

### National and Local Policy and Resources Outlook 2019

#### **1. Introduction**

1.1. The national context that we are working and planning within remains deeply uncertain. Planning for Brexit continues to occupy Government and Parliamentary time and progress in a range of areas that require legislation or decisions from Central Government has been delayed as a result. This includes much-needed detail and certainty on the new system and quantum for local government finance from 2020/21 onwards (see 2.4 – 2.13), and the Social Care Green Paper which was planned for summer 2017 and is now expected at the earliest opportunity. The Queens Speech to launch the Government's next legislative session, which was planned to take place in June, has also been delayed.

1.2. On Friday 7 June, Rt Hon Theresa May MP resigned as Leader of the Conservative Party and Prime Minister. A Conservative Party leadership contest is underway and due to conclude with a new Prime Minister taking office in the week beginning 22 July. This adds further uncertainty to the national political picture and the context outlined within this paper is therefore subject to change under a new Government policy direction.

1.3 In spite of this uncertainty, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) continues to plan proactively to ensure we deliver excellent services to residents and meet our priority outcomes, working effectively with our partners to make the very best use of the resources we have. A look at the local and national developments that are setting the context and will influence and impact our work for the coming year is outlined in this appendix, in sections on:

- Overall Context
- Adult Social Care and Health
- Children's Services
- Schools
- Communities and Residents
- Community Safety
- Economy
- Infrastructure, Transport and Planning
- Environment
- Partnerships
- Workforce
- Funding and Income

#### **2. Overall Context**

##### Brexit

2.1. The UK was due to leave the European Union (EU) on 29 March 2019. Following a short initial extension, the EU Council granted a six-month extension to the Article 50 process and, as it stands, the UK will leave the EU on 31 October 2019. If a withdrawal agreement is ratified in the UK and EU before then, the UK will leave on the first day of the following month. The six-month extension means that the risk of leaving the EU without a deal (i.e. with no agreed transition or implementation period) has been removed in the immediate future and Government has ceased its planning for a 'no deal' exit. However, the change in Prime Minister means the future approach to Britain's exit from the EU, including whether a withdrawal agreement can be agreed before 31 October 2019, remains uncertain.

2.2. ESCC's approach has been to undertake pragmatic and proportionate planning for Brexit alongside Central Government, local partners and businesses and this will remain the case throughout the summer. As a member of the Sussex Emergency Resilience forum, we were involved in county-wide no-deal planning and preparation in March, and will contribute to any future local emergency planning for leaving the EU through that forum. We have considered the impact of a no-deal Brexit on our services and responded as required. Officers will continue to proactively share information in our networks, monitor developments and respond to any issues arising in advance of October.

2.3. Becky Shaw, Chief Executive is one of nine regional coordinators representing the South East on a Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) working group. The group coordinates regional intelligence, escalates concerns to Government and shares key information with local authorities, partners and businesses to ensure they are prepared for our departure from the EU.

### Spending Review and Local Government Funding

#### a) Spending Review 2019

2.4. The Chancellor of the Exchequer confirmed in the March 2019 Spring Statement that - providing an EU exit deal was agreed - the Government would hold a spending review this year, to conclude alongside the Autumn Budget. The expectation was that the spending review would set departmental resource spending for the next three years (2020/21-2022/23) and undertake a zero-based review of capital spending where each programme or project would be scrutinised from the bottom up, ensuring the maximum return for the country. A spending review is different to a comprehensive spending review, when all revenue spending is zero-based.

2.5. Liz Truss, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, has since said in evidence to the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee that the spending review would be delayed to after the summer and was unlikely to take place this year. 2019/20 is the last year of the four year deal for local government funding, set at the last spending review in 2015. Without a spending review, we could see a "roll over" year take place, which continues uncertainty in our budget planning, as temporary funding allocations would be made, rather than longer term permanent funding arrangements.

2.6. Concerns about the unsustainability and insecurity of funding for local government are increasingly documented nationally. In October 2018, the National Audit Office (NAO) published its 'Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018 report' which found that since the NAO last reported in 2014 financial pressure on authorities had increased markedly. It concluded that authorities had done well to manage the 49.1% real-terms reduction in government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18 but, because authorities faced a range of new demand and cost pressures while their statutory obligations had not been reduced and non-social care budgets had already been reduced substantially, authorities had less room for manoeuvre to find further savings. The report also found that the current spending review period had been characterised by one-off and short-term funding fixes, and the increasingly crisis-driven approach to managing local authority finances risked value for Government money. The NAO's analysis reflects ESCC's local experience and in our lobbying (see 2.14-2.16 below) we have emphasised the increasingly urgent need for additional long-term funding to maintain our services and provide value for public money.

#### b) Fair Funding Review

2.7. In December 2018, as part of the 2019/20 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, MHCLG released its latest consultation on the review of local authorities' relative needs and resources, also known as the Fair Funding Review (FFR). Government intends that the FFR considers cost drivers and pressures facing authorities (their local need), resources available to authorities, and then establishes a fairer link between the two with a new relative needs formula to allocate funding.

2.8. The relative needs formula proposed in the December consultation consists of a per capita foundation formula for upper and lower tier authorities, alongside seven service-specific funding formulae – for Adult Social Care (ASC), Children and Young People's Services, Public Health, Highways Maintenance, Fire & Rescue, Legacy Capital Finance, and Flood Defence and Coastal Protection. The foundation formula (allocating about a third of funding for upper tier authorities for services such as Libraries, Planning and Central Services) will be allocated on the basis of population, then subject to an Area Cost Adjustment to account for remoteness or rurality, local labour costs, and non-housing building costs.

2.9. The proposed foundation formula does not include any measure of deprivation as Government's analysis found that population is the most important cost driver for the services included in the foundation formula. However, deprivation will be taken into account in four service-specific formulas – ASC, Children and Young People's Services, Public Health and Fire & Rescue Services. For ASC, a formula incorporating a range of 18-64 and 65+ cost drivers is proposed and Government intends to publish a technical paper which will provide further background information in due course. Cost drivers for the proposed Children's and Young People's Services formula are to be determined and consulted on, which MHCLG planned to do before the summer.

2.10. ESCC responded to the consultation and we are broadly supportive of the proposals, including the use of population as the cost driver for the foundation formula; the move away from regression analysis of spending in social care to determine resources; and proposals for how locally raised resources, including Council Tax, are taken into account. However, without detail on proposals for the Children and Young People's Services formula (which forms over 20% of our annual net expenditure) or detail on weightings applied to the service formulae, it is difficult to undertake detailed analysis of the appropriateness of the formula. Government is currently analysing feedback on the consultation and intends to implement the new formula for the 2020/21 financial year, but this has been called into question by the national context outlined at the top of this paper.

#### c) Business Rates Retention

2.11. The Government also intends that local authorities retain 75% of Business Rates from 2020/21. In December 2018, the Government published a consultation on their proposals for Business Rates Retention Reform, seeking views on how to achieve the right balance of risk and reward in the new system so that authorities are incentivised to grow their local economies without creating a significant disparity between local need and resources. The consultation sought views on whether a partial, phased or full reset to the system should take place and how frequently resets should take place thereafter to ensure the national distribution of business rates resource remains broadly aligned with need.

2.12. ESCC responded to the consultation in support of frequent full resets. As our business rate growth is below the national average (2% compared to 11.5%) with

limited opportunities to grow large property-based businesses that would increase revenue, frequent resets are needed to ensure our baseline resource keeps pace with growing need. Government is currently analysing feedback on the consultation, although as with the Fair Funding Review, implementation in 2020/21 has been called into question by the national context outlined at the top of this paper.

2.13. At the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement 2019/20, MHCLG confirmed that the East Sussex Business Rates Retention Pilot bid had been successful for 2019/20. Retaining 75% of the business rate growth in East Sussex, since the last rebasing in 2013/14, will generate around £1.6m additional funding for ESCC this year and will not involve any additional charge to local businesses. This one-off gain is not reflective of the level of funding we might receive under a national 75% Business Rates Retention system.

#### Lobbying

2.14. We have been proactively lobbying with our local MPs and partners to secure sustainable funding for ESCC, for powers to improve our delivery of services, and for investment to guarantee East Sussex remains a great place to live, work and visit. Our lobbying in 2018/19, alongside other sector groups, helped increase Government awareness of the need for sustainable funding for local authorities. We received additional in-year and one-off funding in autumn 2018 as a result, which allowed us to defer some savings planned for 2019/20.

2.15. We have since been lobbying Government to take the opportunity in the spending review to provide a longer-term sustainable funding settlement for local authorities. We have written to the Treasury, worked with MPs to raise the issue in Parliament, met with civil servants to help build a detailed evidence-base of our pressures and spending need, and contributed to national lobbying activities undertaken by the Local Government Association (LGA) and County Councils Network. In April, we responded to the HCLG Select Committee's inquiry on 'Local Government finance and the 2019 Spending Review' making the case for Government to increase the total quantum of funding for local government in the spending review, to be distributed via the new relative needs formula.

2.16. With the spending review expected to be delayed this year, our focus over the summer will be on lobbying for guarantee from Government at the earliest possible opportunity that the funding we received for 2019/20 (including additional one-off funding grants) will continue as our new funding baseline, uplifted to reflect our pressures.

#### Climate Change Response

2.17. Climate change has risen to the top of the national and international agenda in recent months. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change published a report in 2018 which set out that global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide would need to fall by 45% from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching net zero by 2050 to prevent global warming above 1.5 degrees. There is a considerable body of evidence that shows that a warming climate is negatively impacting society and, without action, this warming is likely to have significant economic and social consequences.

2.18. On 12 June the Prime Minister laid before Parliament a statutory instrument to amend the Climate Change Act 2008 and legislate a target for the UK to reach net-zero emissions by 2050. On 20 June six parliamentary committees (Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and

Local Government; Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury committees) announced plans for a citizens' assembly to discuss how the UK should tackle climate change. The assembly is expected to be set up in the autumn.

2.19. Since signing the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change in 2000, ESCC has recognised the importance of mitigating climate change. Our approach has included:

- The County Council's own estate: a commitment to reduce corporate carbon emissions by 3% per year, which is in line with the national target of an 80% reduction between 1990 and 2050. Between 2008/9 and 2017/18 ESCC reduced its emissions by about 46%;
- Fuel poverty: supporting those in fuel poverty through a range of measures including improving insulation and installing more efficient boilers;
- Businesses: delivering free energy audits and awarding grants to local businesses to improve their energy efficiency and support them to invest in renewable energy through Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE);
- Renewable energy tariffs: working in partnership with other local authorities in East Sussex to encourage the take-up of the 'Sussex Tariff', which includes 100% renewable electricity;
- we have been closely involved in developing a tri-Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) energy strategy, which includes the South East, Coast-to-Capital and Enterprise M3 LEPs (see further information at 8.7); and
- we are in the process of working with a range of local organisations to update the East Sussex Environment Strategy, which was originally prepared in 2011.

2.20. We are looking again at what more we can do as a County Council and with our partners to reduce our carbon emissions and environmental impact.

### **3. Adult Social Care and Health**

#### Growth pressures

3.1. The number of adults over the age of 65 in East Sussex is expected to grow from nearly 145,000 in 2019 to over 157,000 in 2023, which represents an increase from 26% to 27% as a proportion of the overall population. This continues to drive demand for both social care and health services in East Sussex for the over 65s. This is evident in ongoing increases in non-elective admissions to acute settings as well as continued growth in expenditure in the older people's ASC budget. In addition to the local age profile of East Sussex, future demand growth is expected in line with national trends projecting an increase in the demand for social care services provided to younger adults.

3.2. As well as pressures linked to demographic trends, East Sussex is experiencing additional demand on ASC services as a result of national NHS initiatives. The NHS Transforming Care Programme places significant pressure on working age adult spend, while a national drive to reduce Continuing Healthcare (CHC) costs is expected to increase high cost packages of care through reviewing CHC eligibility.

#### National funding uncertainty

3.3. In 2019/20, over £30m of expenditure supporting core ASC services is planned to be funded from the East Sussex Better Care Fund (BCF), including the improved Better Care Fund (iBCF). In addition, £9m of the BCF is used to fund investment in improved working between health and social care, including spend on carers.

3.4. The NHS Long term Plan published earlier this year referred to National Audit Office findings that local authorities are using the BCF to replace core council funding rather than to add investment at the interface between health and care services. While ESCC is confident the BCF will be sufficient to meet demand in 2019/20, concern at a national level that funding is not being sufficiently invested in integration work could mean that additional conditions are attached to future funding streams which could constrain the Council's ability to meet the assessed care needs of the local population and put significant financial pressure on local NHS services.

3.5. At the same time, one-off Government grant funding announced in autumn 2018 has been essential for supporting service delivery and avoiding savings this year. The Council's winter pressures grant of £2.6m (provided for 2018/19 and 2019/20 only) is used to meet additional demand for nursing beds, homecare (particularly for hard to reach places) and equipment needs during the winter months; and an additional £4.4m of one-off social care support grant for 2019/20 has been used to reduce the need for further social care savings across ASC and CSD.

3.6. There is no certainty from Central Government that this one-off funding will continue after 2019/20. We are therefore actively lobbying Government to emphasise the importance of BCF and one-off funding for meeting our local ASC need and the need for it to, at the very least, continue in 2020/21.

#### Health and social care integration

3.7. Since 2014 we have worked closely with our local NHS partners with the vision of developing integrated, seamless services across health and social care in East Sussex, and moving towards a culture of all organisations taking joint responsibility for ensuring our community receives the best service possible within the available resources to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for everyone.

3.8. ESCC is a member of the East Sussex Health and Social Care Programme. The other members of the Programme are the Hastings and Rother Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), Eastbourne, Hailsham and Seaford CCG, High Weald Lewes Havens CCG, East Sussex Healthcare Trust, Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust and Sussex Community Foundation Trust. The Programme's ambition is to build an Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) that integrates the whole health and social care system to make the best use of our collective resources to meet the health and care needs of the people of East Sussex and this will continue to be the focus of work in the coming year.

3.9. The CCGs in East Sussex are considering merging to form one CCG for East Sussex. This change would support the development of an ICP in East Sussex and fully integrated health and social care commissioning for the whole population. If agreed, the new arrangements will be in place for 2020/21. The NHS is also establishing Primary Care Networks, led by General Practitioners, which will form a key element of the future health and social care partnerships within the county.

#### Sustainable Transformation Partnership

3.10. The Sussex and East Surrey Sustainable Transformation Partnership (STP) is led by the NHS and brings together health organisations in East and West Sussex, Brighton & Hove, Mid Sussex and East Surrey and represents around 1.9 million residents. The STP is developing its approach to clarify what NHS commissioning will take place across its whole footprint and what will be delegated to local CCGs. The intention is to identify what services can be more effectively commissioned across the whole geographical area where this provides financial and clinical

benefits. This approach would also support the further integration of commissioning for social care services and an agreed range of NHS provision in East Sussex. The STP is also reviewing its governance arrangements to ensure local authorities are involved in its leadership, including ESCC.

#### **4. Children's Services**

##### Review of Early Help services

4.1. In common with many other Local Authorities, ESCC is seeing rising demand for both Early Help and Social Care services and the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans continues to be higher than in similar authorities. Work with partner agencies is ongoing to see whether a safe reduction in plans is feasible whilst we continue to ensure that children are adequately protected.

4.2. In order to ensure our Early Help services continue to support the most vulnerable families and reduce child safety concerns within available resources, a review of Early Help services is underway. A consultation on the draft Early Help Strategy 'Building Stronger Families' was launched on 21 May and will run until 29 July 2019. The draft Strategy sets out how £4.2m will be invested in Early Help services from 2020-2023 to target support for the most vulnerable families and young people, and how current services will change to provide savings of around £2.6m. The level of keywork support to individual families is proposed to reduce but will continue to be prioritised, while the consultation will consider whether some of the current Children's Centres and related support services will transfer to other providers or venues, or will close. Subject to the consultation and final decision, a revised and reduced structure and service offer is planned to be in place from April 2020.

##### Safeguarding

4.3. The County continues to experience an increase in drug related activity as London gangs target shire authorities in a development which is termed 'county lines'. This development sits within a range of other behaviours that are leading to an increase in the number of children who are being exploited and in response ESCC is working with partners and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board to develop 'Contextual Safeguarding', a response championed by the University of Bedford that involves understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families.

##### Children's Mental Health

4.4. There remains focus nationally on children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health and their ability to access services. Government has responded through implementing the core proposals of their 'Transforming children and young people's mental health provision' Green Paper. Locally, increasing numbers of children require support. The Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Transformation Grant continues to be focused on generating innovative solutions and specifically on: developing schools as responsive contexts for children; on extending the award winning i-Rock drop in service currently in Hastings to other parts of the county; and on integrating the referral process for both CAMHS and the Council's Single Point of Advice to refine and speed up the response to families in crisis.

##### Adoption South East proposals

4.5. 'Adoption - a Vision for Change' was published by the Department for Education (DfE) in 2016, with supporting legislation directing local authorities to form or join Regional Adoption Agencies (RAAs). Central Government seek to rationalise

the adoption sector, creating a smaller number of regional adoption agencies in place of the 180 agencies in operation in England in 2015. By May 2019, half of local authorities nationally were already part of functioning RAAs, with remaining projects working towards implementation by April 2020.

4.6. Given both the existing four well-performing adoption services and strong relationships forged in a previous local consortium approach to adoption, the Directors of Brighton & Hove City Council, ESCC, Surrey County Council and West Sussex County Council initially met in 2016 to explore regionalisation, with a 'bottom line' of no increase to the amount currently spent on the adoption services in the four authorities and no deterioration in the quality of service to children or to prospective adopters. A successful application was made for grant funding of £700,000 to support development work and workstreams have been taking this thinking forward since that time. The name of the proposed RAA is Adoption South East.

4.7. Having considered various options and structural models and having learnt from RAAs that are already operational, there is now confidence that a South East RAA can be successfully delivered with minimal disruption to staff, within existing budgets and without diminution of service quality.

4.8. Consideration of a number of possible service models has resulted in all four authorities agreeing that, subject to agreement by Lead Member for Children's Services on 22 July, East Sussex should act as the lead authority in the RAA and therefore recruit to a jointly funded Head of Service post. The wider staff group from all four authorities would not be subject to TUPE transfer and remain in 'spokes' in their own local authority. The arrangement would be underpinned by a formal Inter Authority Agreement setting out the terms of the partnership and the respective roles and responsibilities.

## **5. Schools**

### Schools landscape

5.1. In line with our Excellence for All Strategy, we continue to work with all East Sussex schools to support them in improving standards. Increasingly, this work is delivered through brokering school to school support as we move away from directly providing school improvement services. An updated Excellence for All strategy will be published in September covering the period 2019-2021. The updated strategy will take account of our plan to move to a Core Offer, which for the Standards Learning and Effectiveness Service (SLES) means we will:

- Operate a light-touch monitoring of the performance of maintained schools. We will use our best endeavours to intervene when a school is at high risk of failure.
- Where academies in East Sussex are under-performing we will encourage the Regional Schools Commissioner to intervene.
- Use our best endeavours to improve the outcomes of pupils vulnerable to under-achievement.
- Promote post-16 participation in education and training, including provision and support for young people with learning difficulties/disabilities.

5.2. We are seeing a steady pattern of a few schools a year converting to academies. Though other schools express interest, the capacity of multi-academy trusts to support them remains limited and even when capacity is identified progress to conversion takes time. We continue to promote the opportunities of formal partnerships between schools, including federation and academy trusts. The impact of academy conversions (on ESCC's responsibilities, staff numbers, traded services and the liability of school staff pensions) will continue to be monitored.

## Schools Funding

5.3. Schools continue to face a challenging financial landscape, in part caused by transition to the National Funding Formula (NFF), but also significantly by the real cost increases to provision to be absorbed within current funding levels.

5.4. The funding system for schools is being replaced by a new NFF, which determines the level of grant schools receive directly from the DfE. The formula is intended to rectify any disparities in the level of funding schools receive across the country. The current indication is that the NFF will be fully implemented by 2021/22. 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21 are transitional years, where the total funding local authorities receive for schools is determined by the principles of the NFF, but local authorities retain the function of distributing the funding to schools using a locally determined formula. The Funding Formula Working Group (FFWG) comprised of ESCC and school representatives, has used this period to transition towards the NFF with a number of steps taken in 2018/19 and 2019/20. The FFWG are now looking at potential changes for 2020/21 with discussions underway. The aim of this gradual approach to adoption of the NFF has been to maintain stability in funding for schools.

5.5. Additional transitional funding (for 2018/19 and 2019/20) was provided by the DfE to ensure that no school would see a reduction in funding as a result of the introduction of the NFF during this period. One of the principles of the NFF is to allocate as much funding as possible via pupil-led factors. The major impact of this for East Sussex schools is to reduce the lump sum element of the budget significantly from historically levels. While the NFF's introduction shows an overall net financial gain for East Sussex schools, smaller schools with fewer pupils see little or no increase to their funding from its introduction. Funding levels beyond 2019/20 are uncertain.

5.6. More significant than the impact of the NFF are the real cost increases that schools are required to absorb which continue to pose a challenge for school budgets. Pay awards, higher National Insurance and pension contributions, the implementation of the National Living Wage and the Apprenticeship Levy have seen payroll costs increase and continue to add additional pressures (further detail on the Apprenticeship Levy is at 12.1-12.3). Additional inflationary pressure on bought in services and non-pay costs also impact on schools budgets. Larger schools, which will on the whole realise a gain when the NFF is fully implemented, have some level of protection against these cost pressures. However, small schools face a significant risk in their capacity to address the cost pressures faced.

5.7. To ensure sustainability, ESCC actively encourages schools to plan ahead, to operate differently and to use partnerships and collaborative working to operate more efficiently. We continue to support schools in financial difficulties to find sustainable models. ESCC has also supported schools in challenging Government for a fairer funding regime. Schools are reporting that pressure on their budgets is impacting negatively on children and young people, in particular those who are most vulnerable.

## School places

5.8. Annually the County Council reviews school places as part of its statutory duty to ensure that the supply of school places across the county is in the right location, is of sufficient size, and is viable and of good quality. As part of this ongoing review we

have determined this year that we should consult on the following school organisation changes:

- the proposed closure of Broad Oak Community Primary School with effect from 31 August 2020; and
- the proposed closure of Fletching CE Primary School with effect from 31 August 2020.

5.9. The County Council continues to receive some basic need funding for school places. The Secretary of State for Education has announced additional funding for local authorities for Special Educational Needs places and we are developing new special free schools and specialist facilities to increase the places available. We continue to rely on Council resources to meet basic need requirements alongside the funding we receive.

#### Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) pressures

5.10. East Sussex has historically had high numbers of children on statements which have now been transferred to Education, Health and Care Plans. Whilst the rise in number of new plans remains below that of our neighbouring authorities, the overall numbers of children who are subject to a plan remains high. This has an impact on finding suitable provision and on cost. Both locally and nationally, if this rise continues the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant will come under sustained pressure. Children's Services has introduced new systems and processes and is working closely with our schools to manage this demand and try and ensure that children can attend their local school. The successful free school bids we made in 2017 will, over time, assist in managing the pressure for places and reducing some pressure on the High Needs Block.

5.11. National legislation relating to post-16 provision for young people with SEND was unfunded. Locally and nationally there has been a significant increase in the number of young people supported; and the associated costs have risen disproportionately.

5.12. In response to local authorities', schools' and colleges' concerns about the rising costs of provision for children and young people with SEN and in preparation for the spending review, the DfE is undertaking a national consultation on how SEND funding is allocated to optimise its use. It is likely that this will result in some changes to the management of the budget provided for settings, schools, colleges and the local authority. It is unclear at this stage whether this will impact positively or negatively on our responsibility to manage the DfE budget on behalf of all providers, children and young people. ESCC will be responding to set out the challenges of current funding arrangements and need for improved clarity in the guidance we receive.

#### Hastings Opportunity Area

5.13. The Hastings Opportunity Area is an ambitious two year programme to improve educational outcomes and social mobility for children and young people in Hastings. The programme is funded by the DfE, but delivered locally in partnership with ESCC and overseen by a Hastings Opportunity Board. A delivery plan was published in January 2018 and sets out how the programme will invest £6m direct funding to deliver the Plan's four priorities to:

- improve literacy;
- raise attainment in maths;
- improve mental health and resilience; and
- broaden horizons and prepare young people for work.

5.14. Funding is now fully committed and a wide range of projects and programmes are underway with good engagement from all schools. Impact is being closely monitored and the Board is discussing sustainability of the partnership working and programmes for the future.

## **6. Communities and Residents**

### Libraries

6.1. In March 2018, a new East Sussex Libraries: The Way Forward Strategy (2018/19 – 2022/23) was approved by Cabinet. Central to the implementation of our new libraries strategy has been the launch of the new Children and Young People's Offer, which provides literacy and numeracy support, including outreach work for pre-school and school age children and their families. The Summer Reading Challenge supported 4,800 children in East Sussex to maintain their reading skills during the 2018 school summer holidays by reading six books, and librarians actively supported 11 schools in areas of highest need in the county with visits to encourage participation in the challenge.

6.2. We launched the Teachers' Membership, a service for primary and special schools, which enables teachers to borrow up to 40 books from our special Teachers' Collection. We continue to offer support to schools in areas with highest needs free of charge (within our available resources), for example, working with Ore Village Primary Academy to improve their library and resources, and we provide some charged services to all schools, including participation in the Children's Book Award (39 schools participated and over 600 pupils enjoyed author visits in 2018). Supported by volunteers, we provide 13 rhymetime and 5 storytime sessions across all libraries every week, and an estimated 400 children and adults attend these sessions on a weekly basis. Our outreach activities include delivering weekly rhymetimes and storytimes in East Hastings and Shinewater Children's Centres, as well as providing three sessions at the summer school for 45 Looked After Children.

6.3. In order to implement our offer to provide support for adults with low literacy we secured a £100,000 contract from the East Sussex College Group to deliver accredited courses in English, Maths and ICT at Eastbourne and Hastings libraries. This contract has strengthened the Library and Information Service's relationship with local colleges and will enable the service to signpost learners to the colleges and vice versa.

6.4. The County Council is committed to maintaining a quality physical environment that meets the needs of our customers in every library, and is delivering a programme of capital schemes to refurbish and modernise library buildings. Crowborough Library reopened in January 2019, following refurbishment which included new carpeting, new shelving and new furniture and a refurbishment of Lewes Library was completed in April 2019, which has seen a large increase in students using the new study space on the mezzanine floor for exam revision.

6.5. Following the closure of seven libraries the County Council has supported community groups to set up Community Libraries with training and advice, stock, fixtures and fittings - and where former library buildings are in our ownership - a peppercorn lease for the buildings. Ringmer Village Library opened in June 2018 and the Langney Community Library opened in the late autumn of last year in a new rent-free unit in Langney Shopping Centre. In April 2019 we handed over the keys of Willingdon and Pevensy Bay libraries to the community and we expect these Community Libraries to open soon. We also launched the Community Collection

Membership (CCM) in 2018, which allows communities to borrow a range of items which can be made available locally to the community, for example in a village hall, café etc. Five CCMs have been set up in Fairlight, Pett, Chelwood Gate, Northiam and Ticehurst.

6.6. We will need to ensure that our library service continues to provide a modern and comprehensive offer that reflects the changing needs of residents as well as technological improvements in future.

#### The Keep

6.7. The Keep is our purpose-built county archive, based in Falmer, which we operate in partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council and the University of Sussex. Like many Council services, the running costs of The Keep are increasing at a time when our Government funding is decreasing. We have therefore begun development of a Sustainability Plan for The Keep; a three year savings and income generation plan to ensure its medium-term financial sustainability. The Sustainability Plan will include a review of the affordability of the services currently delivered at The Keep and the development of a new service offer, in line with our Core Offer.

#### Customer Experience

6.8. Our work to improve customer experience across Council services has continued in 2018/19, by gathering more feedback from customers about their interaction with us and acting on that feedback to implement measures that provide a better and more consistent customer experience. Our aim is to ensure that customers get a consistently high quality service from us and our contractors, and that in the current financial climate, we provide access to our services in the most cost-effective way. This means directing customers who are looking for information or reporting problems to our website and ensuring that our online information and tools provide customers with what they need and are easy to use, so that customers choose them by preference. Of course, this isn't always the appropriate way to access council services, and our skilled staff will continue to deal with customers with complex needs over the phone or in person.

6.9. We now have a good baseline of customer experience feedback across a range of services where previously this was limited, and have been able to build up a comprehensive picture of how customers view the Council when they contact us. We have used this feedback to improve our webpage content. A good example is the overhaul of our parking webpages, where we've replaced pdf files with content directly on the webpage to make access on mobile devices and reading much easier, in addition to making content more relevant, accurate and up-to-date. We've also used the feedback to make our email correspondence with customers clearer and more relevant to their needs, with simpler language and better signposting to further sources of information. An example of this work is the improvements made last year to emails notifying parents and carers of the school to which their children had been allocated.

6.10. In 2018/19, we piloted a random satisfaction survey for customers contacting us by phone, and the introduction of face-to-face customer feedback devices at Eastbourne and Hastings Libraries, County Hall, St Mary's and Ocean House. These pilots are now coming to an end and we will evaluate the lessons learned this summer. We have also set up a Customer Service Network, which provides staff from different customer-facing teams a quarterly forum to share knowledge and best practice and implement changes to improve customer experience. One of the changes we have made as a result of feedback from the Network has been the

development of a new corporate “Introduction to Customer Services” training course, which is available to all staff. We have now embedded the Customer Promise, launched in 2017, into the procurement process for all contracts with a value of over £15,000 that deliver services to our customers.

## **7. Community Safety**

### East Sussex Road Safety Programme

7.1. Our Road Safety project aims to use behavioural change initiatives to influence the driving behaviour of targeted high risk groups to reduce the number of people Killed and Seriously Injured (KSI) on the county’s roads. These groups include:

- Young drivers (17 – 25).
- Motorcyclists.
- Car drivers in relation to vulnerable road users (cyclists/pedestrians etc.).

7.2. The behavioural change initiatives were launched in 2018/19, in conjunction with the Behavioural Insights Team, together with the first phase of an extensive speed management programme. The speed management programme prioritised road safety interventions on high risk routes (identified based on the level of fatal and serious road crashes which have occurred there) to ensure that we target our resources effectively. These schemes are evidence based and include: lower speed limits; ensuring that there is a consistent approach to the traffic management features provided along the route; maintenance work; targeted safety schemes; and vulnerable road user studies.

7.3. Work on both the behaviour change and the speed management elements of this programme will continue in 2019/20. Early outcomes from this work will be available from winter 2019, with full outcomes and analysis the following year. It is expected that both elements of this programme will inform the future work of the Road Safety Team as well as work to address collisions and KSI across the county.

### Home Office consultation on a new legal duty to prevent and tackle serious violence

7.4. As part of a suite of new measures to tackle violent crime, the Home Office launched a consultation on 1 April 2019 on introducing a new legal duty to prevent and tackle serious violence and address its root causes. The consultation sets out the need to take a multi-agency approach to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focused on prevention and early intervention, and informed by evidence and rigorous evaluation of interventions. This is often referred to as a ‘public health’ approach.

7.5. Three options are proposed for achieving the vision of an effective multi-agency approach:

- Option 1: introducing a new duty on specific organisations (organisations set out in Schedule 6 to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, including local authorities) to have due regard to the prevention and tackling of serious violence which will require primary legislation;
- Option 2: introducing a new duty through legislating to revise Community Safety Partnerships; and
- Option 3: a voluntary non-legislative approach.

7.6. ESCC has responded to the consultation supporting Option 1 – also Government’s preferred option – as it would best deliver the vision and support partnership work underway and led by the Sussex Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to implement the Government’s Serious Violence Strategy. It is

anticipated that this approach would not impose new functions on the agencies specified but would ensure that those agencies placed an appropriate and proportionate weight on preventing and tackling serious violence whilst carrying out their pre-existing functions. As part of our consultation response, we emphasised the need for appropriate funding to be provided for any new duties or activities we are required to undertake.

### Domestic Abuse Services: Future Delivery of Support to Victims and their Children in Accommodation-Based Domestic Abuse Services

7.7. In May 2019, Government published a consultation to gather evidence and seek views on the delivery of support services to victims of domestic abuse and their children in accommodation-based services in England. Implementation of any policy changes brought forward as a result of the consultation and associated monitoring of activity would be the responsibility of ESCC as the top tier authority.

7.8. A new delivery model for accommodation-based support is proposed which includes the introduction of a statutory duty on local authorities to provide support that meets the diverse needs of victims of domestic abuse and their children. Views are sought on:

- the definition of accommodation-based services and support;
- leadership and responsibilities;
- local and national accountability; and
- guidance.

7.9. The proposed statutory duty would require Tier 1 local authorities (including County Councils) to convene a Local Partnership Board for domestic abuse accommodation support services. This Board should include representation from Police and Crime Commissioners, health bodies, children's services and housing providers, along with specialist domestic abuse service providers. The Board would be required to assess need for domestic abuse services, develop and publish domestic abuse strategies, decide what support services are required and commission these accordingly and report progress back to MHCLG. Tier 2 local authorities in two-tier areas (District and Borough Councils) would have an important role to play in contributing to needs assessments, strategy development and reporting on progress on outcomes. In some cases, it would be Tier 2 authorities which commissioned the support services in line with the wider strategy for the area. Tier 2 authorities would be subject to a statutory duty to co-operate with the Local Partnership Board.

7.10. The consultation will run for 12 weeks until 2 August 2019 and in response ESCC will work with Districts and Boroughs and partners from all sectors to undertake a needs analysis. This will inform the consultation submission, mapping needs against current provision and informing a gap analysis. This information will be used to promote and reinforce the requirement on Government to provide sufficient funding to respond to the proposed policy changes and improve response to the needs of victims and their families.

## **8. Economy**

### South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP)

#### a) Local Enterprise Partnership Review

8.1. The Government published its recommendations from its review of LEPs in July 2018 and all LEPs were required to respond to the review on two key points - LEP geography (specifically the removal of overlapping geographies); and wider transition plans covering LEP structure and governance.

8.2. SELEP's response about its geography was that its existing geography should be retained including Lewes District which also straddled the Coast to Capital (C2C) LEP. After discussion it was agreed that Lewes District, including the Newhaven Enterprise Zone, would move entirely into SELEP. To minimise any disruption this will happen gradually over a two year transition period, and Lewes District Council will continue to maintain a presence on the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

8.3. SELEP's response on structure and governance was submitted in October 2018. The majority of Government's recommendations could be implemented immediately. On detailed consideration, and in order to ensure various funding streams remain accessible, SELEP has also agreed to the Government's board composition requirements of 20 members plus 5 co-opted, with a private sector majority of two-thirds; and committed to move toward becoming a legal personality, most likely a Company Limited by Guarantee.

8.4. All of the LEP Review requirements must be fully implemented by March 2020. To drive this forward, SELEP has broken the task into two workstreams covering 'Board Composition, Recruitment & Diversity' and 'Legal Personality'. The workstreams are expected to report back to the SELEP Strategic Board with recommendations in October 2019.

b) Key SELEP strategies

8.5. Over the past year, SELEP has produced and published a variety of key strategies. The Strategic Economic Plan, originally published in 2014, has now been fully refreshed and rebranded as the SELEP Economic Strategy Statement (ESS). The ESS was published in January 2019; it will form the starting point for developing the Local Industrial Strategy (see 8.9 – 8.10 for more detail) and provides a number of hooks and opportunities for East Sussex to support our key priorities and investments.

8.6. The SELEP Skills Strategy 2018-23 was formally launched at an event in September 2018. SELEP's vision for skills in the South East is to help deliver a flourishing and inclusive economy by equipping employers, adults and young people with the skills, conditions and aptitudes required for significant growth today and tomorrow. The strategy is accompanied by a suite of supporting sector reports and district-level tables.

8.7. The tri-LEP South East Local Energy Strategy was published in February 2019 and formally launched at an event in London in March 2019. Jointly developed by SELEP alongside the C2C and Enterprise M3 LEPs, the ambitious strategy offers a shared vision for the region to achieve cleaner energy by cutting carbon emissions and promoting clean growth. The strategy sets out how we will meet statutory climate change targets for 2032 and 2050, as well as how we'll support the government's Clean Growth Plan and Industrial Strategy.

8.8. SELEP is committed to giving 'social enterprise' due prominence in the development of the Local Industrial Strategy, and to eventually see the south east region recognised as the capital of social enterprise. As such, SELEP is currently working on a Social Enterprise Prospectus, setting out the scope and opportunities of the sector in the South East and presenting practical priorities for action to build a stronger, more impactful social enterprise sector. A working draft prospectus has been prepared and consultation sessions will take place through the summer/autumn. A final draft prospectus is expected to be approved in October

2019, with a formal launch to take place before the end of the year. A separate SELEP prospectus on the coastal communities will be produced to demonstrate the contributions and value these areas can play in supporting economic growth.

c) Local Industrial Strategy

8.9. The Government published its 'Industrial Strategy: Building a Britain Fit for the Future' in November 2017. All LEPs were tasked with producing Local Industrial Strategies (LIS) by March 2020. The UK Industrial Strategy focused on 'five foundations of productivity' (ideas, people, infrastructure, business environment and places) and highlighted four 'grand challenges' (artificial intelligence and data economy, clean growth, the future of mobility, and ageing society). SELEP will ensure its Local Industrial Strategy is aligned to these principles; it will also build upon its own Economic Strategy Statement published earlier this year (see 8.5).

8.10. SELEP is currently considering its overall approach to the Local Industrial Strategy and has recruited a Strategy & Intelligence Manager to lead the work, alongside an independent consultant. The LIS development will involve stakeholder engagement, gathering a robust evidence base from each federated area, and a series of consultation sessions throughout the summer/autumn. Work on this has already begun, with ESCC providing information for the evidence base. Team East Sussex had its first engagement session in June 2019. A first draft Local Industrial Strategy will be produced in November 2019. It is expected that a final version will be signed-off in January 2020.

Business Support

a) Scale Up Pilots

8.11. ESCC has set up three pilot 'Scale Up' programmes of support for businesses with the ambition and potential to grow. These programmes will work with groups of businesses, giving them intensive, expert support to help them overcome barriers to growth. One pilot will be in the Newhaven Enterprise Zone, another with the Construction and Built Environment sector and the third will work across all locations and sectors in the county. Each pilot will create a 'peer network' of businesses who can continue to challenge and inspire each other once the pilots have concluded.

b) Locate East Sussex

8.12. The county's inward investment service – Locate East Sussex - is funded by the county council, borough and districts and match funded by European funding and is in its final year of funding. In the last 2 years of the 3 year contract it has supported 22 business to locate to East Sussex and 44 businesses to relocate within East Sussex, as well as supporting the creation of over 200 jobs. The Economic Development team is developing proposals to refocus the services to reflect partner priorities, customer demand and align with the Government's ambitions to increase productivity in a future contract.

c) Business East Sussex Growth Hub

8.13. Our Business East Sussex Growth Hub has secured a further year's funding of £113,000 and we will be looking to design a new business support service from 2020, which will meet Government's aspirations for boosting productivity as set out in the Industrial Strategy (see above 8.9). We will also be working with partners to bid for a second round of European funding to develop and build on the successful South East Business Boost programme, which has given out over £800,000 in grants to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the county and provided over 100 businesses with specialist support.

## Visitor Economy

8.14. The Visitor Economy accounts for almost 1 in 5 businesses in East Sussex, and a quarter of all jobs. In 2015 there were 23.6 million visits to the county and these visitors spent £1.1bn (55% as day trips and 45% overnight stays). The total GVA of the visitor economy in East Sussex was £1.7bn in 2016. This is an increase of £244m since 2013 and is 18.3% of all GVA in the county.

8.15. ESCC identifies strategic interventions, working with partners, to continue to grow this sector, which include:

- Gatwick Airport - recognising its role as a local tourism hub - has initiated Gatwick Gateway, a consortium to develop a series of itineraries featuring the A23/M23 corridor attractions, which will be published in time for the 2019 summer peak period.
- England's Creative Coast will be an art and geocache trail to attract international visitors and increase tourism spend. ESCC has been instrumental in raising the £1.37m to deliver the programme across East Sussex, West Sussex, Kent and the Essex Thames Estuary building on Culture Kent, the Estuary Festival and the East Sussex Coastal Culture Trail. Original art commissions linked to Geocaching at 7 key cultural destinations will be promoted using 3-day suggested travel itineraries for each region, incorporating cultural experiences, travel, and food and drink as well as practical information and a detailed map.
- The Sussex Modern partnership (Charleston, De La Warr Pavilion, Towner Gallery, Hastings Contemporary, Farley Farmhouse) and the Sussex Vineyards group are developing shared marketing tools to cross promote their destinations.
- Recent investment in visitor economy infrastructure includes: Eastbourne Borough Council's £54m investment in the redevelopment of Devonshire Quarter in Eastbourne providing a new state of the art conference facility to support the visitor economy; Charleston has raised £7.9m to transform the venue to a year round attraction with gallery, auditorium and larger café; and Glyndebourne has started work on a new production hub for scenery, costume and prop building.

## Culture and the Creative Industries

8.16. ESCC leads the delivery of a county-wide Cultural Strategy which prioritises participation, creative industries and cultural tourism to ensure that the county benefits from the opportunities this sector offers. This work includes:

- The South East Creative Cultural and Digital Support (SECCADS) programme, an EU match funded bespoke business support services programme to attract and meet the needs of the Creative, Cultural and Digital Industries and address the key barriers to growth of the sector in the SELEP region. The value to East Sussex, including the grants programme, is £530,000 and two SECCADS co-ordinators will drive forward the work. The programme will run between November 2018 and June 2020.
- In addition, a further £100,000 has been secured to enable a detailed mapping of creative workspace opportunities across SELEP and the development of a Cultural Prospectus to be completed by early 2020.
- Culture East Sussex and the three Coastal Culture Trail galleries are leading on the development of a Coastal Cultural Enterprise Zone, which will support cultural activity from national galleries and creative businesses to local participation and skills development.
- Projects to increase arts and cultural engagement, which has proven benefits for the resilience of individuals and communities. These include the National Explorers programme led by Project Art Works, making mainstream galleries more accessible to people with disabilities; National Outlands experimental music touring network led by De La Warr Pavilion; and an NHS partnership initiative,

working with the Director of Public Health to engage the cultural sector in the future health of our communities.

### Skills

8.17. ESCC continues to facilitate Skills East Sussex (SES), which oversees a range of business-led careers education, information, advice and guidance campaigns and curriculum development activity in the county via six task groups focussed on the skills needs of our priority sectors. Government has published its national Careers Strategy for schools and colleges, and is promoting the introduction of technical education to support the Industrial Strategy. Both of these policy changes are being carefully monitored by SES and embedded in the work of our task groups.

8.18. ESCC was successful in obtaining funding from the Careers Enterprise Company (CEC) to pilot a strategic careers programme – Careers Hub East Sussex - across our secondary schools and colleges. As part of this, our Enterprise Adviser Network supports 40 secondary schools and colleges in East Sussex, identifying initiatives and opportunities for employer engagement in school careers activities, and supporting schools to work towards national benchmarks that will now be inspected under the new Ofsted framework.

8.19. The County Council successfully secured £146,000 from the CEC to undertake a one year pilot project to scale up some of the excellent practice in the secondary schools Careers Hub. We will be working with 24 primary schools to review their curriculum and embed careers and aspirations, STEM activities, video resources and employer encounters that link learning with the world of work. All schools taking part in the project will be asked to identify a Careers Champion who can join a network in order to access training, share good practice and build on what works.

8.20. In the last academic year - 2017/18 - there was a 22% decrease in new apprenticeship starts compared to the same period in 2016/17. This compares to a decrease of 24% nationally. Apprenticeships East Sussex, a sub-board of SES, is actively lobbying on issues impacting on the take up of apprenticeships, in particular amongst Small and Medium Enterprises, since the introduction of the Apprenticeship Reforms in May 2017.

8.21. The ability of the county to secure large-scale funding to support skills provision post-Brexit is uncertain, as there will be no new European Social Fund contracts awarded after 2019. It is important that ESCC influences the framework for the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund (see paragraphs 8.27-8.28 below) to ensure that a pipeline of project funding is available in future.

### East Sussex College Group

8.22. Our two largest Further Education colleges in East Sussex; Sussex Downs College and Sussex Coast College Hastings, merged in 2018 as a result of the Government's post-16 Area Review which aimed to have fewer, often larger, more financial resilient and efficient providers. East Sussex College Group was established on the 31 March 2018 as a result of the merger and retained 5 campuses; Eastbourne, Hastings Station Plaza, Ore Valley, Lewes and Newhaven.

8.23. ESCC supported the merger process through involvement in the Transition Board and consultation (alongside others) on their Strategic Plan 2018-21 which outlined their initial four stage approach as a newly merged East Sussex College to

'stabilise, repair, improve and sustain'. ESCC maintains ongoing regular dialogue with the college's Executive Team through various routes and via membership on their Board of Governors. The college has now produced an Education Case following a thorough review and analysis of performance, curriculum offer and local skills needs, capacity and forecasting. This, in turn is informing their emerging Estate Strategy which they are developing in partnership with key local stakeholders, including ESCC.

8.24. Sussex Coast College was inspected by Ofsted in December 2017 and was judged to be Good for Overall Effectiveness. Sussex Downs College was graded Requires Improvement for Overall Effectiveness in 2017, but an Ofsted monitoring visit to merged college campuses of Lewes & Eastbourne in December 2018 identified significant progress had been made in three areas and reasonable progress in two others. The merged college is likely to receive their full Ofsted inspection early 2020.

### Broadband

8.25. Faster broadband to businesses and communities remains a priority and ESCC intends to increase coverage to as close to 100% as possible. Contracts 1 and 2 have delivered superfast and ultrafast broadband right across the county, including hard-to-reach rural areas, ensuring 97% coverage (from a baseline of 3% in 2011) with a third contract now in place forecast to go as close to 100% of premises in the county as possible by the end of 2020.

8.26. In the coming decades, fixed and mobile networks will be the enabling infrastructure that drives economic growth. Government wants to provide world-class digital connectivity that is gigabit-capable, reliable, long-lasting and widely available across the UK. It has set clear, ambitious targets for the future of telecoms infrastructure (15 million premises connected to full fibre by 2015, with coverage across all parts of the country by 2033). ESCC is in discussion with Building Digital UK (formerly Broadband Delivery UK) about their National Rural Gigabit Connectivity and Full Fibre projects and how we can use these in East Sussex to continue to support economic development and digital inclusion for all communities.

### UK Shared Prosperity Fund

8.27. After the UK leaves the European Union, it will no longer receive European structural funding. This funding is used for boosting several aspects of economic development, including support for businesses, employment and agriculture, and is administered by the different nations of the UK.

8.28. The Government has pledged to set up a replacement Shared Prosperity Fund to "reduce inequalities between communities". The Government has not yet published its consultation on the Fund and there are several issues that will need to be considered. These include:

- the priorities and objectives of the Fund;
- the amount of money to be allocated;
- the method of allocating it between the countries and regions of the UK, and whether this is based on need (and what measure is used to determine need);
- the model by which funding will be allocated, whether pre-allocating an amount for a country or region or inviting competitive bids from across the UK;
- the length of the planning period and the way in which this could conflict with domestic spending priorities; and

- who administers the funds (whether they are controlled from Westminster or by the devolved administrations) and the degree to which local authorities are involved.

## **9. Infrastructure, Transport and Planning**

### Transport for the South East and future mobility

9.1. Transport for the South East (TfSE) is becoming an influential and effective strategic partnership for the region. The proposed addition to the TfSE Shadow Partnership Board of Highways England (HE), Network Rail and Transport for London will further strengthen its relationships with strategic transport partners.

9.2. A draft proposal to Government setting out the case for TfSE to become a statutory sub-national transport body, with powers and responsibilities to deliver its Transport Strategy and support economic growth in the region was published for consultation in early May 2019. TfSE will be working with the Department for Transport (DfT) to determine the timing of its submission. Meanwhile, TfSE continues to actively build support across sectors and audiences, to make its case for statutory status.

9.3. The development of the draft Transport Strategy continues apace, with a launch event in October 2019 set to mark the start of a three-month public consultation. The strategy will set out a vision for transport-led sustainable economic growth which supports the delivery of the Industrial Strategy and Local Industrial Strategies (see paragraphs 8.9 – 8.10) while reducing emissions. It will reflect recent significant additions to the sustainability policy landscape – including the government's Clean Air Strategy and Road to Zero Strategy – and also set out how the region can harness the full benefits of future transport technology set out in the Government's 'Future of mobility: urban strategy'.

### A27 and Road Investment Strategy 2020-2025

9.4. Highways England (HE) announced a package of smaller scale interventions for the A27 east of Lewes in September 2017 following the inclusion of the scheme in the Government's Roads Investment Strategy (RIS) 2015 – 2020. Since then, HE has been progressing the designs for these interventions. A series of public information exhibitions were held in early March 2019 on two of these interventions - capacity improvements at Polegate which comprise two lanes in both directions from Cophall to enhanced A27/A2270 traffic signal junction as well as improved capacity at Drusillas roundabout. There will be further exhibitions on the other interventions (safety improvements of Wilmington crossroads, new shared use path along the A27, a new path from Drusillas up to Berwick station, as well as new/upgraded crossings at Wilmington, Selmeston and Firle) in the summer. Construction of the first tranche of the small scale improvements is programmed to start in 2020 at the earliest and completion expected by late 2021/early 2022.

9.5. Although these smaller scale improvements address some of the existing issues on the A27 between Lewes and Polegate in the short to medium term, they do not address issues in the longer term, particularly with significant housing and employment growth planned in the South Wealden area. Accordingly, funding from the RIS allocation was secured in May 2017 by the A27 Reference Group (which comprises local MPs, local authority leaders and the LEPs) for a study to look at a new dual carriageway route between Lewes and Polegate. The HE commissioned study looking at these potential new route options was completed in May 2018.

9.6. The study, which was an early stage investigation, recognised that there is a strong strategic case for an off-line improvement between Lewes and Polegate to address current problems and to facilitate housing and economic growth in the area. It identified that all the route options considered would bring significant economic benefits outweighing the dis-benefits. The outcomes of the final study are being considered by the DfT as part of the development of HE's Roads Investment Strategy 2 (RIS2). RIS2, which is expected to be published in autumn 2019, will set out investment that Government will be make in the Strategic Roads Network (SRN) and that HE will be expected to deliver during the second road period between 2020 and 2025, as well as the strategic vision for the future of the SRN looking towards 2050.

9.7. TfSE (see paragraphs 9.1 – 9.3 above) identified 10 RIS2 priorities for the South East, including the A27 between Lewes and Polegate. It also identified the wider A27 as a high priority corridor for investment in its Economic Connectivity Review. We will continue to lobby and make the case to Government for its inclusion in RIS2. If identified as a priority in RIS2, we will actively engage with HE from late 2019/early 2020 onwards to ensure that we jointly maintain the momentum over the five year RIS2 period in progressing the scheme through the various design, consultation and statutory process stages in order to bring forward construction as early as possible.

9.8. In addition to the A27, improvements to the A21 Corridor - Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst, Flimwell and Hurst Green - were identified in our and TfSE's submission to Government on priorities for RIS2. Likewise, should any of the A21 schemes be identified as priorities within RIS2, we will actively engage with HE to jointly ensure their progression through the relevant stages.

#### Major Road Network and A22

9.9. The Government's 2017 Transport Investment Strategy laid out plans to consult on the creation of a Major Road Network (MRN) that comprises the busiest and most economically important local authority A roads to sit between the SRN, which is the responsibility of HE, and the local road network, which is the responsibility of local authorities. The creation of the MRN intends to provide more long-term certainty of funding, with a portion of the National Roads Fund being dedicated to the MRN.

9.10. Following the County Council's response to the Government's MRN consultation, a number of roads in East Sussex (below) were announced in December 2018 as part of the MRN:

- A22 Eastbourne to Forest Row (including Golden Jubilee Way)
- A26 Lewes to edge of Tunbridge Wells
- A259 Eastbourne to county boundary with Brighton & Hove
- A272 edge of Haywards Heath to Maresfield
- A259 Glyne Gap to Batchelors Bump, east of Hastings
- A21 Baldslow to Hastings seafront
- A2270/A2021 Polegate to Eastbourne town centre
- A2280 Cross Levels Way, Eastbourne
- A2102 Silverhill to St Leonards seafront (Hastings)

9.11. This opens up the opportunity to bid for National Roads Fund monies from the early 2020s towards interventions on these corridors. The MRN funding is eligible towards schemes such as bypasses or new alignments; missing links between existing stretches of the MRN or SRN; widening existing MRN roads; major structural

renewals; major junction improvements; the introduction of Variable-Message Signs; traffic management; and the use of smart technology to raise network performance, or packages of improvements incorporating a number of these elements.

9.12. A Phase 1 of 'Early Entry' MRN schemes, commencing before April 2023, are in the process of being prioritised against the DfT's MRN criteria. This application process is being coordinated through TfSE and the County Council has put forward an outline business case relating to the section of the MRN on the A22 in south Wealden. The package comprises improvements to a number of junctions – Boship roundabout, Hempstead Lane, A295 South Road roundabout, A27/A22 roundabout and A22 Golden Jubilee Way/Dittons Road roundabout – which have been identified in the Wealden Local Transport Plan Study (2018) as infrastructure required to support the current and planned housing and employment growth in the Wealden Local Plan. If identified as a priority by TfSE, the outline business case will be submitted to DfT in July 2019.

#### Newhaven Port Access Road

9.13. The County Council has been continuing the construction of the Newhaven Port Access Road across the Newhaven–Seaford railway and Mill Creek to the harbour mouth. Construction began in January 2019 and is progressing well, with the road expected to be completed in late 2020.

#### Smart Transport Measures

9.14. In 2018 the County Council commissioned a technology study entitled 'Smart in East Sussex' to understand what measures could be applied to an urban, coastal and rural-split county like East Sussex, in relation to:

- air quality & carbon reduction solutions
- future energies
- tackling traffic congestion
- highways maintenance & management

9.15. The final report was produced in March 2019 and provides a series of prioritised recommendations for the County Council to consider when developing major infrastructure, sustainable transport and maintenance programmes, to support sustainable economic growth in East Sussex.

#### High Speed 1

9.16. Recognising the journey time and economic benefits it would bring to Hastings and Bexhill, we continue to work with Network Rail and other partners, including Kent County Council, to make the case for the extension of high speed rail services to run via Ashford International into East Sussex.

9.17. Funded by the local authorities and DfT, Network Rail has recently undertaken preliminary design work on the Ashford West junction which would enable the trains to run between the existing high speed rail link and the Marshlink (the line from Ashford westbound to Eastbourne). The study was completed in May 2019 and raised a number of unforeseen difficulties in the delivery of the enhancement works which would result in significant cost. In response, Network Rail have put forward potential options for progressing work on enabling high speed rail into the county: continue progressing the existing scheme to a detailed design; looking at an alternative scheme which would provide a new platform at Ashford International Station; and/or a timetabling study on the line speed improvements required on the Marshlink to reduce journey times. These options are being considered by all parties to determine the most appropriate way forward.

### South East Airport Expansion

9.18. In June 2018, Parliament formally backed Heathrow Airport expansion and supported the Government's Airports National Policy Statement (ANPS). The ANPS sets out Government policy for new airport infrastructure including support for a new north west runway at Heathrow Airport. Heathrow Airport is currently stepping through the statutory processes which will result in a development consent order, to be submitted to the planning inspectorate in 2020. As with other areas, it is possible that Government policy on Heathrow Airport expansion could change with a new Prime Minister.

9.19. Meanwhile, Gatwick Airport has been developing its masterplan which seeks to utilise its emergency runway in response to demand for services. ESCC has long been supportive of expansion at Gatwick Airport because of the economic importance to East Sussex. During the Airports Commission work we recognised that expansion at Heathrow Airport was complicated to implement and that expansion of Gatwick Airport offered a quicker alternative to increasing aviation capacity in the South East. We remain supportive of Gatwick expansion and emphasise the importance of adequate surface transport arrangements in the event of either additional capacity being created by use of the emergency runway or more comprehensive expansion.

### Review of parking charges

9.20. On 17 June, the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approved a six week consultation on proposals to increase parking pay and display tariffs and change the way in which resident permits are charged, making a link to vehicle emissions. Parking controls support improvements to air quality, management of curb space and demand management, particularly in congested town centres. The consultation will run from 1 July to 11 August 2019. Feedback from the consultation along with an Equalities Impact Assessment will be presented to Lead Member for Transport and Environment for decision in autumn 2019.

### Planning policy outlook

9.21. During the past 12 months there have been revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) with a particular emphasis on seeking to boost the delivery of new housing across the country. Whilst further reform of national planning policy cannot be discounted over the coming 12-18 months, the expectation is that Government will instead now focus on changes to the process elements of the planning system.

9.22. This will include reform of the system for securing developer contributions for infrastructure, with a particular emphasis on how the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is utilised alongside Section 106 agreements, which will be implemented through amended CIL regulations. The amended regulations, which we are broadly comfortable with, will come into effect on 1 September 2019 and include:

- removal of pooling restrictions – omission of regulation 123; and
- authorities will be allowed to charge a fee through S106 to contribute towards the cost of monitoring and reporting on developer contributions.

Further expansion of Permitted Development rights (i.e. developments that can be undertaken without the need for planning permission) are also expected during the coming year.

9.23. The Government has announced that it will publish a Planning Green Paper later in 2019, which will focus on "ensuring faster decision-making within the

planning system". The Government consider a quicker decision-making process will aid in meeting their target of delivering 300,000 new homes per annum. The content of this Green Paper is likely to have implications for the County Council, both in terms of how we perform our various statutory consultee roles in the planning system and how we operate as a planning authority for waste and minerals matters.

9.24. Also anticipated over the course of the coming year are reports and reviews that could have implications for both local and national planning policy. One example is the Glover Review into protected landscapes, which is exploring how these areas can be improved, how people who live and work in these areas can be better supported and how they can support a growing rural economy. This will be particularly pertinent to East Sussex given that much of county is covered by both the South Downs National Park and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

9.25. Recent revisions to the NPPF have resulted in the need for Local Plan to be reviewed every five years (which was already standard practice for many Local Planning Authorities). Locally, this will mean reviews will commence on the Local Plans for Eastbourne and Hastings during the coming 12 months and the review into the East Sussex, South Downs National Park and Brighton & Hove Waste and Minerals Local Plan will continue through to the Examination in Public stage. In the Eastbourne and Hastings cases, a significant challenge is going to be accommodating the development needs for the boroughs due to tightly drawn administrative boundaries and coastal locations. Potentially, this will involve innovative approaches to meeting housing and employment needs and also possibly looking at locations beyond the plan areas for shortfalls of need being met. The County Council will have a key role to play in these Local Plan reviews and, in particular, any impacts upon the county's transport network will need to be considered and planned for.

9.26. The Wealden Local Plan is being examined by a Planning Inspector over summer 2019. A sound outcome from this Examination process will provide an up-to-date plan for the largest quantum of housing growth in the county, with a particular emphasis on south Wealden. However, if it is considered that the Local Plan is not sound, amendments and further consultation will be required, or potentially a more fundamental change of approach will be required for the plan.

## **10. Environment**

### **Countryside Access Strategy**

10.1. On 17 June, the Lead Member for Transport and Environment approved the transfer of four countryside sites (Seven Sisters Country Park, Ditchling Common Country Park, Ouse Estuary Nature Reserve and Riverside Park). This will see the transfer of these sites to South Downs National Park Authority, Sussex Wildlife Trust and Newhaven Town Council respectively. The Lead Member also delegated authority to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport to continue discussions with Rother District Council with respect to Camber Sands and Broomhill, and to seek alternative arrangements for Chailey Common and Weir Wood Local Nature Reserves.

10.2. These changes will secure investment to improve the conservation and recreation ambition for these sites. The preferred bidders have the skills and expertise to enable these sites to flourish. This comes at a time when County Council budgets are under increasing pressure and we would not be able to invest in

these sites to the degree it would wish. These bidders provide that opportunity for investment, protecting and enhancing these sites into the future.

#### New waste collection and recycling arrangements

10.3. From 29 June 2019 the way household waste is collected and recycled materials are disposed of has changed. A new waste collection and street cleansing contract for Hastings, Rother and Wealden was awarded to Biffa, replacing the previous contractor Kier, whilst in Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough the collection service is being carried out by an in-house workforce. One of the principle changes to this contract is the way in which recyclable materials are collected. Across all five boroughs and districts all recyclable materials are now collected in one bin and residents no longer have to separate glass. This, it is hoped, will make recycling easier for residents and increase recycling rates, with a corresponding reduction in the volume of black bag waste.

10.4. The way recycled materials are sorted to be recycled has also changed. Prior to 29 June Kier handled the recycled material on behalf of four of the borough and district councils and Lewes District had their own arrangements. The County Council paid recycling credit payments to the Borough and District Councils to cover the cost of providing this service on behalf of ESCC. Now the County Council has taken back responsibility for the disposal of recycled materials and has put in place arrangements with a recycling contractor Viridor to sort and sell-on the recycled materials. ESCC has a three year contract with Viridor and will benefit from a share of any income received from the sale of recycled materials. The level of income that the County Council can expect to receive is dependent on the market value of recycled materials.

10.5. The introduction of charging for garden waste collection by Wealden District Council on 1 July means that all households across the county now have to elect and pay for this service. County Council officers are monitoring the impact charging on tonnages and recycling rates.

#### Resources and Waste Strategy for England

10.6. The Department for Food and Rural Affairs published a Resources and Waste Strategy on 18 December 2018. Much of its content is subject to consultation focussed on:

- Consistent kerbside collections including a 'core set' of mandatory materials, better separation of materials, possibly separate food waste and possibly free garden waste. Mandatory 'minimum standards' of collection may be introduced
- Reform of the 'Extended Producer Responsibility' requirements for packaging waste and the adoption of 'full net cost recovery' for local authorities so they receive the full costs of collecting and disposing of packaging waste placed on the market
- Introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for the UK
- Taxing plastic packaging with less than 30% recycled content

10.7. All four consultations closed in mid-May 2019. The Government has indicated that it will consult with stakeholders again in early 2020 on the preferred approach and specific regulatory measures. Many of the proposals impact both waste collection and disposal arrangements. Any effects on existing and future waste arrangements need to be assessed in more detail as Government plans are unveiled.

## **11. Partnerships**

## Orbis

11.1. East Sussex and Surrey County Councils have been working in partnership on business services since 2015 through Orbis. Brighton & Hove City Council joined the partnership in May 2017 and Business Services budgets were integrated in April 2018.

11.2. The Orbis Business Plan 2021 sets out the savings to be achieved for 2019/20 and the areas of search for further efficiencies and savings in response to the financial challenges faced by the three partner councils. Orbis has achieved £9.7m ongoing savings between 2016/17 and 2018/19 for the partner councils. A further £8.2m of one-off savings have also been delivered by the partnership.

11.3. Orbis is going through a period of review and refresh to ensure the partnership fits the requirements of each sovereign partner. A number of changes will be implemented during the course of 2019/20 with the new operating model starting in April 2020.

11.4. For 2019/20 we will have both an internal focus on how we run the partnership and a customer focus on meeting the needs and priorities of the three partner councils. This means we will look at continued integration of specific services and the enabling IT and systems to support the partnership to realise financial and non-financial benefits. Orbis will continue to support and be responsive to the strategic priorities and change agendas of each individual partner council in order to ensure that the level and pace of change can be resourced and delivered.

## Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES)

11.5. SPACES is a partnership between local authorities, emergency services, health services and a number of Government departments in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The programme was formed in 2011 as part of the East Sussex Strategic Partnership with the aim of facilitating co-location and collaboration on property based activity. It aims to achieve £30m in capital receipts, £10m reduction in revenue costs and a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions. The total value of benefits delivered by SPACES across all partners for 2018/19 was nearly £16.5m, with another £4.5m identified within pipeline projects.

11.6. SPACES has successfully bid for funds from One Public Estate (OPE) phase 7, which has allocated funding to support the delivery of collaborative public sector land and property projects. SPACES will receive £450,000 towards the development of feasibility studies for four projects in Eastbourne, Hastings, Newhaven and Hailsham. The phase 5 OPE projects for Uckfield and Heathfield, where emergency services will co-locate into Fire Stations, have been approved by fire, police and ambulance services and are planned for delivery in 2019/20. These will lead to reduced revenue costs, capital receipts and an opportunity for aligned service delivery as well as potential for housing development on surplus sites.

11.7. In future there will be a focus on surplus sites to identify any marriage value or land swap opportunities. There will also be a focus on the challenges partner organisations face in their property based activity, such as finding appropriate resource, to identify if a joint approach could help overcome them. The SPACES Strategy is being drafted to help identify where SPACES can assist partners in achieving their property goals.

## Collaborative working with the Voluntary and Community Sector

11.8. The relationship between ESCC and the network of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations who work in the county is absolutely crucial to delivering quality services, enabling local action, and engaging effectively with local communities.

11.9. The current reduction in public sector finances, together with an increased demand for and vulnerability faced by the voluntary sector is creating an unprecedented position, requiring real partnership working to serve East Sussex residents and make best use of the resources we have collectively to provide services and support. These circumstances demand that both the public sector and the voluntary sector change and develop the way in which we work together.

11.10. During 2019, a joint planning group will review and reset local arrangements so they are effective, well understood and accessible. The group will focus on the following areas:

- inward investment – ensuring East Sussex is well positioned to respond to funding opportunities;
- commissioning and procurement – pursuing and leading national best practice;
- meeting needs - collaborating across sectors to make best use of resources when providing services and support for local people;
- cross sector understanding - building a strong cross-sector knowledge base and joint long lasting approaches to workforce development; and
- strategic engagement – ensuring the “conversation” between ESCC and the voluntary sector is effective, wide ranging and strategic.

## **12. Workforce**

### Apprenticeship Levy

12.1. From 6 April 2017, all employers with an annual wage bill of over £3m must pay an Apprenticeship Levy, calculated at 0.5% of the annual wage bill. This currently equates to approximately £565,000 per annum for the Council and £426,000 for schools. The Levy is collected by Government and, in return, employers receive electronic vouchers that can be exchanged with local providers for training apprentices.

12.2. The Government has set a statutory target of 2.3% of the public sector workforce being apprentices. This currently equates to 104 apprentices for the Council and 124 in schools. By April 2019, 130 staff had undertaken an apprenticeship, approximately 57% of the 2.3% target. In the first year of reporting, no County Council met the 2.3% target.

12.3. A key component of the Council's approach to apprenticeships is that they should complement existing workforce development and training plans already in place. Given the greater demands that the new standards place on managers, it is recognised that from a service delivery perspective, a balance needs to be struck between seeking to achieve the 2.3% target and spending the Levy, against distortion of the composition of the workforce. The intention is that the Levy is used to support the Council's recruitment and retention needs, especially in "hard to recruit" areas.

### Gender Pay

12.4. The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties and Public Authorities) Regulations 2017 required all employers with 250 or more employees to undertake a gender pay analysis and publish the data on the gov.uk website. Public sector bodies are required to publish by 31 March each year using pay data from the snapshot date of 31 March of the previous year.

12.5. This is the second year of reporting and the Council's median gender pay gap is 7.10%, a small improvement on last year which was 7.18%. This is lower than the average gender pay gap for County Councils of 11.5%. We already have in place a range of initiatives which improve the gender pay position including: occupational maternity pay, flexible working and investment in our staff, and have developed an action plan to look at further initiatives to reduce the gender pay gap.

#### Workforce Make up and Shape

12.6. The Council employs approximately 4517 headcount (3664 fte) in its non-Schools workforce of which approximately 81% are female and 19% are male. 4% of our employees are Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and 3% identify themselves as having a disability. Overall, we have a higher proportion of part time workers than the national average which is a positive indication of opportunities for flexible working arrangements, helping our staff to achieve a work-life balance.

12.7. In considering the shape of the organisation, approximately 45% of the workforce are 'team members', 29% 'team leaders', 24% 'managers' and 2% 'senior managers'.

12.8. Like many Councils, we have a number of "hard to recruit" areas and our workforce is getting older, with over 67% of our staff aged 40+ and 41% aged 50+. The county as a whole is facing a decreasing working age population and the number of older people will rise sharply. Conversely, only 0.03% of our workforce is aged under 23 and 11% aged under 29.

#### Workforce Development

12.9. Over the coming years we expect to see changes to our workforce as a result of demographic change and growing diversity, changes to the state pension age, changing technologies, digital services and automation/robotics, and a workforce that will contain multiple generations from Generation Z to those in their 60s, with different needs and expectations.

12.10. It is essential that we are able support the workforce to deliver high levels of performance, underpinned by effective self-managed learning and development. The Council's People Strategy outlines our approach to developing the workforce over the next three years. The plans and interventions within the People Strategy include strategies to attract a diverse workforce, retain our existing highly skilled staff, and the Apprenticeship Levy (see 12.1 - 12.3 above) to attract more young people to work at the Council and the development of critical skills such as leadership, commercial and digital.

### **13. Funding and income**

#### 2018/19 Outturn

13.1. There was a £8.0m underspend in 2018/19. There still remains significant pressures in demand-led social care however, with a total overspend of £4.1m (ASC - £1.1m and Children's Services - £3.0m). Underspending in other departments helped to reduce the service budget overspend to £1.8m.

13.2. An underspend of £6.3m on centrally held budgets (Treasury Management (£2.2m), General Fund Contingency (£3.5m) and Business Rates and other budgets (£0.6m)), together with one-off funding from the national Business Rates Levy Surplus of £1.1m and £2.4m from the change in Minimum Revenue Provision policy, resulted in the total underspend of £8.0m.

13.3. The underspend has been allocated as follows:

- Capital Programme (£4.6m), to minimise the net cost to the Council of meeting its Capital Programme requirements, as a consequence of a lower level of borrowing.
- Financial Management Reserve (£3.4m), in order to manage future revenue funding uncertainties and help smooth the delivery of required future savings.

13.4. Capital Programme expenditure was £85.1m in 2018/19, against a budget of £92.2m, a variation of £7.1m. This was attributable to slippage of £8.2m and a small underspend of £0.2m, offset by spend in advance of £1.3m.

13.5. Reserves and balances have now been updated to reflect the outturn (see 13.13)

#### Reserves, Contingency and General Fund

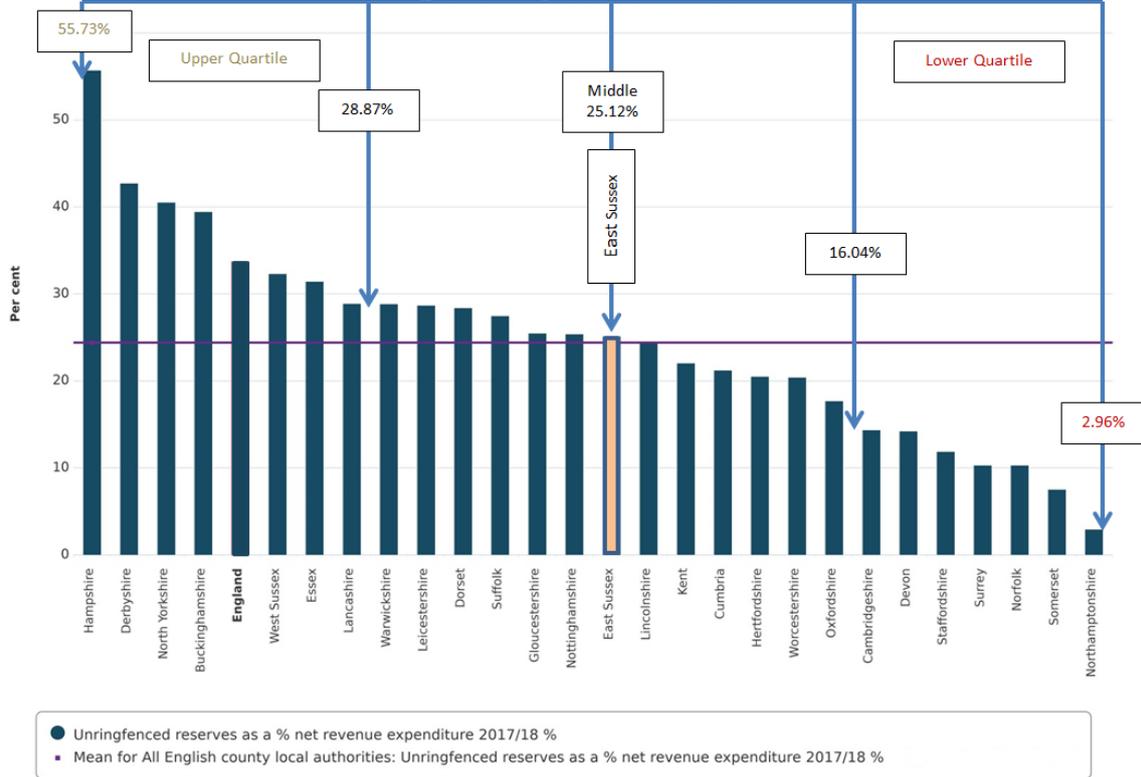
13.6. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) has been developing a Financial Resilience Index, which aims to illustrate local authorities' financial position within each authority's comparator tier or nearest neighbour group. The index uses MHCLG Revenue Outturn returns submitted by authorities each year.

13.7. In May 2019, the BBC identified 11 authorities CIPFA said will have "fully exhausted" reserves within four years unless they were topped up. The authorities were identified by measuring the percentage change in reserves over the past three years (excluding public health and schools' balances). A large decrease may indicate financial risk.

13.8. The BBC used this methodology to compare reserves recorded in the MHCLG data for March 2018 and March 2015. The reserves of the 152 upper tier councils were £400m less than March 2015. ESCC ranked 41<sup>st</sup> of the 152 upper tier authorities with a decrease of 18%. Compared to the 27 Shire Counties, ESCC ranks 8<sup>th</sup>, although there are some significant outliers.

13.9. The LGA produces data similar to the CIPFA indicator, using the MHCLG Revenue Account (budget) returns submitted by authorities each year. This indicator shows the ratio of reserves balances (excluding schools) to the council's net revenue expenditure. A low level of reserves may indicate that a council has low capacity to cope with financial shocks. Looking at this in conjunction with the CIPFA indicator gives a better overview of a council's financial position (note - the LGA includes the Public Health reserve and the CIPFA indicator does not). The following two graphs provide a comparison of this analysis for 2017/18 and 2018/19.

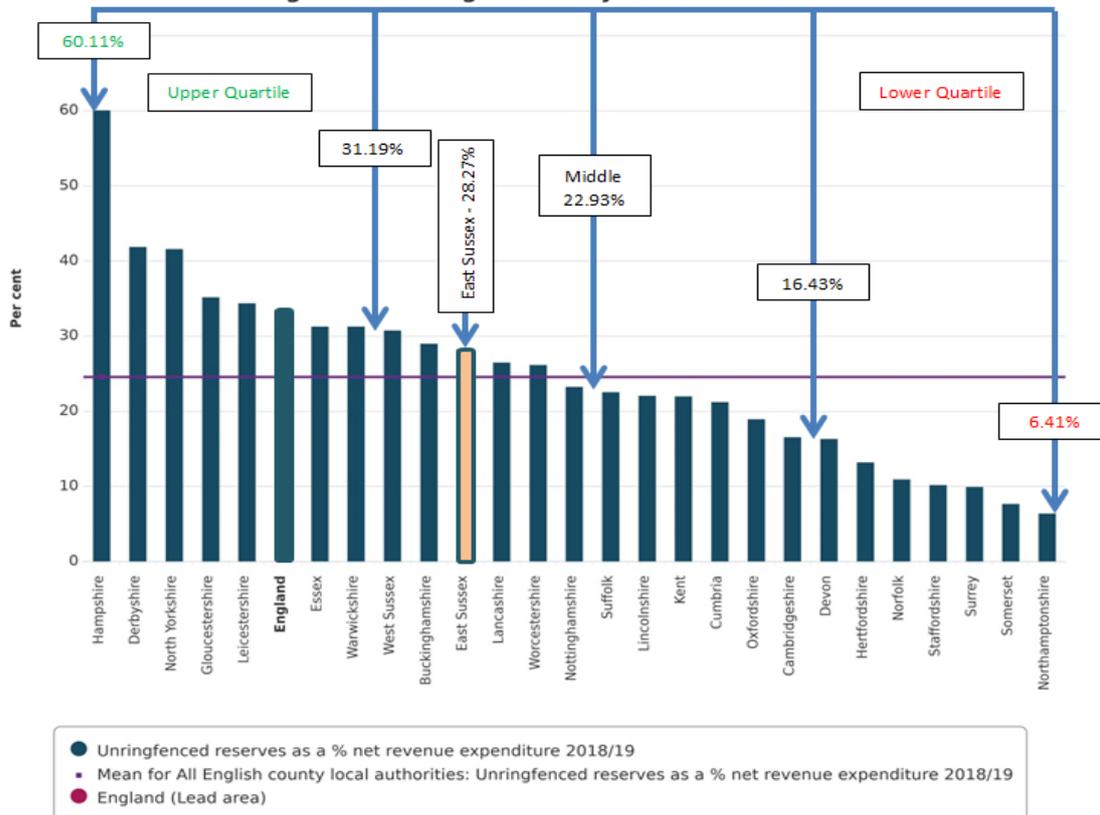
**Estimated unringfenced reserves as a % net revenue expenditure (%) (2017/18) for England & All English county local authorities**



Source: Local Government Association

Powered by LG Inform

**Estimated unringfenced reserves as a % net revenue expenditure (2018/19) for England & All English county local authorities**



Source: Local Government Association

Powered by LG Inform

13.10. It is the S151 Officer's duty to consider the robustness of the Council's budgets, the adequacy of reserves and the general fund when they are set annually.

This consideration is summarised in the published Robustness Statement and the position reported in February 2019 stands.

13.11. The Council's approach to the management and accounting for earmarked reserves is set in the Reserves Strategy adopted by the Cabinet in June 2017. The number of reserves was reviewed when setting the budget in February 2019.

13.12. Reserves are the only source of financing to which ESCC has to fund risks and one-off pressures over a number of years. Reserves can only be spent once and the possibility of creating new reserves in an era where budgets are tight and can become overspent, not just individually but corporately, is increasingly limited. The current financial uncertainty about future funding means it is prudent to bolster reserves when possible; the 2018/19 £8m underspend (see 13.1-13.3) has provided such an opportunity with £3.4m moved to the Financial Management Reserve.

13.13. The reserves are split into two categories: named service reserves and strategic reserves. ESCC reserves total £92.8m as at 1 April 2019:

#### Summary of Earmarked Reserves estimated at 1 April 2019

	<b>Actual Balance @ 01.04.19 £'m</b>	<b>Estimated Balance @ 31.03.23 £'m</b>
<b>Held on behalf of others or statutorily ringfenced</b>	<b>24.1</b>	<b>21.3</b>
<b>Named Service Reserves</b>		
Waste Reserve	12.8	8.6
Capital Programme (set aside for current programme) Reserve	10.5	0.0
Insurance Reserve	4.8	4.8
<b>Subtotal Named Service Reserves</b>	<b>28.1</b>	<b>13.4</b>
<b>Strategic Reserves</b>		
Financial Management	32.4	24.7
Priority Outcomes and Transformation	8.2	4.4
<b>Subtotal strategic reserves</b>	<b>40.6</b>	<b>29.1</b>
<b>Total ESCC Service and Strategic Reserves</b>	<b>68.7</b>	<b>42.5</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>63.8</b>

13.14. The Council holds a general contingency in its revenue budget of £3.5m in 2019/20 to cushion the impact of unexpected events and emergencies in year. There is also a General Fund Balance of £10.0m which, whilst lower than a lot of other authorities', is considered adequate on the basis that the in-year general contingency base budget is also held.

#### Development of a 10 year Capital Strategy

13.15. The CIPFA revised 2017 Prudential and Treasury Management Codes require local authorities to set out a Capital Strategy. ESCC is developing a 10-year Capital

Strategy 2029/30. The limited resources available to fund capital expenditure means the Capital Strategy will need to be closely aligned to the Treasury Management Strategy, as significant borrowing will be required even to meet basic need.

#### East Sussex Pension Fund Tri-Annual Valuation

13.16. The 2019 tri-annual valuation of the East Sussex Pension Fund will take place during 2019. This will determine the employer pension contribution rates for the Council for the next three financial years from 2020/21. The results of the valuation will be available from November 2019; the impact will be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Plan, prior to approval of the budget in February 2020.

#### Investment and Returns

13.17. The Treasury Management Strategy seeks to minimise the cost of debt and maximise the income generated from investments. During 2018/19, opportunities were taken to repay £23m Lender Option Borrower Option (LOBO) loans, whilst also investing £5m in CCLA Property Funds. The Treasury Management budget will continue to be reviewed as opportunities are sought.