management of highway infrastructure assets through longer-term planning and ensuring that levels of service are defined and achievable. Through taking a life-cycle approach to assets and their management, and engaging with local stakeholders, we aim to make best use of resources and target improvements to highway infrastructure assets to support social wellbeing of local communities and drive sustainable economic growth. This is alongside supporting the objectives of LTP4 including safety, accessibility and resilience.

Issues/opportunities

- Ensure asset management programmes are future proofed and adapt to changes in mobility
- During the maintenance and repairs of assets, the replacement of materials that are more difficult to source will be dependent on availability of funding and the prioritisation of this
- Ensuring that whole life scheme maintenance costs are included from the outset of scheme planning stages, to ensure that these are affordable, will be critical
- Climate change and an increased frequency of extreme weather events mean that highways assets are subject to increased adverse conditions which can result in increased maintenance costs
- Use of carbon management systems in scheme identification, design and delivery minimise the embedded and operating emissions of the infrastructure

- There is growing recognition of the importance of good design and integrated delivery in maximising the life and capacity of existing assets while considering social and environmental impacts, such as resilience to climate change
- Consideration of the waste hierarchy[xxxviii] during construction (for example, using sustainably sourced materials with recycled content or reusing demolition material in new schemes) offers wide reaching benefits in terms of resource efficiency, sustainability, and cost savings

Component policy measures

8.75 In summary policy measures will focus on the following which are in alignment with East Sussex County Council's Highway Asset Management Strategy:

- Provision of a transport network which is as safe as possible for all users
- Prioritisation towards the maintenance of the existing highway assets
- Provision of enhancements to highway assets depending on the availability of funding
- Minimising the whole life costs of the highway
- The management and co-ordination of roadworks which minimise delays for all users, particularly public transport
- Addressing the challenges of climate change and enhancing our communities and environment through highway asset management and maintenance
- Embedding carbon management systems in the identification, design, and delivery of highways
- Monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of highways maintenance to ensure value for money is being achieved

9 Glossary

Term	Description
Active travel	Physically active modes such as cycling, walking, wheeling or horse riding. It also includes walking or cycling as part of a longer journey.
AQMA	Air Quality Management Area, an area where it is unlikely that the national air quality objectives, as set by DEFRA, will be achieved.
Car dependency	Reliance on cars to get around, whether through habit, because street environments have been planned around car use, or because walking, cycling and public transport alternatives are not available or appealing.
Carbon footprint	The total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organisation, event or product, expressed as a carbon dioxide equivalent.
Clinical Commissioning Group	Clinical Commissioning Group, responsible for implementing the commissioning roles as set out in the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
Community transport	A form of typically demand responsive transport that is typically volunteer-led and focused on vulnerable and isolated people. Sometimes takes the form of fixed route services where conventional bus services are needed but not available.
Distribution Network Operator (DNO)	Distribution Network Operator, a company licenced to distribute electricity in the UK.
DDRT	Digital Demand Responsive Transport, a form of transport where vehicles alter their routes based on particular transport demand rather than using a fixed route or timetable.
Electric vehicle	A vehicle that uses an electric motor for propulsion, comprising ones that run solely on batteries, as well as plug-in hybrid electric vehicles that have an attached petrol or diesel engine to power the battery engine.
EqIA	Equality Impact Assessment, a process designed to ensure that a policy, project or scheme does not discriminate against any disadvantaged or vulnerable people.
Greenhouse gas	A gas which absorbs solar radiation contributing to the greenhouse effect which leads to global warming and climate change.
HGV	Heavy Goods Vehicle, a large heavy vehicle generally used for transporting freight.

Term	Description
HIA	Health Impact Assessment, a series of procedures by which the impact of an intervention or policy may have on the health of a population is measured.
Highway	The whole or part of a public right of passage, often in reference to a road but also including pavements / footpaths, cycle routes, bridges, tunnels and other adjoining assets.
HRA	Habitats Regulation Assessment, which assesses whether plans will have the potential to cause an impact on protected areas.
KSI	Killed or Seriously Injured, a standard metric used to measure levels of road safety.
LCWIP	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, a long-term approach to developing local cycling and walking networks over a ten-year period.
Light rail	A form of urban rail transport which operates at a higher capacity to a tramway, often on an exclusive right of way, and serving parts of a large metropolitan area.
Local Authority	A local government organisation. In England there may be either one or two tiers of local government. A two-tier structure includes a County Council as the upper tier and a District Council as the lower tier. Local Authority responsibilities include strategic land use planning, and highways and transport.
Local Plan	A statutory planning document which sets out the vision and framework for future development within a Local Planning Authority area. It addresses housing, economy, community and infrastructure and is used as a tool to guide decisions about development proposals.
LTP	Local Transport Plan, a statutory document which sets out the objectives and programme for improving the transport network.
MaaS	Mobility as a Service, a shift away from privately owned vehicles towards a model where different transport modes are consumed as an on-demand service through a single (online) platform. For example, the concept of paying for a weekly travel pass that includes bike hire, car hire, bus and train travel.
Mass transit	A form of public transport to satisfy higher potential trip demand, featuring limited stops, high capacity and attractive, reliable journey times. It is usually rail based, such as trams or light rail above ground, or underground trains.

Term	Description
Mobility hub	A place of transport interchange providing easy access to the wider transport network with cycle parking, taxi call points and access to car club vehicles, drop off points and (at larger locations) park and ride facilities.
Mode share	The relative use of each mode of transport.
Mode shift / Modal shift	A percentage change in the use of different transport modes. When one transport mode becomes more advantageous than another over the same route or market, a mode shift is likely to take place.
MRN	Major Road Network, a classification of Local Authority roads in England.
Multi-modal/multi-operator ticketing	Multi-modal ticketing is being able to use the same ticket or ticketing system across different modes of transport, e.g. on a bus and then on a train. Multi-operator ticketing is being able to use the same ticket across different transport operators, not necessarily across different modes, e.g. on a Stagecoach bus and then on a First bus.
NHS	National Health Service.
NO_x	A generic term for the nitrogen oxides that are most relevant for air pollution, namely nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2). NO_x gases are produced during the combustion of hydrocarbon fuels in diesel and petrol-powered vehicles. In areas of high motor vehicle traffic, NO_x can be a significant source of air pollution.
Park and Ride	A system for reducing urban traffic congestion, in which drivers leave their cars in car parks on the outskirts of a city and travel to the city centre on public transport.
PHE	Public Health England, the body responsible for protecting the nation's health and wellbeing and reducing health inequalities.
PM	Particulate Matter, a complex mixture of small material and liquid droplets which have the potential to cause significant health issues.
Public realm	Publicly accessible space between and within buildings, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment, a decision support process which ensures that environmental and sustainability aspects are considered effectively in policy, plan and program making.
SRN	Strategic Road Network, motorways and the most significant trunk roads in end and, which are managed by Highways England.

Term	Description
Sustainable transport	Forms of transport which have lower environmental impact than single occupancy car use. It includes walking, cycling, public transport, Park & Ride, and car-sharing.
Transport decarbonisation	The process of reducing, and ultimately removing, greenhouse gas emissions produced as a by-product of transport infrastructure and operations.
TFL	Transport for London, the body in charge of delivering transport services in Greater London.
TfSE	Transport for the South East, the regional sub-national transport body for the south east.
Travel Plan	A strategy that an organisation or development has to meet the travel needs of the site it is developed for, particularly to minimise single occupancy travel and maximise the use of sustainable modes. It involves ongoing and continuous implementation of initiatives and measures as well as constant monitoring.
Trip	A one-way movement from one place to another to achieve a single main purpose. Trips may be further sub-divided into journey stages.
Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle	Vehicles that use low carbon technologies, fuelled by electricity or hydrogen, to reduce the amount of pollutants emitted. They commonly have rechargeable batteries which are used to store energy.
Vision Zero	An approach to road danger reduction that works towards the elimination of road traffic deaths and serious injuries by reducing the dominance of motor vehicles.
Wheeling	Using a wheelchair or mobility scooter to get around as opposed to walking or cycling.

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EAST SUSSEX LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 (2024 – 2050)

DRAFT FINAL INVESTMENT PLAN

Version 2

September 2024

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1. Introduction

1.1 The Investment Plan sets out East Sussex County Councils and their partners ambitions for delivering the policies and investment priorities in both urban and rural areas, presented to achieve the four thematic aspirations of the fourth East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP4).

1.2 The Investment Plan is split into five sections:

- **Delivering the plan** – sets out the proposed Investment Plan priorities and the scheme development stages.
- **Roles and responsibilities in delivery** – identifies the key delivery partners and their role to enable the successful delivery of scheme priorities identified in the LTP4.
- **Investment priorities** – outlines identified schemes and the types of schemes that the County Council and key partners wish to deliver, subject to funding being secured.
- **Funding and financing** – presents the funding challenges and opportunities associated with the identified priorities.
- **Measuring Success** – sets out how LTP4 and its Investment Plan will be monitored and evaluated. It also outlines monitoring and evaluation for individual schemes.

2. Delivering the plan

Introduction

2.1 To demonstrate how the LTP4 strategy can be realised, an investment plan has been developed which outlines the investment priorities, subject to funding being secured by the County Council and its partners, and policies we propose for delivery in both urban and rural areas over the life of the plan. Priorities are either geographically specific or county wide cross cutting interventions or initiatives, which will help deliver the investment priorities.

2.2 Geographically specific priorities are focussed on delivering improvements to users along a particular transport corridor or in a given location (e.g. town / village centre or rural community), or for users travelling to, from and within East Sussex.

2.3 County wide cross cutting interventions or initiatives, including active travel initiatives, multi modal opportunities for freight, and national road pricing may be rolled out appropriately across the East Sussex region.

2.4 Investment priorities are often defined in more detail within the modal strategies associated with the LTP, these include:-

- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan,
- Bus Service Improvement Plan,
- Rail Strategy,
- Freight Strategy, and
- Electric Vehicles Strategy.

Investment Priority - Geography

2.5 The Investment priorities (outlined in section 3) are presented in the context of the four LTP4 geography types:

1. Regional Long Distance.
2. Moving east-west along the coast.
3. Urban Coastal.
4. Rural and market towns.

2.6 The investment priorities are set out according to whether these are strategic transport schemes (i.e. support longer distance travel) or local schemes (i.e. support improvements within a local centre or village). In addition, cross-cutting priorities are also set out where investment priorities or interventions straddle across both strategic and local priorities.

2.7 For each type of priority or intervention/initiative the following is identified:

- Scheme or priority name.
- Potential investment and/or interventions.
- Development timescales for study, develop and deliver over the short-term (2024 to 2029), medium-term (2030 to 2039) and/or long-term (2040 to 2050).
- Applicable geography type(s).
- Applicable LTP4 theme(s).

  Links to further information (e.g. other strategies or policies)

2.8 It is important to note that progress in undertaking the various stages of scheme development will be dependent on the availability of national, regional and local funding, and the County Council and their partners ability to secure funding.

Investment Priorities - Development Stages

2.9 Under the stages of development, the following three stages have been identified. It is important to note that these stages and their timing will be dependent on funding to bring investment and/or intervention priorities forward.

- **Study** – where there is none or limited existing evidence which explores the potential feasibility of the intervention, including the benefits. Key stakeholder engagement can play a key role in advancing the strategic case for investment, identifying objectives, desired outputs and outcomes and work with key delivery partners to explore the idea further to advance the scheme to development stage. This stage is similar to the contents of a Strategic Outline Business Case for larger scale schemes.
- **Develop** – feasibility studies have been undertaken into the potential benefits of the scheme, however, there is a need for greater development of the business case of the scheme or intervention.
- **Deliver** –strong business case evidence has already been developed with strong stakeholder support. There is an identified funding route for delivery. There are few risks identified which have yet to be mitigated.

2.10 Developing a scheme may include further stages of design (pre – liminary, detailed design) supported by appropriate engagement and consultation, analytical work to strengthen the strategic case, economic case, identifying funding opportunities and conducting greater technical assessment of the scheme (assessing deliverability risks and environmental impacts), such that the scheme is ready for delivery. This stage is similar to the contents of an Outline Business Case for larger scale schemes.

2.11 There has been consideration of how to integrate blue and green infrastructure and wider East Sussex County Council environmental and social policy with scheme delivery, informed by the Integrated Impact Assessment. This stage is similar to the contents of a Full Business Case for larger scale schemes.

Scheme/Policy progression through Development Stages

2.12 There will be investment priorities which can be studied, developed and/or delivered within the short term of the next five years (2024 – 2030).

2.13 Likewise, there are priorities where partners can only study and/or sufficiently develop a pipeline of schemes that are ready for delivery, given timescales for and other deliverability constraints, are unlikely to commence or be fully delivered in the short-term. For example, schemes could include railway schemes where the nature of industry funding cycles mean enhancements presented in the LTP are unlikely to be considered for delivery in the next Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline Period and, therefore, at earliest will be delivered in Control Period 8 (2029-2034) or later.

2.14 Also. some schemes are unlikely to involve any short-term actions (e.g. by 2030). This is because they will rely on other schemes to be delivered, be reliant on national policy or technological advances, or require significant funding to be made available before a scheme can be studied or developed.

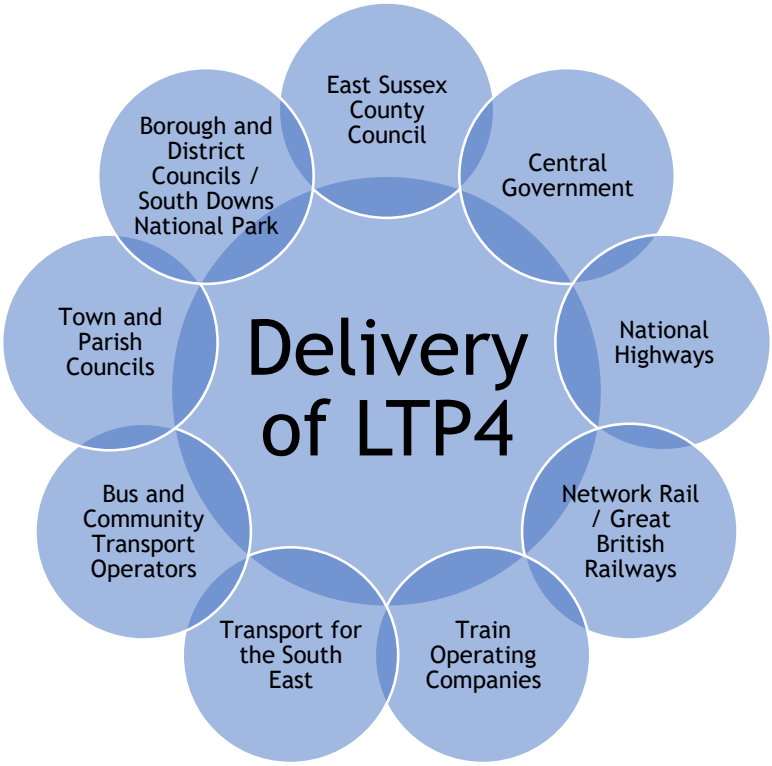
2.15 Section 3 of the Investment Plan sets out the current investment priorities for the timescales of the plan, up to 2050. Appendix … outlines the proposed implementation plan in the short term (2024 – 2030).

3. Roles and responsibilities in delivery

3.1 No single organisation will be solely responsible for delivering the East Sussex LTP. Across the county multiple organisations have different responsibilities for provision of transport infrastructure and services, spatial planning and economic development, all of which shape our communities influence how people travel and how goods are moved.

3.2 This is summarised in the diagram below:

Figure 11: Summary of roles and responsibilities in delivery



Key organisations

East Sussex County Council

3.3 The Investment Plan identifies investment priorities where the County Council will play a key lead role in delivering schemes, and where they will play a coordination or other key role.

3.4 Through development of the LTP, the County Council will play a role in setting the governance structures by which schemes are delivered and undertake the programme management role. This may include scheme prioritisation, government and stakeholder engagement, project management, monitoring and evaluation.

3.5 East Sussex County Council will also play an advocacy role on all schemes, supporting pre-feasibility work, identifying funding and likely appropriate delivery partners, and other key stakeholders. They will, and work with these partners, for onward business case and scheme development and support to applications and bids to secure funding.

3.6 Roles and responsibilities of other key agencies identified for delivery of identified schemes and policies are summarised below.

Central Government

3.7 Central government will play a significant role in delivering many of the packages of interventions and investment priorities in this plan. This includes the Department for Transport, but also other government departments and their agencies (e.g. National Highways, Active Travel England).Central Government's role will include:

- setting national policy for wide-ranging topics including climate change and new technology regulation.
- setting investment and business case development frameworks to guide the planning and delivery of interventions.
- guiding the development and delivery of nationally significant infrastructure and networks (e.g. through setting National Policy Statements).
- regulating the transport system (including economic and safety regulation).
- in some cases, funding interventions.

Network Rail, Great British Railways and rail operators

3.8 The British rail industry is currently undergoing one of the most significant periods of structural reform of the last three decades. In the immediate future, it is assumed that the Department for Transport will continue to outline the strategy for the rail network. Network Rail will continue in its role as infrastructure manager for the rail network, and that train operating companies will continue to deliver passenger or freight rail services. However,

3.9 In the short- to medium term, we expect Network Rail's strategic and planning functions (along with other industry functions) will merge into a new government agency, Great British Railways. This new agency will lead the future development of the rail network in Great Britain and specify future infrastructure and service needs, and lead delivery of the strategic rail schemes identified to deliver service enhancements which improve connectivity within, to and from East Sussex and to other regions.

3.10 Train operating companies operate the passenger train services on the rail network, set timetables and manage railway stations. Freight operating companies operate the freight services that operate on the rail network.

Bus and community transport operators

3.11 Bus and community transport operators play a key role in moving people around our communities and run services within and to/from our villages and towns providing people access to/for employment, education, training, shopping and leisure.

3.12 Many bus services are operated commercially (at the operators risk), with some services receive financial support (usually from local authorities) to operate.

National Highways

3.13 National Highways will lead the development and delivery of highway interventions on the strategic road network (SRN),which in East Sussex the SRN includes:

- A21 north of Hastings to the border with Kent (A21 in Hastings borough is the responsibility of East Sussex County Council)
- A26 between Lewes and Newhaven.
- A27 between Falmer and Pevensey (Pevensey Bay roundabout)
- A259 from Pevensey (Pevensey Bay roundabout) to the east of Rye (except through Hastings borough which is the responsibility of East Sussex County Council).

3.14 They will also support interventions where the Strategic Road Network interfaces with local transport authority highways. National Highways will utilise their internal project control framework to develop the business cases for highways interventions.

District / borough councils and South Downs National Park Authority

3.15 District and borough councils and the South Downs National Park Authority, as local planning authorities (LPA's), have a very significant role to play in delivering this plan. The County Council will ensure that the key principles of LTP4 are embedded within the respective Local Plans (and any subsequent reviews), to ensure developments are joined up, efficient and are well connected by walking, wheeling and cycling and by public transport, which supports the development of healthy and sustainable places.

3.16 The LPA's in their role and through the development management process, are able to secure transport infrastructure improvements through development contributions (s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy) which can be utilised to deliver transport infrastructure.

Local communities (town and parish councils, local communities and modal user groups)

3.17 Town and parish councils, local communities and user groups are the main users of transport and benefit most from the investment and improvements in our networks. These groups are also the best voices to advise delivery partners what their local community or modal user groups want to see in terms of new transport infrastructure, networks and behaviour change initiatives.

3.18 Town and parish councils play an important role at the most local levels. They are consulted on East Sussex County Councils plans for transport and work in partnership to inform updated Neighbourhood Plans, which can include local infrastructure and connections that will benefit their local areas, which in turn feed into Local Plans.

3.19 Local communities, residents and user groups also contribute to helping shape scheme development proposals through engagement sessions, whether this be through collaborative design or consultation events/surveys.

Private sector and third parties

3.20 Private sector partners and third parties provide important assets, operations, funding, and insights; as well as being key planning and delivery partners.

3.21 The private sector may be involved in the delivery of interventions, including the renewal and maintenance, where the private sector or non-governmental organisations (e.g. Sustrans), have the expertise in delivering specific outputs which cannot exist in the public sector alone.

3.22 Land and other asset owners alongside developers, as highlighted under the 'District and Borough Councils' section, may deliver infrastructure and services identified in Local Plans and their Infrastructure Delivery Plan's or provide contributions as part of planning permissions linked to development.

3.23 The private sector may be involved in operating and maintaining public transport services, operate rail, bus and other shared mobility services.

Engagement and consultation

3.24 The plan's 'golden thread' of equality and inclusion does not apply solely to the design and delivery of schemes and initiatives. With a 'planning for people and places' approach, inclusive engagement will be a key driver in this plan.

3.25 Proactive and inclusive engagement will be integrated from the outset of scheme identification and development to enable everyone to have a voice , including those who do not usually participate in consultations. We will bring together communities and/or stakeholders to co-design particular types of schemes, for example school streets, that they want to see come forward within their local community.

Governance

3.26 We will establish appropriate governance to oversee the development, delivery and benefits realisation arising from schemes and policies included in this strategy.

3.27 This will utilise the stakeholder groups established as part of the development of LTP4 and which will support the monitoring of the strategy and investment plan.

4. Investment Priorities

4.1 In order to support the delivery of the four thematic ambitions of the fourth East Sussex Local Transport Plan (LTP4), this section firstly sets out identified priorities or the types of priorities (scheme(s) that the County Council and their partners will seek funding for to enable these to be studied, developed and delivered over the life of the plan.

4.2 Secondly, a list of priorities is presented showing those that the County Council and their partners seek to study, develop and/or deliver in the short-term (over the next five years to 2030).

4.3 The potential list of investment priorities outlined in this plan are not exhaustive. As LTP4 is a live document, other investment priorities will and are likely to emerge and be supported through the development and delivery process as appropriate.

4.4 Investment priorities detailed within this section are intentionally presented as a high-level overview. It is important to note that as these investment priorities progress through the study, develop and deliver scheme stages the level of available detail will increase, priorities will become more defined through the consideration of options, and a preferred and deliverable option confirmed.

4.5 Where appropriate we have signposted to modal strategies and other locations where further information on scheme types are outlined these include, and are not limited to, the following:

- TfSE Strategic Investment Plan
- East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- Bus Service Improvement Plan
- Rail Strategy
- Electric Vehicle Strategy
- Freight Strategy
- Local Planning Authority Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans (Eastbourne, Hastings. Lewes, Rother, South Downs National Park and Wealden)

4.6 In their role of co-ordination for the delivery of LTP4, the County Council will maintain a schedule of identified investment priorities and those being progressed through the study, develop and deliver stages. These schedules will be updated in collaboration with key LTP4 development and delivery partners and summarised within future LTP4 monitoring reports.

Types of priority investment

4.7 This section of the Investment Plan presents the potential investment priorities. Different investment areas are presented within three broad groups based on the geography types identified in the Local Trasport Plan strategy. These groups are:

- **Strategic priorities** – typically geography types 1 (regional long distance) and 2 (moving east-west along the coast). Schemes in this group are primarily intended to facilitate and improve longer distance journeys (i.e. those across the length of the county (north-south or east-west) or those which cross the local authority border as part of a regional trip.

  The modal focus of strategic priorities is towards highway (car, van, freight) and rail trips, along with longer distance trips undertaken by people walking, wheeling and cycling and using Public Transport. Key partners will include East Sussex County Council, District and Borough Councils, National Highways and neighbouring local authorities.
- **Local priorities** – typically geography types 3 (urban coastal) and 4 (rural and local centres). Schemes in this group are seeking to facilitate and improve shorter trips within a community, town/village or between neighbouring towns/villages.

  Investment priorities here are those within local communities, either to support the efficient movement of transport or to provide new and improved connectivity between residential areas and places people need or want to access . The modal focus of local priorities is towards walking, wheeling, cycling trips and using public transport trips. These priorities are also likely to have a larger emphasis on creating a sense of place. Key partners will include East Sussex County Council, District and Borough Councils, and bus operators.

- **Cross cutting priorities** – these schemes and interventions straddle both strategic and local priorities, typically covering one or both of geography type 1 and 2, and one or both of geography types 3 and 4. Accordingly, these schemes / interventions facilitate and improve both longer and shorter distance trips.

  The modal focus of these cross-cutting priorities is across all modes and will ensure consistency in the approaches to the delivery of interventions or initiatives. . Key partners will include East Sussex County Council, District and Borough Councils, National Highways, Network Rail, bus and train operators and local communities.

Strategic priorities

Name	SP01: Strategic Priorities – Walking, Wheeling and Cycling
Potential investment	• A21 Hastings to Tunbridge Wells • A259 Eastbourne to Hastings • Avenue Verte (London to Paris via Newhaven) alternative route • Crowborough to Tunbridge Wells • Hastings to Ashford • National Cycle Network (NCN) 90 Hailsham/Polegate to Brighton
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short- and medium-term • Deliver - Short- and medium-term
Key partners	Leads • Active Travel England • Sustrans • East Sussex County Council Supporting partners • District and Borough Councils • Neighbouring local authorities
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Name	SP02: Strategic Priorities - Highway
Potential investment	• A21 Flimwell and Hurst Green Improvements • A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst • A21 Safety enhancements • A22 Maresfield to East Grinstead • A22 Hailsham to Uckfield • A22 Uckfield bypass improvements • A26 Newhaven to Lewes • A27 Falmer Junction enhancements • A27 Lewes to Polegate • A259 East of Rye (level crossing removal) • A259 Eastbourne to Brighton
Development timescales	• Study – Short-, medium- and long-term • Develop – Short-, medium- and long-term • Deliver – Short-, medium- and long-term
Key partners	Leads • National Highways (Strategic Road Network) • East Sussex County Council (Major and Local Road Network) Supporting partners • District and Borough Councils • Neighbouring Local Authorities • South Downs National Park
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Government Roads Investment Strategy • Transport for the South East Strategic Investment Plan • Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Local priorities

Name	LP01: Local Priorities – Walking, Wheeling, Cycling
Potential investment	• Enhancements in and around Battle • Enhancements in and around Bexhill • Enhancements in and around Eastbourne • Enhancements in and around Hastings • Enhancements in and around Lewes • Enhancements in and around Peacehaven, Newhaven and Seaford • Enhancements in and around Rye • Enhancements in and around the South Downs • Accessing the Cuckoo Trail • Review rights of way, bridleways • Rural quiet lanes • Enhancing active connectivity between Uckfield and Heathfield
Development timescales	• Study – Short- and medium-term • Develop – Short-, medium- and long-term • Deliver – Short-, medium- and long-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • District & Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council • South Downs National Park Authority • Sustrans
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B – Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan • Rights of Way Improvement Plan

Name	LP02: Local Priorities – multimodal
Potential investment	• A259 Peacehaven-Newhaven-Seaford corridor • Area based traffic management schemes • Redesign of road space • Review of active travel crossings • Review of speed limits
Development timescales	• Study – Short-, medium-term • Develop – Short-, medium-term • Deliver - Short-, medium- and long-term,
Key partners	Leads • East Sussex County Council Supporting partners • District and Borough Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan • Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Name	LP03: Local Priorities – Bus
Potential investment	• Bus service enhancements • Bus priority measures • Dynamic and demand responsive travel
Development timescales	• Study – Complete (regularly review) • Develop – Complete (regularly review) • Deliver – Complete (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • Bus operators • Community transport operators • East Sussex County Council
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan

Name	LP04: Bus service funding
Potential investment	• Financial support (subsidies) for transport operators
Development timescales	• Study – Completed • Develop – Ongoing (regularly review) • Deliver – Ongoing (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads • Bus operators • East Sussex County Council • Others who provide funding to bus services Supporting partners • District & Borough Councils • South Downs National Park Authority • Town and Parish Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan

Name	LP05: Supporting lower public transport fares
Potential investment	• Lower fares for bus passengers
Development timescales	• Study – Completed • Develop – Ongoing (regularly review) • Deliver – Ongoing (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads • National government • Bus operators, • East Sussex County Council Supporting partners • Rail operators (passenger)
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan

Name	LP06: Integrated transport opportunities
Potential investment	• Car clubs • Community hubs • Customer experience improvements at travel interchanges / mobility hubs • Cycle, e-cycle, scooter and e-scooter hire schemes • Cycle parking and hubs • Integrated public transport timetables, fares and ticketing • Mobility as a service initiative • Park and Ride • Travel interchanges / mobility hubs
Development timescales	• Study -Short- and medium-term • Develop – Short- and medium-term • Deliver - Short- and medium-term
Key partners	Leads • Bus operators • East Sussex County Council • Network Rail • Rail operators (passenger and freight) • Supporting partners • District and Borough councils • South Downs National Park Authority
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan • Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan • Rail Strategy • Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Name	LP07: Future Mobility schemes
Potential investment	• Ensuring future mobility is accessible to everyone • Future mobility initiatives
Development timescales	• Study -Short-, medium- and long-term • Develop – Short-, medium- and long-term • Deliver - Short-, medium- and long-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • East Sussex County Council • District and Borough Councils • Other partners as required
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan • Electric Vehicle Strategy • Freight Strategy • Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan • Rail Strategy • Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Name	LP08: Streetscapes and public realm
Potential investment	• Public spaces and placemaking • Streetscape and public realm improvements
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop –Short- and medium-term • Deliver - Short- and medium-term
Key partners	Leads / supporting partners • District and Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan • Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Name	LP09: Local Priorities - Highway
Potential investment	• A22/A2290 Eastbourne Package • A2101 Corridor Package (Hastings) • A2270 Corridor Package (Eastbourne)
Development timescales	• Study – Short-and medium-term • Develop – Short-and medium-term • Deliver – Short- and medium term
Key partners	Leads • East Sussex County Council Supporting partners • District and Borough Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan • Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan • Local Plans and Infrastructure Delivery Plans

Name	LP10: Assets – planning maintenance and renewal
Potential intervention / investment	• Asset management plans by East Sussex County Council • Asset Management plans by National Highways • Asset Management (Maintenance and Renewals) plans by Network Rail • Asset Management plans by Sustrans • Asset Management plans by local Borough / District Councils (e.g. promenades, off-highway walking and cycle routes – Cuckoo Trail etc)
Development timescales	• Study -Short-term (regularly review) • Develop – Short-term (regularly review) • Deliver – Short-term (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • East Sussex County Council • National Highways • Network Rail • Sustrans • Local Borough / District Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B – Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	

Name	LP11: Parking and access
Potential intervention	• Dynamic parking tariffs • Emissions based vehicle access and parking • Managing off-street parking supply • Managing on-street parking supply • Parking enforcement • Reassessment of parking requirements (new developments) • Reassessment of resident parking zones • Workplace parking levy
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term (regularly review) • Develop – Short-term (regularly review) • Deliver - Short-term (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • East Sussex County Council • District and Borough Councils • Private car park operators • Developers
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	

Name	LP12: Travel behaviour
Potential intervention	• Travel behaviour change and training programmes • Travel plans
Timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term (regularly review) • Deliver - Short-term (regularly review)
Key partners	Leads / supporting partners • East Sussex County Council • District and Borough Councils • Developers Supporting partners • Organisations such as Sustrans, Living Streets
Applicable Geography Type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable Theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan • Travel Plans for Development guidance

Name	LP13: Local Planning
Potential intervention	• Freight consolidation centres • Integrated transport and spatial planning • Local plans to allocated sites for freight consolidation • Sustainable last mile movement
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term • Deliver - Short-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • District and Borough Councils • Developers • Development site operators • East Sussex County Council • Freight operators
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Eastbourne Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Hastings Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Lewes Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • South Downs Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Rother Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Wealden Local Plan and Infrastructure Delivery Plan • Freight Strategy

Name	LP14: Digital
Potential investment	• Digital connectivity for our rural and urban communities • Optimisation operations (rail and highways) • Passenger experience – real time information, Wi-Fi, mobility as a service • Traffic flow optimisation
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term • Deliver – Short-term
Key partners	• Bus operators • District and Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council • National Highways • Network Rail • Train operators (passenger)
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B – Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan

Name	LP15: Logistics (deliveries and servicing)
Potential intervention	• Construction and logistics plans • Delivery and serving plan • Sustainable last mile movement
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term • Deliver - Short-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • Developers • Development site operators • East Sussex County Council • District and Borough Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D - Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Freight Strategy

Cross-cutting priorities

Name	CP01: Making transport accessible and inclusive
Potential investment	• Making railway stations accessible • Transport accessibility and inclusion
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short- and medium-term • Deliver - Short-term and medium- and long-term
Key partners	Leads • Network Rail • Rail operators (passenger) • Bus operators • East Sussex County Council Supporting partners • South Downs National Park Authority • National Highways • District and Borough Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B – Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Bus Service Improvement Plan • Rail Strategy

Name	CP02: Signage and wayfinding
Potential investment	• Signage and wayfinding
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term • Deliver – Short-term
Key partners	Leads • District and Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council • South Downs National Park • Network Rail Supporting partners • National Highways • Bus Operators • Rail Operators (passenger and freight)
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan • Local Plans and Local Infrastructure Plans

Name	CP03: Strategic and local journeys– Rail
Example investment	• Direct rail services from Seaford/Newhaven to London • Faster journeys – Brighton to Eastbourne • Faster journeys – Hastings to Eastbourne • High Speed 1 to Eastbourne (via Ashford International and Rye, Hastings and Bexhill) • Ore to Ashford International (via Rye) electrification • Spa Valley Line modern railway operations • Uckfield to Hurst Green (Surrey) electrification • Uckfield to Lewes line reopening
Development timescales	• Study – Short- and medium-term • Develop – Short- and medium-term • Deliver – Medium- and long-term
Key partners	Leads • Network Rail • Rail operators (passenger) Supporting partners • East Sussex County Council • District and Borough Councils
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Rail Strategy

Name	CP04: Fuels and air quality
Potential investment / intervention	• Air quality management • Alternatives fuels (e.g. hydrogen) • Investment in and roll out of e-mobility (e.g. e-bikes) • Zero-emission buses • Zero-emission railways
Development timescales	• Study – Short-term • Develop – Short-term • Deliver – Short-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting partners • Bus operators • District and Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council • Rail operators (passenger and freight) • Train leasing companies
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Electric Vehicle Strategy • Rail Strategy • Bus Service Improvement Plan • Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan

Name	CP05: Multimodal opportunities (freight)
Potential investment	• Freight facilities at Newhaven • Newhaven Port rail freight upgrades
Development timescales	• Study – short- to medium-term • Develop – short- to medium-term • Deliver - short- to medium-term
Key partners	Leads / Supporting Partners • Freight companies • Freight organisations • National Highways • Network Rail • Newhaven Port Authority
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B – Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Freight Strategy • Rail Strategy

Name	CP06: Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure
Potential Investment / intervention	• Electric Vehicle charging infrastructure
Development timescales	• Develop – short term • Deliver – short to long-term
Key partners	Leads / supporting partners • District and Borough Councils • East Sussex County Council • Government – Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) • Other partners – private sector car park operators, Network Rail
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A - Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	• Electric Vehicle Strategy

Name	CP07: Autonomous vehicles
Potential Investment / intervention	• Connected and autonomous vehicles
Development timescales	• Study – short-term • Develop – Medium-term • Deliver – Medium- to long-term
Key partners	Leads • National Government • Freight operators Supporting partners • Transport for the South East • East Sussex County Council
Applicable Geography type(s)	5. Regional long distance 6. Moving east-west along the coast 7. Urban coastal 8. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	

Name	CP08: Road pricing
Potential intervention	• National road pricing
Development timescales	• Study – Medium- to long-term • Develop – Medium- to long-term • Deliver - Medium- to long-term
Key partners	Leads • National government Supporting partners • Transport for the South East
Applicable Geography type(s)	1. Regional long distance 2. Moving east-west along the coast 3. Urban coastal 4. Rural and market towns
Applicable theme(s)	A – Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment B - Safer, healthier and more active travel C – Integrated and accessible transport D – Keeping East Sussex connected
Further information	

5. Funding and financing

5.1 It is important to note that LTP4 and its investment and intervention priorities, as set out in section 3, are not funded. This section sets out the potential funding and financing opportunities for the proposed interventions identified in the LTP4 Investment Plan.

5.2 The availability of funding, with consideration to the costs of development, construction, maintenance and renewals, alongside operational costs, will be a key challenge in delivering LTP4. Additionally, routes for financing, as well as how and from whom the funding is secured to meet the costs of construction as they arise may change over the life of the Plan and Investment Plan.

5.3 As the LTP4 is made up of several diverse schemes, there is not going to be a 'one size fits all' funding and financing solution that applies across the programme. So, over the life of the plan up to 2050,this LTP more than previous plans will provide the County Council, their partners and communities opportunities to explore and innovate how funding can be secured and combined to study, develop and deliver transport infrastructure interventions and initiatives.

Types of funding

5.4 To study, develop and deliver transport infrastructure, services and initiatives requires a combination of capital and revenue funding.

- **Capital funding** – is typically used in the delivery of permanent or fixed transport infrastructure improvements. Each year the government allocates local authorities a capital sum for highway maintenance and a further allocation is made for integrated transport schemes and road safety improvements.

  Capital funding also becomes available from Government and other partners from time to time for specific types of schemes (e.g. active travel, bus priority). Local authorities either must competitively bid for this funding and if successful, the funding is allocated to delivery bodies and transport authorities or is directly allocated to the local authority. If secured, this funding will be ring-fenced to spend on specific schemes/projects (e.g. if secured for a cycle scheme it cannot be used to spend on highway maintenance).

- **Revenue funding** - The County Council provides revenue from its annual budget towards a variety of services including:
  - Support for bus services,
  - Concessionary fares,
  - Home to school transport;
  - Road safety education,
  - School crossing patrols, and
  - Further highway maintenance.

Similarly, revenue funding becomes available to local authorities from time to time from Government and other partners to deliver revenue specific measures, for example additional highway maintenance funding or travel behaviour programmes. Likewise, if this funding is secured, either competitively or through direct allocation, it will be ringfenced towards specific projects/schemes and cannot be directed to other uses.

Sources of funding

5.5 The sources of funding that are most appropriate and available will vary according to scheme scale. For example, community match funding is only available for schemes up to a total value of £120,000, whereas larger strategic transport schemes will usually need to secure central government funding, e.g. DfT Bus Service Improvement Funding or the Road Investment Strategy (RIS). This will influence which schemes can be prioritised.

5.6 The sources of funding that are most appropriate and available will also vary across the LTP's modal strategies, i.e. the East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan, Bus Service Improvement Plan, Rail Strategy, Freight Strategy and, EV Electric Vehicle Strategy.

5.7 This section explores potential and known/historic sources of funding schemes and initiatives, considering each mode.

Highways Maintenance & Integrated Transport annual government grant allocation

5.8 As highlighted above, each year the government allocates local authorities a capital sum for highway maintenance and a further allocation is made for integrated transport schemes and road safety improvements. The level of funding received is determined via a formula-based system. With the increases in construction costs and the allocation remaining static, the overall value of this has decreased over the past decade.

5.9 Both the highways maintenance and integrated transport grant funding received by the County Council is included in the annual county council's capital programme for these specific uses. Further information on the allocations that the County Council currently receives is available at Highways maintenance and ITB funding formula allocations, 2022 to 2025 (3 years) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk).

Active Travel

5.10 Local authorities are encouraged to develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans, or similar, to set out their active travel networks to support with the securing of active travel investment.

5.11 East Sussex County Council has previously secured over £20m of funding for active travel schemes through the South East Local Enterprise Local Growth Fund and has more recently secured funding from the Levelling up Fund and the Towns Fund to develop and deliver schemes that support active travel. A number of these schemes will be delivered in the early years of LTP4.

5.12 National Highways have also delivered a segregated active travel path alongside the A27 from Polegate to Glynde as part of the £75m funded A27 East of Lewes works

5.13 In August 2022, Active Travel England (ATE) was established. ATE are a government agency set up to manage the allocation of active travel funding alongside managing active travel scheme delivery performance and applying a strategic approach to the delivery of walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure at a local level.

5.14 There are currently specific funding programmes managed by Active Travel England (ATE) including the Active Travel Fund, which is capital funding available for the development and delivery of infrastructure improvements, including walking and cycling schemes as well as school streets. East Sussex County Council has been successful in securing Active Travel funding to progress the design of various walking and cycling schemes alongside trial and then deliver three school streets schemes in the county.

5.15 ATE also administer the Capability Fund and the Bikeability Trust's Bikeability programme, which is revenue funding available for scheme design and the delivery of initiatives and training.

5.16 Crucially, to maximise opportunities to secure funding for the integration of active travel as part of schemes or of programmes with broader transport, regeneration, health and/or environmental objectives that come from other, complementary funding sources, the County Council and their partners will continue to work collaboratively to secure funding.

5.17 Looking at schemes under development, active travel measures also form part of the two Major Road Network business cases currently being developed to secure funding for improvements to the A22 between Hailsham and Stone Cross, and the A259 corridor from Brighton to Eastbourne. Other funding is also available via Sustrans for improvements to the National Cycle Network (NCN) with two routes – NCN route 2 and NCN route 21 – traversing parts of the county.

5.18 The Council and their partners are supportive of longer, multi-year-term funding programmes to help realise the benefits of active travel schemes and ensuring a co-ordinated network of improvements can be developed and delivered as set out in our LCWIP.

Bus

5.19 Funding for bus-based solutions and services is generally very context specific and accordingly does not fit within established modal regulatory funding settlements and is secured in combination by the local highway authorities and bus operators.

5.20 Funding for passenger transport improvements is through County Council capital and revenue expenditure, Government and regional funding for specific projects, and development contributions. Capital development contributions are being used to improve bus stop facilities, by ensuring they are designed to comply with accessibility requirements, and to help fund the roll out of real time passenger information across the county. In conjunction with Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, revenue contributions are also used to subsidise bus services in areas where development requires sustainable transport solutions but before services have become viable.

5.21 East Sussex County Council was successful in securing £41.1m of DfT Bus Service Improvement Funding to improve services and infrastructure across the county, with the Flexibus element commencing in May 2023 and service enhancements in July 2023. The development of bus priority schemes is continuing.

5.22 In conjunction with Bus Service Improvement Plan funding, revenue contributions are also used to subsidise bus services in areas where development requires sustainable transport solutions but before services have become viable. Development funding can also be obtained to provide improved bus stop infrastructure for passengers.

Rail

5.23 The Rail Network Enhancements Pipeline (RNEP) is a periodically updated list of enhancements that Network Rail is expected to deliver within each five-year Control Period and is tied to government spending review allocations. Previous RNEP schemes in East Sussex have included the £18m re-signalisation of the line between Lewes and Newhaven, which was completed in 2019. With the establishment of Great British Railway's the County Council and their partners will expect a review of rail funding for infrastructure and initiatives.

Funding is also available to improved accessibility of stations (Access for All programme). In 2024 Battle secured feasibility funding, as did Wivelsfield station (which is used by residents of East Sussex). If successful both these stations will progress for the Access for All programme.

Road / Highway improvements

5.24 Funding for highway schemes comes through a variety of sources, often depending on the type of road (i.e. part of the strategic, main or local road networks)

Strategic Road Network

5.25 Funding for highway interventions on the strategic road network managed by National Highways is generally provided by DfT and allocated as part of the Road Investment Strategy (RIS) Road Investment Strategy (RIS) process.

5.26 For example, in RIS1, covering the period 2015 to 2020, the Government allocated £75m towards small scale improvements to the A27 east of Lewes including localised capacity improvements, safety enhancements and a shared use path for pedestrians and cyclists along the length of the route. These were completed in March 2023 and were led by National Highways.

Major Road Network

5.27 This is alongside the DfT's Major Road Network and Large Local Majors programme providing investment for local authorities for road enhancement schemes on the most important local authority roads, including priorities to support multi modal journeys. At present East Sussex County Council is leading and working with partners on business cases to secure major road network funding for the A22 in between Hailsham and Stone Cross as well as the A259 corridor from the east of Brighton through to the east of Eastbourne.

Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

5.28 To support the increase take up of electric vehicles across the country, the Government has rolled out its Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund to local authorities to work with the chargepoint industry and improve the roll out and commercialisation of local electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

5.29 These public chargepoints will help residents who don't have off-street parking and need to charge their electric vehicles.

5.30 The LEVI fund includes:

- Capital funding to contribute to the costs of delivering chargepoints.
- Capability funding for local authorities to employ and train new staff specifically to plan and deliver chargepoint infrastructure.

Development funding

5.31 Development contributions are payments made by developers to help fund the provision of infrastructure which supports developments. There are two main mechanisms which are used to collect contributions, S106 and CIL.

Section 106 contributions

5.32 S106 involves the use of legal agreements which secure contributions as part of a planning permission. They are used to make a development proposal acceptable in planning terms and are focused on mitigating the impact of that specific development. Most S106 contributions are secured through planning applications which are determined by other authorities.

5.33 In some areas (Rother, Eastbourne, Hastings) S106 contributions are paid directly to the County Council by the developer. In Wealden and Lewes contributions are mostly paid to the districts and the national park authority who then hold the contribution on our behalf until we request the transfer of the contribution to a specific project.

Community Infrastructure Levy

5.34 For new developments being granted planning permission, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has mostly replaced S106 contributions sought. However, there are still contributions from historical S106 agreements which are to be collected once the payment point has been reached and spent.

5.35 CIL is a standard charge on development which can be levied by charging authorities on new development in their area. It is used to help deliver infrastructure which support development across their area. CIL only applies where a charging authority has an approved charging schedule which sets out its CIL rates. In most cases it replaces contributions which were previously collected through S106.

5.36 The County Council is not a CIL charging authority. In East Sussex the charging authorities are the districts, boroughs and the South Downs National Park Authority. Currently all authorities other than Hastings Borough Council have an adopted CIL charging schedule in

place. Therefore, the County Council has to bid to the charging authorities to secure CIL funding towards transport infrastructure.

Highway Maintenance Funding

5.37 Through the Highways Act 1980, Councils are required to keep the roads in a safe and usable condition. This undertaken and funded through two types of maintenance programmes:

- Reactive maintenance, where reported safety defects such as potholes are repaired in line with the Council's maintenance policies to keep roads safe to use as contained in the East Sussex Highways Inspection Manual. This is funded from the Council's revenue budget.
- Planned maintenance, is funded from the council's capital programme, where a programme of planned works such as surface dressing and resurfacing, structural maintenance, street lighting and road reconstruction is undertaken to maintain road condition against the Council's performance targets. This funding comes primarily from the Department for Transport (DfT) road maintenance grant funding received annually (see Highways Maintenance and Integrated Transport annual government grant allocation section).

Other Funding sources

5.38 Other sources of funding particularly pertinent to local transport schemes include town and parish councils and community match funding, an initiative created for local communities to apply for match funding from ESCC for schemes up to a total value of £120,000.

Income generation

5.39 Where we generate any surplus from civil parking enforcement it can be used to fund transport improvements, especially supported bus services. We are also able to charge for some of the services we provide, including driver training and Bikeability for adults, which support these services towards financial sustainability.

Future sources of funding

5.40 Given the investment horizon of the LTP4 and as the devolution agenda continues to evolve, it is conceivable that innovative new funding mechanisms will form part of future funding deals for transport schemes. Mechanisms that may play such a role in the future delivery of the LTP may include:

- The diversion of incremental revenues from existing taxes or charges in specified locations, e.g., the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), business rates, Council Tax or Stamp Duty.
- Increased rates, or other enhancements, to existing taxes and charges such as a Council Tax precept, business rates supplement or a supplementary CIL.

- New local charging mechanisms, such as a betterment levy or 'transport premium charge' (TPC), or land pooling or sharing the proceeds of development rights through mechanisms such as land value capture (LVC).

5.41 There is also an opportunity to look at funding reform beyond the prism of specific interventions or modes. For example, there is a growing trend for broader 'growth deals' with government whereby a package of investments is agreed that might stretch beyond transport to, for example, housing delivery, and in return unlock either matched funding and / or access to wider revenue-raising powers at a local level.

6. Measuring Success

6.1 In their role of LTP4 co-ordination, which includes measuring success, East Sussex County will develop a set of transport outcomes and wider socio-economic and environmental indicators. These indicators will be used to provide an indicative indication of progress towards each objective.

6.2 As LTP is significantly unfunded, a decision has been made to not set specific targets or trajectories for each objective. The availability and value of funding priorities are not known (especially in the longer-term) and due to the longer duration of LTP4 (26 years) it allows the plan to be flexible and react to availability of funding and any changes in priorities at national, region or local levels during the timescales of the plan.

6.3 A selection of indicators for measuring success for each theme of LTP4 are currently being considered. (A range of existing national datasets could be used to measure the following indicators)

6.4 Tackling climate change and enhancing our local environment

- Reduction in carbon emissions by transport (data source: National Government datasets)
- Reduction in NOx, SOx and particulate pollution levels in urban areas

6.5 Safer, healthier, and more active travel

- Increase in active travel mode share overtime, by different user groups if data is available (data source: National Government datasets)
- Reduction in the number of people killed and seriously injured by road and rail transport (data source: National Government datasets)

6.6 Integrated and accessible transport for all

- Increase in rail and bus mode share overtime, by different user groups if data is available (data source: National Government datasets)

6.7 Keeping East Sussex connected

- Reduced minutes delayed and improved journey time reliability on the Strategic Road Network, Major Road Network and local roads (data source: National Government datasets)
- Improved operating performance on the railway network, measured by Public Performance Measure (PPM) and other available passenger and freight performance measures, where available (data source: Office or Road and Rail datasets)

Appendix 1 - Short-term priorities

This appendix presents the priorities that the County Council and their partners want to invest in over the short-term, to 2030), across the study, develop and/or deliver stages of scheme development and delivery.

Not all priorities during the next five years are funded at present and their progression, by the County Council and/or other lead partners, in the short term will be dependent on this.

Schemes are presented in tables divided by the development stages partners wish to achieve in the short-term

A. Priority investments / interventions to complete 1 development stage (study or develop or deliver) in the short-term (by 2030)

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
Tunbridge Wells – Hastings (along A21) Active Travel enhancements	Study	SP01
Hastings – Rye - Ashford (New NCN) Active Travel enhancements	Study	SP01
East Sussex High Speed Rail (via Ashford International, Rye, Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne)	Study	CP03
Zero Emission Railways	Study	CP04
Restoration of a rural bus service between Hurst Green, Etchingham, Burwash, Heathfield, Cross in Hand, Framfield and Uckfield (A265/A272)	Study	LP03
A22 Corridor Package (north of Maresfield to East Grinstead)	Study	LP09
Access to Eastbourne A2270 MRN Corridor Package	Study	LP09
Access to Hastings A2101 MRN Corridor Package	Study	LP09
Park and ride schemes	Study	LP06
Freight consolidation centres	Study	LP13
A27 Falmer Junction Enhancements	Study	SP02

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst Improvements	Study	SP02
A21 Flimwell and Hurst Green Improvements	Study	SP02
A26 Lewes - Newhaven Enhancements	Study	SP06
A259 Level Crossing Removals (east of Rye) – linked to East Sussex High Speed Rail	Study	SP02
Alternative Fuels Policy - Hydrogen Refuelling	Study	CP04
Emissions based vehicle access pricing and restrictions	Study	LP11
Tunbridge Wells - Hastings (along A21) Active Travel enhancements	Develop	SP01
Direct rail services between Seaford/Newhaven and London	Develop	CP03
Railway station accessibility improvements	Develop	CP01
Connecting tourism and cultural destinations, national parks, national landscapes with sustainable public transport and active travel	Develop	LP01
A22/A2290 Eastbourne MRN Corridor Package	Develop	LP09
A27 Lewes - Polegate (RIS Pipeline)	Develop	SP02
Digital - technology to manage and optimise rail and highway operations	Develop	LP14
Local Plans to allocate sites for freight consolidation	Develop	LP13
Delivery of accessible future mobility schemes	Develop	LP07
Investment in Streetscapes and Public Realm to promote Active Travel	Deliver	LP08

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
Cuckfield - Haywards Heath - Newick - Uckfield Rural bus service enhancements (A272)	Deliver	LP03
Hastings - Rye - Ashford/Dover rural bus service enhancements	Deliver	LP03
Digital Demand Responsive Transport serving rural areas around Lewes, Seaford and Newhaven	Deliver	LP14
Digital Demand Responsive Transport serving rural areas around Hailsham, Crowborough, Heathfield and Uckfield	Deliver	LP14
Digital Demand Responsive Transport serving rural areas around Hastings/Bexhill, Battle and Rye	Deliver	LP14
Bus subsidies for transport operators	Deliver	LP04
Railway stations and mobility hubs as community hubs	Deliver	LP07
Public Transport hubs customer experience improvements	Deliver	LP14
A21 Safety Enhancements (existing RIS scheme)	Deliver	SP02
Parking Enforcement	Deliver	LP11
Air Quality Management	Deliver	CP04
Electric Vehicle on-street chargepoints	Deliver	CP06
Highway and active travel asset maintenance and renewal strategy	Deliver	LP10
Review of carriageway and cycleway asset plans	Deliver	LP10
Digital - Improved digital connectivity (rural and urban)	Deliver	LP14

B. Priority investment / interventions to complete 2 development stages (study and develop or to develop and deliver) in the short-term (by 2030)

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
Rail Electrification / Power Solutions • Uckfield- Hurst Green (Surrey) • Ore - Ashford	Study, Develop	CP03
Accessing the Cuckoo trail (Hailsham - Uckfield and Hailsham – Heathfield)) Active Travel enhancements	Study, Develop	LP01
Avenue Verte (London to Paris via Newhaven) alternative route	Study, Develop	SP01
Eastbourne - Pevensey - Bexhill - Hastings (A259/NCN2) Active Travel enhancements	Study, Develop	SP01
Uckfield - Heathfield Active Travel enhancements	Study, Develop	LP01
Crowborough - Tunbridge Wells Active Travel enhancements	Study, Develop	SP01
Active travel enhancements in and around our communities: • Battle • Rye	Study, Develop	LP01
Transport Interchange(s) / Mobility Hub(s) • Battle • Bexhill • Crowborough • Hastings • Eastbourne • Falmer • Lewes • Hailsham • Heathfield • Newhaven • Polegate • Rye • Seaford	Study, Develop	LP06

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
• Wadhurst		
E-cargo bikes, town centre portering schemes and other sustainable last-mile movement	Study, Develop	LP06
East Coastway Line (Brighton to Eastbourne) - Faster Services	Study, Develop	CP03
East Coastway Line (Eastbourne to Hastings) - Faster Services	Study, Develop	CP03
A22 Hailsham to Uckfield MRN Corridor Package	Study, Develop	SP02
A22 Uckfield Bypass	Study, Develop	SP02
Access to Eastbourne A22/A2290 MRN Corridor Package	Study, Develop	LP09
Delivery and expansion of cycle / e-cycle hire schemes	Study, Develop	LP06
Delivery and Expansion of future mobility initiatives	Study, Develop	LP07
Zero Emission Buses	Develop, Deliver	CP04
National Cycle Network (NCN) 90 Hailsham/Polegate to Brighton	Develop, Deliver	SP01
Travel behaviour change and training programmes	Develop, Deliver	LP12
Travel Plans for schools, businesses and institutions (such as healthcare)	Develop, Deliver	LP12
Brighton-Newhaven-Seaford-Eastbourne 'Coaster' Inter-urban Bus priority and service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Brighton – Lewes – Ringmer - Uckfield-Crowborough-Tunbridge Wells (A26) Inter-urban Bus priority and service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Hailsham-Polegate-Eastbourne inter-urban bus priority and service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Hellingly – Hailsham - Stone Cross – Langney – Seaside -	Develop, Deliver	LP03

Potential Investment / Intervention	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
Eastbourne inter-urban bus priority and service enhancements		
Eastbourne – Bexhill - Hastings coastal inter-urban bus priority and service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
New inter-urban bus service between Hailsham - Polegate - Lewes (A27)	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Improved inter-urban bus route between Eastbourne - Polegate - Lewes (A27)	Develop, Deliver	LP03
East Grinstead - Tunbridge Wells rural bus service enhancements (A264)	Develop, Deliver	LP03
East Grinstead - Uckfield - Hailsham rural bus service enhancements (A22)	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Eastbourne urban bus priority and service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Rural bus service enhancements	Develop, Deliver	LP03
Digital Demand Responsive Transport (DDRT)	Develop, Deliver	LP06
Subsidised public transport fares for different user groups	Develop, Deliver	LP04
Transport accessibility and inclusion for all user groups	Develop, Deliver	CP01
Integrated transport, spatial planning	Develop, Deliver	LP13
A259 MRN South Coast Corridor (Eastbourne to Brighton) Package	Develop, Deliver	SP02
Delivery and servicing plans for all commercial centres	Develop, Deliver	LP15
Construction and logistics plans for all large developments	Develop, Deliver	LP15
Upgrading freight facilities at Newhaven	Develop, Deliver	CP05

C. **Priorities to complete 3 development stages (study, develop and deliver) in the short-term (by 2030)**

Potential Investment	**Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)**	**Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)**
Review of Resident Parking zones and parking restrictions	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP11
Review of parking requirements for new developments	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP13
Managing supply of off-street parking	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP11
Managing supply of on-street parking	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP11
Dynamic Parking Tariffs	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP11
EV Charging Policy - Network of Charging Hubs	Study, Develop, Deliver	CP06
Investment and roll out of e-bikes/e-mobility	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06
Active travel enhancements in and around our communities: • Bexhill • Eastbourne • Hastings • Lewes • Peacehaven ,Newhaven Seaford • South Downs National Park	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP01
Review of speed limits on rural roads	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP02
Area based traffic management schemes, including School Streets	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP02
Investment in Signage and Wayfinding	Study, Develop, Deliver	CP02
Review of speed limits in urban areas	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP02
Review of pedestrian/active travel crossings	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP02
Redesign of road space	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP02
Cycle hubs and parking	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06
Public spaces and placemaking	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP08

Potential Investment	Development Stage(s) completed in short term (by 2030)	Investment type (see section 3 of the Investment Plan)
Hastings/Bexhill urban bus priority and service enhancements	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP03
Transport Interchange(s) / Mobility Hub(s) • Uckfield	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06
Review of Rights of Way, Bridleways and designation of quiet lanes in rural areas	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP01
Delivery and expansion of car clubs	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06
Digital - technology to manage and optimise traffic on highways	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP14
Digital - Real time information to users, Wi-Fi on public transport, supporting Mobility as a Service (MaaS)	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP14
Integrated Public Transport Timetables, Fares and Ticketing	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06
Public Transport Integration and Mobility-as-a service initiative	Study, Develop, Deliver	LP06

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Report to:	**Cabinet**
Date of meeting:	**26 September 2024**
By:	**Director of Communities, Economy and Transport & Chief Operating Officer**
Title:	**Annual progress report to full Council on the Council's progress towards net zero**
Purpose:	**To consider the progress report.**

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to consider the progress report and advise on changes required.

1 Background

1.1 In October 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency. It set a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050 and committed to reporting annually to full Council on its progress towards meeting this target. Appendix 1 of this report sets out the draft progress report, which will be presented to Cabinet on 26 September 2024 and Full Council on 8 October 2024. Once approved, the progress report in appendix 1 will be published on the Council's website.

2 Supporting Information

2.1 In October 2019 the Council agreed the following Motion, that the Council:

(i) supports the aims and implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

(ii) recognises and declares a Climate Emergency.

(iii) will set a target of achieving carbon neutrality from its activities as soon as possible and in any event by 2050, in line with the new target for the UK agreed by Parliament in 2019.

(iv) will build upon the work we have undertaken to date, will commit resources where possible and will align our policies to address the Climate Emergency.

(v) will set out a clear plan of action to reduce our carbon emissions.

(vi) will report annually at the May Council Meeting on its progress towards the target.

(vii) will investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment, as well as writing to central government with respect to the emergency to request funding to implement swift appropriate actions.

(viii) will use our Environment Strategy to provide a strong unified voice in lobbying for support to address this emergency, sharing best practice across East Sussex and more widely through other partners.

2.2 In line with the commitment made in the Motion agreed in 2019, Cabinet agreed a Climate Emergency Plan in June 2020, which set out how the organisation would continue to reduce its carbon emissions, building on work undertaken since the first Carbon Management Plan was put in place in 2009. The Action Plan covered 2020-22 and set out the scale of the Council's carbon footprint, described the carbon budget that the Council will aim to keep within, and included a set of actions. In 2021/22 Cabinet agreed a further £9.945m to support the work to enable the Council to become carbon neutral and agreed that climate change be considered a basic need requirement within the Council's

Capital Programme and Capital Strategy. Climate change has been embedded in the Council Plan and is recognised as a strategic corporate risk. In February 2023 an updated corporate Climate Emergency Plan, covering 2023-25, was agreed by full Council. This report sets out the progress achieved in 2023/24 in delivering the actions set out in the Plan.

3. Assessing the Council's Carbon Emissions

3.1 A clear understanding of the carbon emissions generated by our activities is a key foundation for working towards carbon neutrality. The corporate Climate Emergency Plan sets out the carbon emissions from the Council's activities using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, an accepted global standard for measuring and reporting on an organisation's GHG emissions. The Protocol divides GHG emissions into three categories, referred to as Scope 1, 2 and 3. Together, these represent the total GHG emissions related to an organisation and its activities. Each scope covers the following emissions:

- Scope 1 – emissions from the combustion of gas, oil, petrol, diesel, coal, or wood. For the Council this covers buildings and vehicles where the Council is responsible for paying for the fuel.
- Scope 2 – emissions from the electricity purchased by the Council.
- Scope 3 – emissions that result from all other activities of the Council. There are 15 different scope 3 categories defined in the Protocol, some of which do not apply to a local authority (e.g. emissions from manufactured goods). The categories that do apply include emissions from business travel, water usage, waste, procurement and staff commuting. In other words, the Council's scope 3 emissions mostly comprise the scope 1 and 2 emissions of other organisations (e.g. contractors).

3.2 The Council has measured scope 1, 2 and some scope 3 emissions since 2008-9. Data on scope 1 and 2 emissions is of higher quality than data on most scope 3 emissions, largely because the Council relies on third parties to provide their carbon emissions under scope 3. The Climate Emergency Plan highlights that scope 3 emissions are by far the largest part of the Council's estimated carbon footprint, notably through the supply chain i.e. the goods, works and services that are purchased by the Council in order to deliver its statutory functions. This is typical for a local authority, as most of the Council's revenue and capital budgets are used to procure goods, services and works from third parties. For an upper tier authority this includes major services such as highways maintenance, waste disposal, and education, as well as social care provision commissioned from a myriad of relatively small independent providers. The Climate Emergency Plan also highlights that the largest proportion of scope 1 and 2 emissions is from schools. Overall, this means that the majority of carbon emissions generated by the Council's activities are from sources over which the Council has influence but limited direct control.

3.3 The Council therefore has a large and complex carbon footprint. Further work is being carried out to quantify scope 3 emissions, notably from our extensive supply chain, before they can begin to be integrated reliably into the Council's carbon footprint and targets set. Consequently, the Climate Emergency Plan focusses primarily on reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions, for example carbon emissions from buildings. This is also typical for most local authorities.

4 Working Towards Carbon Neutrality From Our Activities

4.1 The approach adopted in the Climate Emergency Plan is that, in order to make its fair contribution to reducing county-wide emissions, the Council will aim to cut its own emissions in half in the 5 years between 2020-25. This is based on a recognised methodology developed by the UK's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research for calculating the carbon budget by local authority area. A carbon budget represents the total quantity of greenhouse gases which can be released to the atmosphere if we are to contain temperature rises to a given level – this can be calculated globally and then broken down into national and sub-national budgets. The Tyndall model, based on current scientific understanding, indicates that to stay within a budget based on a rise of no more than 1.5

degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels (as set out in the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change) requires cutting emissions from East Sussex by half every 5 years.

4.2 This science-based reduction target is what the Council is working towards, rather than a fixed end date by which it will become carbon neutral. This approach is in line with advice to Councils from the Local Government Association, which has stated that: "*There is no science to picking an end year where emissions are zero*. *Setting a target year by which emissions will be zero can be symbolically important. However, what counts is the trajectory of the commitments to carbon reduction between now and the target zero emissions year. This defines the actual level of emissions reduction being promised over the budget period. This is what matters to climate change*".

4.3 Cutting emissions in half every 5 years is extremely challenging. This is highlighted by modelling carried out by independent experts in 2022, which indicated that the Council would need approximately £200m up to 2050 to pay for capital intensive interventions to keep within the science-based target for just its scope 1 and 2 emissions. Many of the simpler and cheaper measures, and those within the Council's direct control, have already been implemented through the Council's carbon reduction programme that has been delivered for many years and which is summarized in appendix 1. In addition, the last two years have seen significant cost increases through the supply chain, as well as delays to delivery with some projects due to bottlenecks in the supply of particular items and the limited availability of consultants and contractors with the right skills and experience. Some of these pressures have been partly mitigated by the Council successfully securing £1.9m of additional external funding since 2020. Bids for further external funding continue to be made, however there is intense competition for funding. In view of the challenging financial position for local government, which is highlighted in the Council's State of the County report in June 2024, lobbying of government to encourage larger scale and longer-term sustained funding for public sector decarbonization continues to take place.

4.4 Despite the challenging circumstances, appendix 1 illustrates that the Council has reduced its emissions by 35% between 2019/20 and 2023/24, against the cumulative target of 43%. This is a shortfall of about 950 tonnes of CO_2e, which is equivalent to the average annual per capita emissions of about 170 people in the UK, based on the latest government data. The 35% reduction has largely been achieved through a combination of the carbon reduction measures that the Council has invested in, the decarbonization of the national electricity grid and changes to the Council's buildings portfolio. Other County Councils have not yet reported publicly on their performance in 2023/24, so it's not currently possible to compare the Council's performance with that of other local authorities. However, the most recent independent assessment of local authority performance in addressing climate change, carried out by Climate Emergency UK in 2023, ranked the Council as 7th amongst English county councils and the highest performer amongst county councils in the South East in its overall approach to climate change.

4.5 Progress towards becoming a carbon neutral council is overseen by the Climate Emergency Board, which has senior representatives from every department and is co-chaired by the Chief Operating Officer and the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport. Reporting on progress is made quarterly to the Corporate Management Team, annually to Full Council and is published on the Council's website.

5 Conclusion and Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 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. This report sets out the further progress made during 2023/24.

ROS PARKER
Chief Operating Officer

RUPERT CLUBB
Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Contact Officer: Andy Arnold Tel. 01273 481606. Email: Andy.arnold@eastsussex.gov.uk

LOCAL MEMBERS: ALL BACKGROUND PAPERS: None

Appendix 1

Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Report, 2023/24

1.0 Introduction

In October 2019 East Sussex County Council declared a Climate Emergency. In 2020 it adopted a Climate Emergency Plan, which was updated in 2023. The approach taken in the Plan is that, to make its fair contribution to reducing county-wide emissions, the County Council will aim to stay within a science-based budget. This budget is based on a recognised methodology developed by the UK's Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research for calculating carbon budgets by local authority area. The Tyndall model, based on current scientific understanding, shows that to stay within a budget based on a rise of no more than 1.5 degrees centigrade above pre-industrial levels (as agreed in the UN Paris Agreement on Climate Change) emissions from the county of East Sussex need to be cut in half every 5 years. Therefore, the Council has committed to also cutting its corporate emissions in half every 5 years.

This report gives an annual summary of emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) from Council operations, measured as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) emissions for the financial year 2023/24, compared with emissions from the baseline year of 2019/20. The report follows guidance from the Department of Food, Environment and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on how we should measure and report on these emissions.

The report covers:

- **Scope 1 emissions:** from fossil fuels used for heating schools and corporate buildings, together with the Council's vehicles.
- **Scope 2 emissions:** from electricity used in building and for street lighting.
- **Scope 3 emissions:** arise from all other activities of the Council and include business travel, water usage, waste, procurement and staff commuting. This is by far the largest part of our total emissions, as is typical for a local authority, as most of the Council's revenue and capital budgets are used to procure goods, services and works from third parties. Our Scope 3 emissions mostly comprise the Scope 1 and 2 emissions of other organisations (e.g. the energy that contractors and suppliers use to deliver services on behalf of the County Council).

Control v Influence: The County Council has direct control over Scope 1 & 2 emissions, arising from our own operations, and can influence (but not directly control) Scope 3 emissions.

2.0 CO_2e Emissions

2.1 Scope 1 & 2 Emissions

Figure 1 summarises the Council's estimated scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions in 2023/24. We have calculated Scope 1 & 2 emissions based on robust consumption data. These emissions are from the operation of our buildings and vehicle fleet, and so are under our direct control. Details as to how these emissions have been calculated are summarised in table 1.

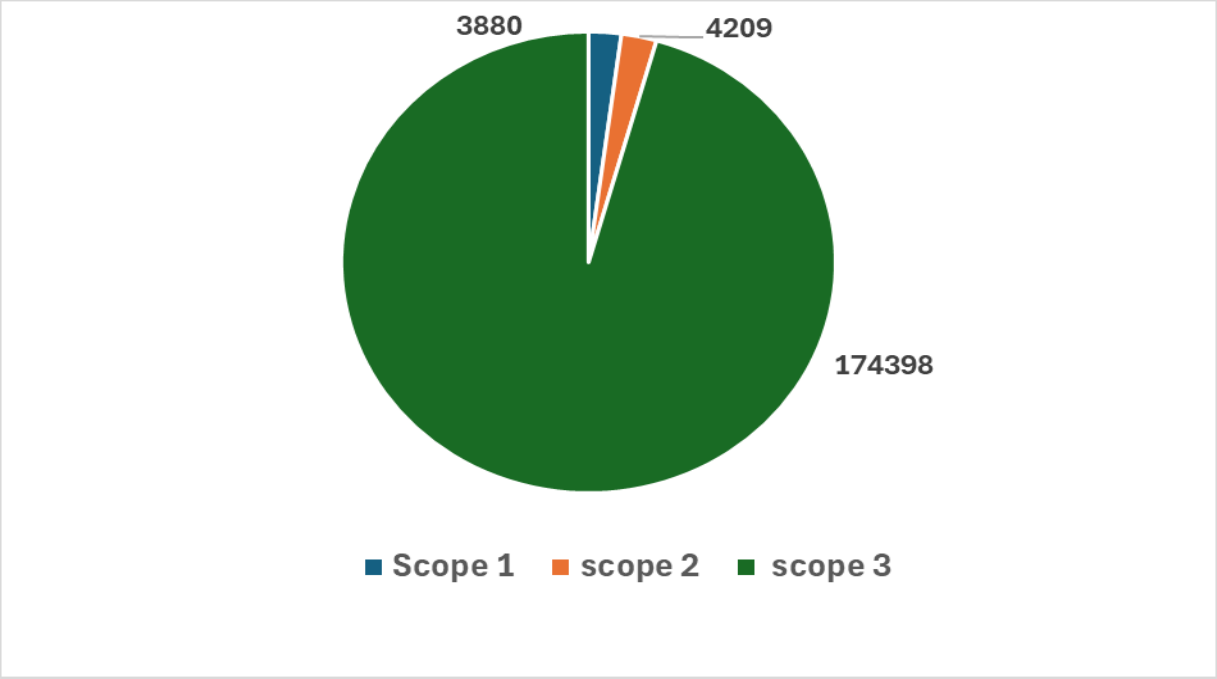

Figure 1: Scope 1, 2 & 3 Emissions Breakdown (tCO_2e 2023/24)

2.2 Scope 3 Emissions

Prior to 2020/21, only Scope 3 emissions from Business Travel and Electricity Transmission & Distribution were reported. From 2020/21 additional Scope 3 emissions have been included, notably supply chain and staff commuting emission data.

Scope 3 emissions have been calculated using a mixture of robust measured data, where this is available (e.g. staff mileage claims, tonnes of waste), and estimates, where robust data does not exist or would be too resource intensive to gather (e.g. from the many smaller companies in our procurement supply chain).

The vast majority of our carbon emissions come from the goods, works or services that we procure from third parties to deliver the Council's statutory functions. Figure 2 shows the estimated emissions by different sectors in the Council's supply chain.

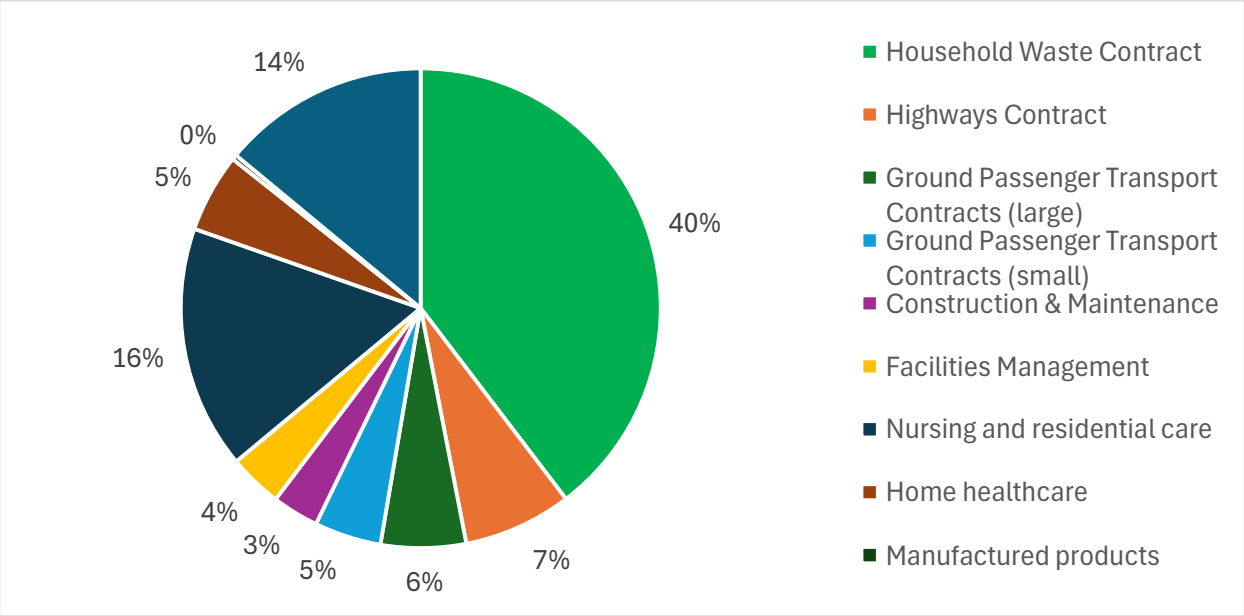

Figure 2. The Council's scope 3 procurement CO2e emissions by sector in 2023/24.

Table 1. Break down of ESCC's scope 1 – 3 carbon emissions.

Scopes	t CO2e	Explanation
Scope 1		
Gas Consumption	3,349	All natural gas used in ESCC buildings or those which we occupy to which ESCC is the counter party to the energy bill, including schools, properties closed and sold in 2020-21 and our portion of shared use.
Gas Oil, Burning Oil and Propane Consumption	365	All gas oil, burning oil, propane and biomass used in ESCC buildings or those which we occupy to which ESCC is the counter party to the energy bill, including schools, properties closed and sold in 2020-21 and our portion of shared use.
Owned Transport	165	All core fleet owned and operated by ESCC.
Process Emissions	n/a	Excluded as not applicable to ESCC activities.
Fugitive Emissions	n/a	Excluded due to cost of data collection.
Total Scope 1	**3,880**	
Scope 2		
Purchased Electricity	4,209	All purchased electricity used in ESCC buildings or those which we occupy to which ESCC is the counter party to the energy bill, including schools, properties closed and sold in 2019-20 and our portion of shared use. Including street lighting and traffic signals.
Exported electricity	-24	Electricity generated by ESCC solar PV assets and exported to the national grid
Total Scope 2	**4,185**	
Scope 3		
Household Waste Contract	67,394	Emissions reported by suppliers based on contract activity for ESCC
Nursing and residential care	27,906	Emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors
Other	23,772	Emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors
Highways Contract	12,453	Emissions reported by suppliers based on contract activity for ESCC
Ground Passenger Transport (large)	9,757	Emissions calculated using a mix of spend based emissions factors & the overall emissions from supplier organisations
Home healthcare	9,007	Emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors
Ground Passenger Transport (small)	7,655	Emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors
Facilities Management	6,180	Emissions mostly calculated from the overall emissions of supplier organisations
Construction & Maintenance	5,332	Emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors
Employee Commuting	2,188	Based on date on travel mode, days in the office, distance from home to work and days worked per year, taken from the 2022 ESCC staff climate change survey
Business Travel	990	All mileage claimed in private or leased vehicles, but excludes public transport and taxis, as below.
Employees Working from Home	801	Based on data on number of days worked in the office from the 2022 ESCC staff climate change survey and a UK Government emission factor for working from home. Note that the majority of emissions are related to home heating, with office equipment emissions an order of magnitude less
Manufactured products	586	Emissions estimated via ESCC & SCC model
Electricity Transmission and Distribution	259	Transmission and distribution loss associated with all purchased electricity.
Waste Disposal	61	Waste tonnages for corporate buildings and schools.
Water/ Sewage	57	Measured m3 water use in ESCC buildings.
Total Scope 3	**174,398**	
GRAND TOTAL	**182,463**	

In common with many other local authorities, we are continually improving the quality of the carbon emission data from our supply chain. Figure 3 illustrates the three-stepped approach that we are taking to improving data quality, namely moving from estimating emissions, based on spend with suppliers, through to requiring suppliers to report directly on the emissions that occur as a result of what they deliver under contract to the Council.

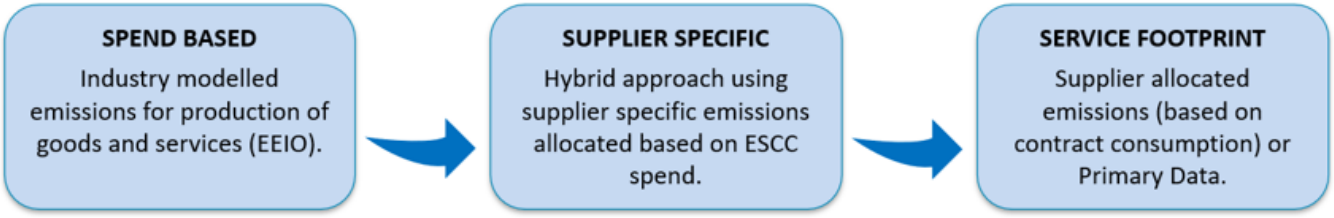

Figure 3. Stepped approach to increasingly accurate data for carbon emissions from procurement.

We significantly increased our engagement with major suppliers during 2023/24 and have gathered much more accurate carbon emissions data from some of them. Table 2 sets out how much of our procurement is being measured under each of the three different steps shown in figure 3. This highlights that about 45% of emissions from procurement in 2023/24 were reported much more accurately, which accounted for over half of our total procurement spend. Table 2 also shows a 37% reduction in carbon emissions between 2022/23 and 2023/24. This was largely because of the much greater accuracy of some of the data being collected. The remainder of our Scope 3 procurement emission figures should be regarded as providing an indication of scale, rather than a robustly accurate measure of carbon emissions. We will continue to work on improving the quality of this data.

Table 2. Scope 3 procurement data in 2022/23 and 2023/24.

SECTOR	**2022/23 t CO2e**	**2023/24 t CO2e**	**% change**	**Spend Report [1]**	**Supplier Report [2]**	**Service Report [3]**
Household Waste Contract	81,252	67,394	**-17%**	0%	4%	96%
Nursing and residential care	41,229	27,906	**-32%**	96%	4%	0%
Highways Contract	7,597	12,453	**64% [4]**	0%	0%	100%
Ground Passenger Transport Contracts (large)	45,813	9,757	**-79%**	52%	48%	0%
Home healthcare	6,710	9,007	**34% [5]**	98%	2%	0%
Ground Passenger Transport Contracts (small)	32,931	7,655	**-77%**	100%	0%	0%
Facilities Management	9,195	6,180	**-33%**	15%	85%	0%
Construction & Maintenance	5,136	5,332	**4%**	99%	1%	0%
Manufactured products	7,418	586	**-92%**	77%	23%	0%
Other	23,528	23,772	**1%**	99%	1%	0%
Total	**260,809**	**170,043**	**-35%**	**39%**	**16%**	**45%**
Intensity per £1,000 of spend	**0.56**	**0.35**				

Notes:
1. Spend Report = emissions calculated using spend based emissions factors (EEIOs).
2. Supplier Report = emissions calculated by suppliers directly reporting overall organisation emissions.
3. Service Report = emissions reported by suppliers based on contract activity for ESCC.
4. Highways Contract: this increase is due to the new contractor (Balfour Beatty Living Places) reporting a more comprehensive set of emission types from its contract activities than the previous contractor.
5. Home Healthcare: a few larger contracts have been reclassified and added to this sector.

Note that our carbon budget and target currently cover our Scope 1 & 2 emissions, but not our Scope 3 emissions, because of the lack of accuracy with most scope 3 procurement data. This may change in the next corporate Climate Emergency Plan, as the accuracy of scope 3 procurement data continues to improve.

2.3 Performance Against Target

Scope 1 & 2 CO_2e emissions: Figure 4 shows annual progress against the target for Scope 1 & 2 emissions during the 5-year carbon budget covering 2020-25, measured against the baseline year of 2019/20. The units are tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_2e). the main points to note are that:

1) Carbon emissions have consistently fallen year on year since the baseline year.

2) In 2020/21 the annual reduction target was marginally exceeded, largely due to a combination of Covid lockdowns, which saw a significant reduction in energy use for heating buildings and business travel, the continued decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, carbon reduction measures and changes to the estate.

3) In 2021/22 the annual reduction target was missed, mainly because of a rebound in building usage and business travel post Covid and a colder winter than average.

4) In 2022/23 emissions were further reduced by 15% (1,500 tCO_2). This was because of the continued decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, a mild winter, carbon reduction measures and changes to the estate. Covid guidance on keeping windows open to maintain ventilation will have contributed to the annual reduction target being missed by 4% (318 tCO_2).

5) In 2023/24 the annual emissions reduction was 5% (457 tCO_2). The main contributing factors to the reduction were estate changes, efficiency measures and warmer weather than in 2022/23. 25 carbon reduction capital schemes were delivered, against a target of 23. Further details are in section 2.7.

6) Overall, the cumulative reduction in the Council's emissions between 2019/20 and 2023/24 has been 35%, against a cumulative target of 43%.

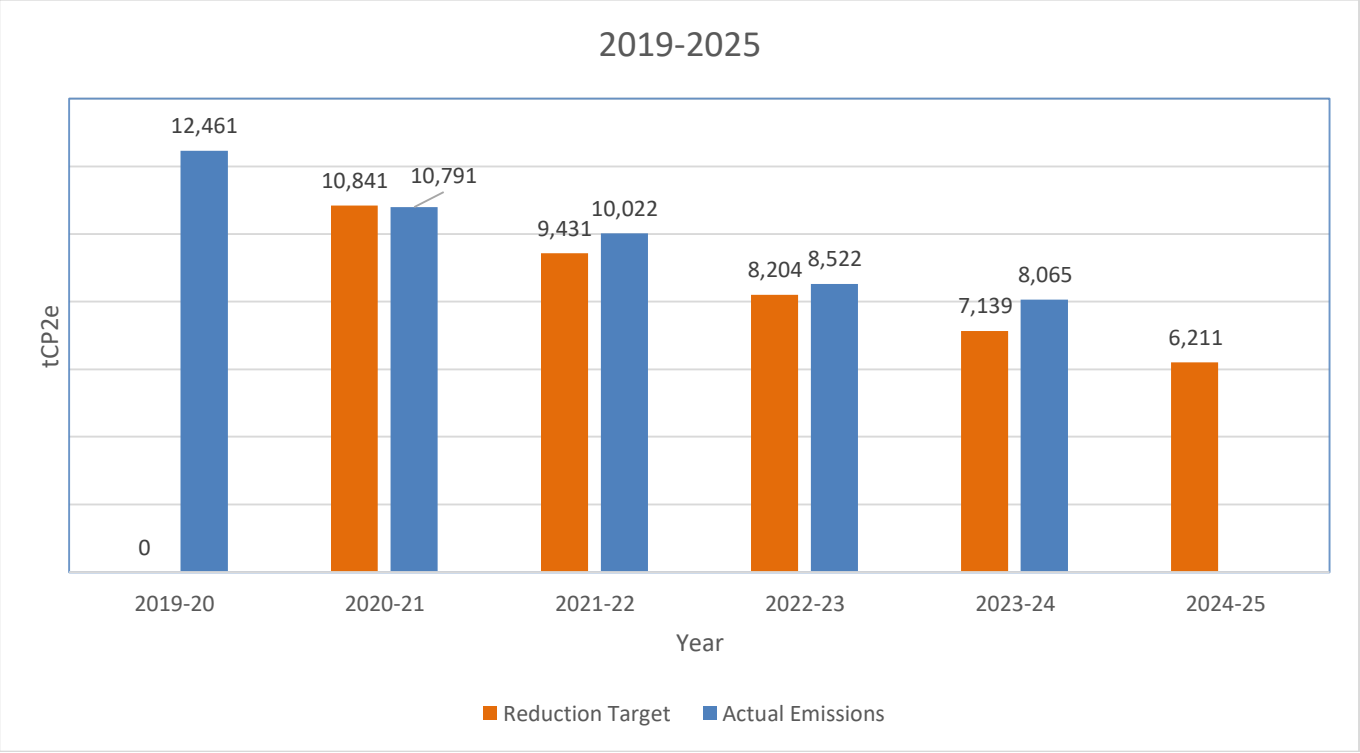

Figure 4: Carbon Emission Target v Actual 5-Year Carbon Budget 2021-2025 compared with the 2020 Baseline.

Table 3 shows the same data as in figure 4 and shows the actual percentage reduction each year and the cumulative reduction against the baseline year of 2019/20.

Table 3. Target and actual carbon emissions and percentages between 2019/20 and 2023/24.

Year	Target footprint (CO_2e)	Actual emissions (CO_2e)	Actual annual reduction (%) [1]	Cumulative target (%)	Actual Cumulative reduction (%) [2]
2019/20	Baseline year	12,461	n/a	n/a	n/a
2020/21	10,841	10,791	-13%	-13%	n/a
2021/22	9,432	10,023	-7%	-24%	-20%
2022/23	8,206	8,522	-15%	-34%	-32%
2023/24	7,139	8,065	-5%	-43%	-35%
2024-25	6,211			-50%	

Notes:
1 – the figures are the reduction against the previous year's actual total emissions.
2- the figures are the cumulative reduction against the baseline year and so are not the total % reduction of the figures in the 'actual annual reduction' column.

In 2023/24:

- Buildings accounted for 81% of Scope 1 and 2 emissions, with schools making up the largest share (figure 5). Corporate buildings include all non-school buildings, such as office buildings, libraries and residential homes. School buildings exclude those that have converted to academies.
- Fossil fuel heating (ie. gas and oil) made up 47% of building emissions, a reduction of 13% when compared with the previous two years, due to a milder winter.
- Street lighting electricity consumption was down 3% compared with 2022/23. This is a smaller reduction than has been achieved in previous years, as upgrades to more efficient LED lighting has largely been completed across the lighting portfolio.
- External temperatures: During 2023/24 external temperatures for the East Sussex region were warmer than during 2022/23.

Figure 5 illustrates the change in scope 1 and 2 emissions between 2019/20 and 2023/24, which is the current five year carbon budget time frame, across buildings, street lighting, ICT servers and business fleet.

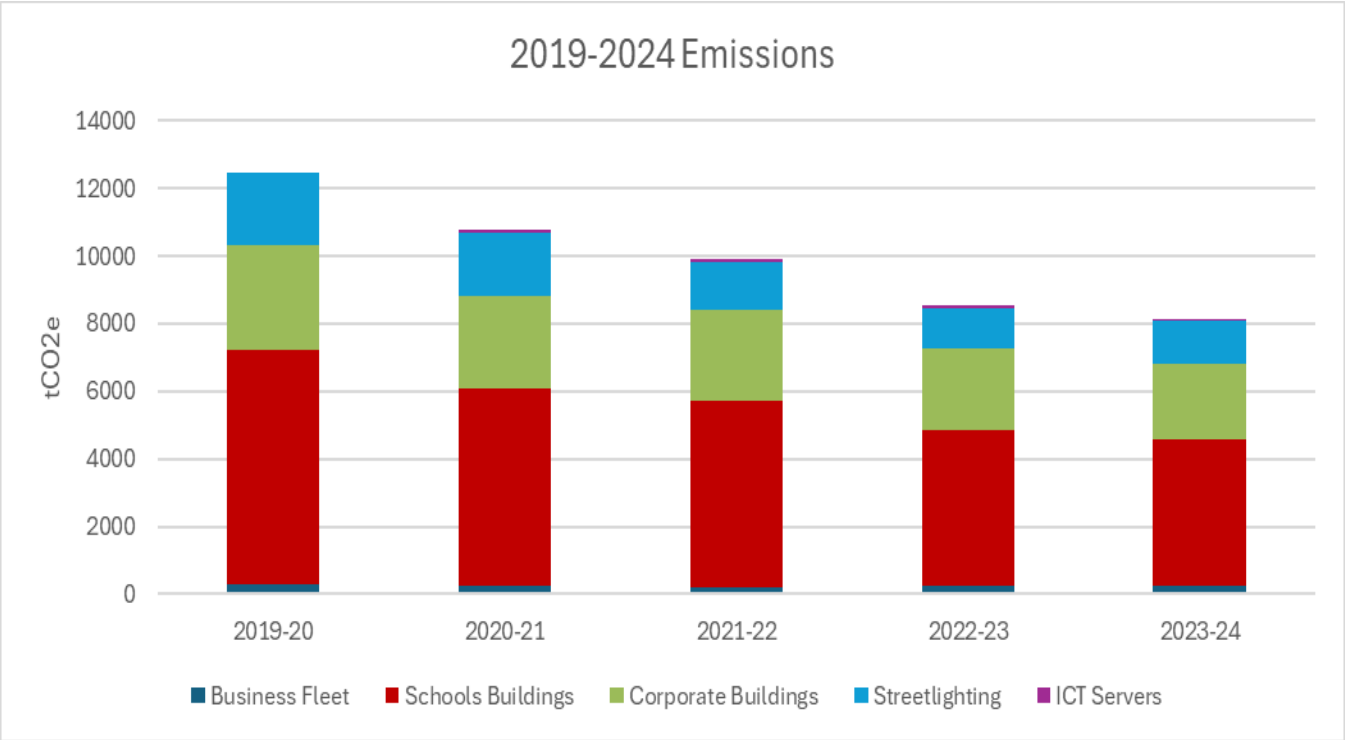

Figure 5. Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions between 2019-24.

2.4 Historic Emissions Comparison

Figure 6 shows the progress made since 2008-9, when we started to report on our carbon emissions. Between 2008-9 and 2023/24 scope 1&2 emissions fell by over 73%.

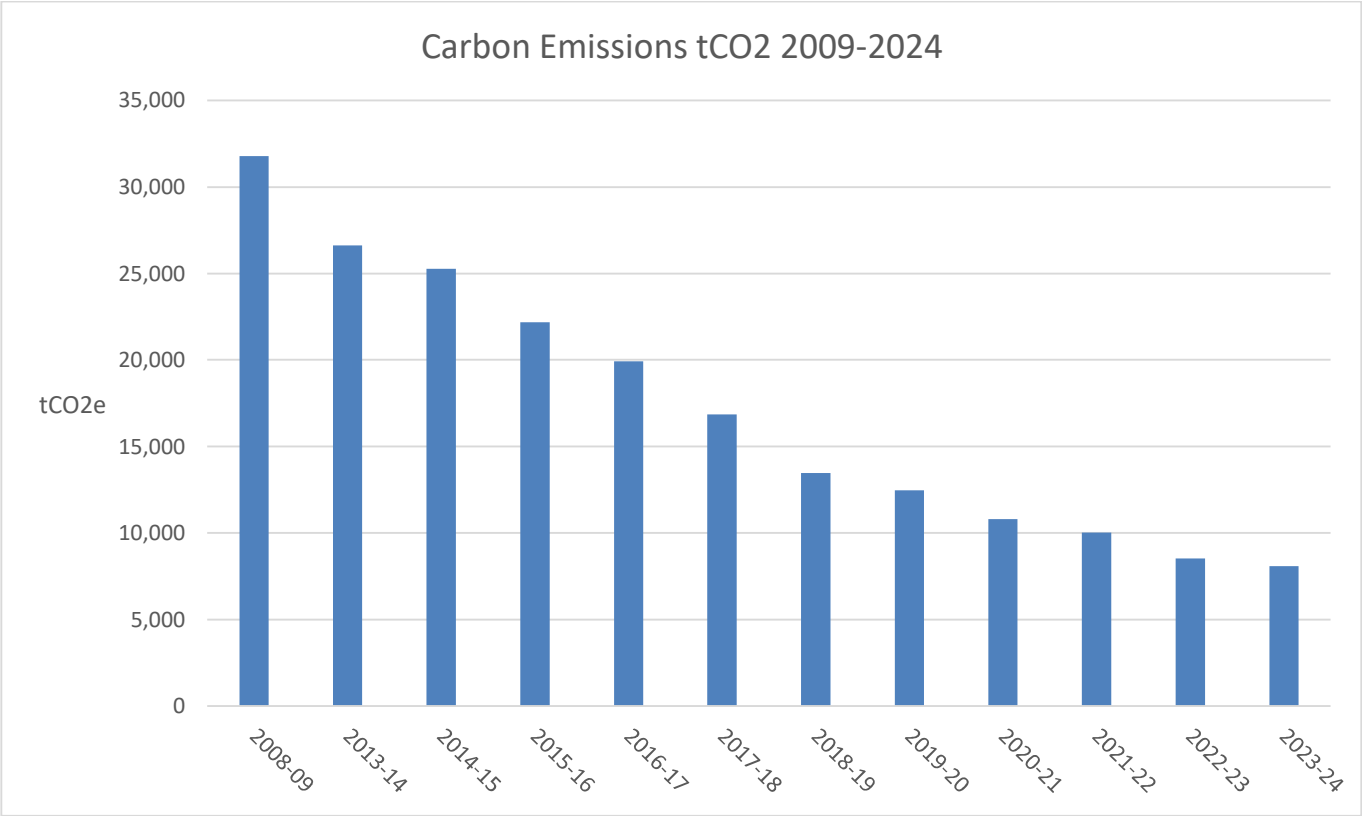

Figure 6: The County Council's carbon reduction between 2008-09 and 2023/24

2.5 Impact of Grid Decarbonisation and Estate Changes

The decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, whereby renewable energy and gas have largely replaced coal, has made a significant contribution during most years to reducing the Council's carbon emissions. However, in 2023/24 the carbon emissions from the Council's electricity consumption increased, despite a fall in the amount of electricity consumed by the Council. This was due to changes in the carbon emission factor, which is the figure used to convert electricity consumption from the national grid into equivalent carbon emissions. Carbon emission factors are produced by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero. They are updated every year and widely applied in the UK. The UK grid carbon emission factor changes from year to year as the fuel mix consumed in UK power stations changes (i.e. between renewables, nuclear, natural gas, oil and coal) and as the proportion of imported electricity also changes. In most years the grid factor decreases. However, the emissions grid factor that the government published for use in calculating emissions that occurred during 2023/24 increased. This was due to a post-covid increase in national electricity demand and a relatively poor year for wind generation in 2021, which is when the emission factor for 2023/24 was based on because of the time it takes to collate and analyse the data (more information can be found here).

Another key factor affecting the size of the Council's carbon footprint is the change in the size of its estate, as a result of the disposal or addition of property. The main change is usually through schools converting to academies and leaving the Council's portfolio.

2.6 Intensity Measurement

In addition to reporting the absolute change in corporate carbon emissions, as shown above, it's also good practice to 'normalise' emissions against an appropriate business metric, such as tonnes of CO_2e per £ of revenue or per square metre of floor space. This allows comparison of energy efficiency performance over time and with other similar types of organisations. As recommended by the Carbon Trust, we divide our total emissions by our annual net revenue expenditure to give a carbon intensity measurement. Table 4**Error! Reference source not found.** shows how our carbon intensity has changed since 2008/9, mainly because of the decarbonisation of the national electricity grid, carbon reduction measures and changes to the estate. Carbon intensity in 2023/24 was 16 tCO_2e per £million, based on a net revenue budget of £501m and emissions of 8,089tCO_2e.

Table 4: Emissions Intensity Comparison.

Emissions Intensity Comparison	2008-9 Base Year	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Net Revenue Budget (£m)	**314**	**375**	**403**	**417**	**453**	**501**
Scope 1 & 2 Emissions t CO2e	**31,790**	**12,461**	**10,791**	**10,022**	**8,522**	**8,065**
Scope 1 & 2 Carbon Intensity	**101**	**33**	**27**	**24**	**19**	**16**
Scope 1 & 2 Change on Prior Year	**n/a**	**-8%**	**-19%**	**-10%**	**-22%**	**-14%**
Scope 1 & 2 Change on Base Year	**n/a**	**-67%**	**-74%**	**-76%**	**-81%**	**-84%**

2.7 Actions to Reduce Scope 1 & 2 CO_2e Emissions

The Council has used a mix of corporate funding and external grants to deliver its carbon reduction programme since 2008/9. Between 2009 and 2024 we invested £14.8 million into over 260 projects which, collectively, generate estimated savings on energy bills of over £1m per year. This investment has supported the delivery of a wide range of projects, including solar PV, LED lighting, building fabric improvements, heating controls, boiler replacements, low carbon heating and energy efficient ICT.

During 2023/24 the main carbon reduction measures that the Council invested in included 10 solar PV installations, 5 LED lighting upgrades, 3 heat decarbonization schemes at schools that previously relied on oil boilers and 7 schemes covering a mix of carbon reduction activities (eg. estate rationalization; building fabric improvements). These projects have been supported by good housekeeping, plus monitoring and targeting.

On-site renewable solar energy generates around 1.7MW of clean energy each year. Table 5 provides a summary of sites where solar PV came on-line during 2023/24. A total of 21 sites have had solar PV installed over the last 3 years.

Table 5. The sites where solar PV came online during 2023/24.

Site	System online	Annual saving (£)	Annual saving (CO2e)
The Keep	May-23	£24,788	25.3
Phoenix Centre	Jul-23	£3,725	3.9
Bodiam Primary School	Oct-23	£7,359	4.1
Chiddingly Primary School	Dec-23	£8,564	4.7
Plumpton Primary School	Dec-23	£9,463	5.2
Rocks Park Primary School	Mar-24	£10,977	6.1
Hailsham Library	Jan-24	£2,960	2.4
Newhaven Library	Jan-24	£5,502	5.3
Bexhill Library	Mar-24	£2,752	2.3
St Nicholas Centre	Feb-24	£4,553	4.3

Totals:	**80,643**	**63.6**

Case study – Milton Grange solar PV

Milton Grange is a Council-owned residential care home in Eastbourne. It had 156 solar PV fitted, at a cost of £92,411, 60% of which was covered by a government grant. During 2023/24 the panels generated 60,900 kWhs, which was 29% of the site's overall electricity consumption. This reduced the electricity bill at Milton Grange by £13,860, giving a payback period of 9 years, and reduced carbon emissions during the year by 14 tCO_2e.

2.8 Actions to Reduce Scope 3 Emissions

2023/24 was the first full year that resources had been dedicated to addressing Scope 3 procurement emissions. This has led to a significant improvement in both the quality of information and the measures taken by the Council in its procurements and contracts. The consequence is that:

1) The improvement in the quality of much of the data, and bringing it up to date, highlighted a 37% reduction in the estimated carbon emissions from scope 3 procurement when compared with 2022/23.

2) The introduction of carbon reporting and reduction requirements in contracts during 2023/24 means that, by the end of 2024/25, over 70% of suppliers in the construction / maintenance category will report directly and have carbon reduction measures in place.

Case study – Planned Maintenance Framework

The Council engages a number of electrical, mechanical, roofing and building contractors to carry out critical maintenance work on corporate and school buildings.

The Framework Agreement for this activity was re-procured in 2023/24, which enabled the Council to work with about 30 suppliers, most of whom are local SMEs, to develop carbon reduction plans. 18 carbon reduction plans were produced and all Framework providers will report against a carbon-related key performance indicator from the end of 2024.

The Framework starts in September 2024 and:

1) places about 3,200 tCO_2e of the Council's scope 3 emissions under management.
2) provides a pathway to reduce these by 39% by the end of the framework agreement in 2028.

Require all bidders to submit a Carbon Reduction Plan for their organisation.

Ask for proposals on how they will intend to reduce on site emissions during delivery.

Assess their capability to deliver decarbonisation schemes and solutions.

Included a Key Performance Indicator requiring progress on carbon reduction targets to be reported.

3.0 Supporting Information

3.1 Organisation Information

For information on the services that ESCC provides and is responsible for delivering, and how we are organised and managed, please refer to our website.

3.2 Reporting Period

This report covers the period from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. Our base year is 2008/09, we chose this as it was used for the previous national indicator, NI185.

3.3 Geographical Boundary

All ESCC operations are carried out within the UK.

3.4 Organisational Boundary

We are defining our organisational boundary via the equity share approach. Although we have 100% equity in the majority of our estate, there are some buildings where we are not in full control of operations but are still responsible for paying a proportion of the energy bills, e.g. some leisure centres. Adjustments have been made to these figures during the calculation phase, to take account of the portion for which we are responsible.

3.5 Operational Boundary

Error! Reference source not found. on the following page shows what we have included and excluded from our reporting in 2023/24. We have used the 2023 conversion factors, published by DESNZ, which are available here.

3.6 Alterations to Previous Figures

We have made no alterations to previous emissions figures, except for the 2008-9 base year recalculations – see Section 3.9 for details.

3.7 Carbon Offsets

To date, we have not purchased carbon offsets to reduce our emissions, as it is widely recognised good practice to reduce emissions as much as possible before using offsets to compensate for residual emissions. Our current focus remains on emissions reduction through energy efficiency, decarbonisation of heat and on-site renewable generation. We are, however, looking into options for good quality offsetting to support carbon reduction.

From April 2021, electricity supplied to all corporate buildings and street lighting has been purchased on a green tariff. Currently, schools continue to purchase their electricity on a brown tariff, though the Council has offered and encouraged the take up of green electricity by schools.

As is best practice, we do not count our green tariff electricity as a carbon reduction measure because purchasing renewable generated electricity already in the marketplace makes very little material difference to total UK carbon emissions. On-site renewable and energy efficiency measures give direct carbon savings and offer a more robust mechanism for us to play our part in making genuine carbon reductions.

Instead, the Council decided to use a location-based approach to calculate our carbon emissions from purchased electricity. This approach uses the average carbon emission intensity of the national grid.

3.8 Renewable Generation

Some of our sites benefit from onsite renewable generation in the form of solar thermal, solar photovoltaic and/or biomass boilers. Such measures provide zero or low carbon energy now, rather than relying on improvements over time in grid electricity carbon intensity. It also demonstrates leadership and will help support the growth of a local green supply chain. A breakdown of currently installed solar PV capacity, which remains within our portfolio and reporting boundary, is given in Table 6 below:

Table 6: Solar PV Generation 2023/24

	Installed Capacity (kWp)	Annual Generation (kWh)
School	388	354,314
Corporate (Non-School)	198	604,098
Total	586	958,412

3.9 Base year recalculation

In order to provide meaningful comparisons of our carbon reduction performance, we compare our current year with the baseline year of 2008-9, when we first reported on our carbon emissions.

We periodically adjust the baseline year 2008-9 figures to take account of significant estate changes such as schools converting to academies and site closures. We remove the 2008-9 carbon emissions for sites that have left the estate and add emissions for significant property additions.

We do this to track genuine performance improvements rather than, for example, counting carbon emission reductions for schools that convert to academy as a reduction, when those emissions remain in the county of East Sussex even if they are no longer within our building portfolio.

Re-baselining took place in 2014-15 and again in 2020/21. This means that the baseline year figures shown in this report are lower than those reported in 2008-9, as emissions were included for properties that are no longer in our portfolio. We will recalculate the baseline year emissions in any given year if the significance threshold is met. The significance threshold is set at an annual reduction of 5% of the baseline year's total emissions, where the reduction has come only from estate changes. The baseline year

emissions total will not change until the beginning of the next 5 year carbon budget unless the significance threshold is met.

3.10 Limitations

We have automatic meters installed across most of our estate which allows us to report with a high level of accuracy on our electricity and gas related CO_2 emissions. Street lighting consumption is un-metered and the local distribution network allocates our usage based on the information we submit to them on our street lighting stock. The energy data in this report is calculated using billed kWh figures, which are validated each month against the readings taken from the automatic meter reading (AMR) loggers, where available. Where meters are not fitted with AMR loggers, manual reads are taken at least quarterly to ensure billing accuracy. Currently, we only hold limited information on combusted biofuel (i.e. biomass) as the purchasing of this fuel is delegated to individual sites and so we lack sufficient data to report. Our data for solar PV generation uses a mixture of accurately recorded generation data and estimates based on kWp system size for some 3rd party owned systems installed on schools prior to 2021, where we cannot obtain generation data from the installers.

We have made the best efforts to report on our emissions using the data we have available and, although we are confident in the quality of the data that we hold, there will always be scope for further improvement and adjustment in years to come.