



# Community Services

## Portfolio Plan 2015/16 – 2017/18

June 2015



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## Our Priorities and Operating Principles

### Our Priorities

The Council has set four priority outcomes:

- ❖ Driving economic growth;
- ❖ Keeping vulnerable people safe;
- ❖ Helping people help themselves; and
- ❖ Making best use of resources.

### Operating Principles

The Council has agreed three operating principles:

- ❖ **Strategic commissioning:** using an evidence-based approach to assess and meet the needs of local people in the most effective way. We will specify and deliver appropriate services to secure the best outcomes and value for money for residents.
- ❖ **One Council:** working as a single organisation both through the processes we use, and how we work. We will work in a well connected way across Council teams so we harness all our energy and resources towards achieving our priorities and remove duplication. We will judge our success against outcomes for the whole population and the organisation (and whole local public sector) not against the interests of a particular group, team or department.
- ❖ **Strong partnerships:** recognising we are one part of a wider system, we will work effectively with partners across East Sussex, the South East 7 and South East Local Enterprise Partnership and the wider public sector as appropriate to ensure we learn from others, secure best value for money and maximise impact for our residents.

### Policy Overview by Lead Member

1.1 The Community Services Portfolio Plan covers a range of services central to many communities within East Sussex, such as libraries, registration offices, culture and the voluntary and community sector. These services enrich and empower local communities and make a significant contribution to the quality of life in the county. These services are often located at the heart of the local communities, making them well placed to engage with local communities and understand their needs and aspirations.

1.2 There are a number of challenges currently facing community services; significant financial pressure is affecting the whole of the public sector. 2015/16 is the third and final year of our Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), and outlines the savings the Council needs to make in 2015/16. In the next MTFP period (2016/17 – 2018/19), our current assumption is that we will need to make a saving in the range of £70m – £90m across all services. It is therefore important that we work with local communities, the voluntary and community sector and other partners to make the most of our resources and community assets in a way that is financially sustainable and encourages local communities to help themselves as much as possible.

1.3 We must always be alert to the characteristics and features of East Sussex that can sometimes present a challenge to delivering our services. The rural nature in many parts of the county can make it difficult to access our services in person, but there are opportunities arising from the rollout of superfast broadband to reach more people in a cost effective, convenient manner. East Sussex has an ageing and increasingly diverse population that we must take into account when commissioning services to ensure that we meet the needs of our residents. For example, internet training offered through our Library and Information Service is an important way of making online services accessible to groups such as older people. Consultation and engagement to understand local communities is fundamental to how we overcome these challenges.

1.4 The services in this portfolio plan are highly valued by the residents of East Sussex and many users feel passionately about them. Although change is inevitable, it does give us an opportunity to make positive changes to these services and maximise their contribution to delivering the Council's four priority outcomes.



**Councillor Chris Dowling**

**Lead Member for Community Services**

## Delivering the Priority Outcomes

2.1 The services in the Community Services Portfolio play a major role in delivering the priority outcomes. This section summarises how actions in this portfolio plan will achieve these outcomes.

2.2 The voluntary and community sector has a key role to play in helping communities help themselves by mobilising volunteers and benefactors to tackle local issues and improve the quality of life in the area. Our support for voluntary and community organisations helps them to deliver more for the community and to become more resilient and financially sustainable.

2.3 At this time of diminishing resources, we have to make careful decisions about where we invest to make the biggest impact on local communities and also provide value for money. The capital investment made to modernise library and registration office buildings not only helps to reduce running costs, but in the case of registration offices, will help to attract weddings and civil partnership ceremonies to the county and generate an important source of income for the Council. This also benefits local businesses, particularly those in the hospitality sector.

2.4 Economic growth is supported through the contribution Community Services make to promoting learning and skills for employment. Our libraries make a substantial contribution to learning and offer a wide range of online training courses and activities for all ages. More and more of our services are launching online, which is not only more cost effective, but is often more convenient for our service users. The Keep, our state of the art archives facility, is at the heart of our efforts to promote research into local history. Our programme of educational activities at The Keep is a great way to learn skills that are transferable into employment. Promoting skills helps communities to become more self-sufficient and confident at finding out information, accessing services online and managing their personal finances and other affairs.

2.5 East Sussex enjoys a rich and varied heritage and local culture that provides employment for a significant number of people and attracts many visitors. Our aim is to expand and promote cultural tourism, raise the profile of East Sussex and attract more visitors and businesses to the county.

### Forward Plan

#### Developing our Libraries as Community hubs

3.1 We continue to make better use of our library buildings by developing them as community hubs. In collaboration with other public services, we are increasing the range of services offered at our libraries and, where appropriate, providing a range of complementary services in one location. The benefits are that residents enjoy a single point of access and we make better use of our property estate. Construction work costing £1.7m on a new library in Newhaven was completed and the library opened in March 2015 on its new, modern, and larger site. It has improved facilities and space to hold a wider range of community events and activities for everyone, and will help to regenerate the town centre.

3.2 In Hastings, the existing library in the Brassey Institute will be improved. We have bought 12 Claremont, the building next door, and the Hastings Registration Office will move from its current out-of-centre site, to be co-located with the refurbished library. This will provide modern facilities for local residents to register births and deaths, as well as new, fully equipped ceremony rooms for marriages civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, baby naming, and renewal of vows ceremonies. The redevelopment also brings together the separate Children's Library and Adult Library on the same site to create a flexible, modern library in the heart of the town. The project costs £9.9m and is due to be completed in 2016/17.

3.3 The Library and Information Service and Children's Centres are working together to relocate some services for children and families from Children's Centres (Polegate and Hampden Park) to nearby library premises. This follows de-designation of five Children's Centres to enable their use for the provision of additional nursery places for two year olds. Provision of services in libraries by Children's Centre staff will ensure a continuation of services in these areas and complement those offered by the Library and Information Service for children. This new, integrated service partnership began in December 2014 at Polegate Library.

3.4 Libraries provide formal and informal access to learning. We will continue to develop learning opportunities for residents, particularly to help them learn skills for employment and become more confident at accessing online services and resources. We will continue to grow our pool of volunteers who perform a variety of roles including Home Library Service delivery, local studies cataloguing and computer buddying to help others go online. We will continue to successfully deliver online courses from UK Online and Learndirect, enabling residents to gain valuable qualifications. We have also employed two apprentices.

3.5 Welfare Reform and the introduction of Universal Credit will mean changes to the benefits received by some of our residents. In 2015/16, we are training all 270 library staff to help people with these changes. We will provide online access to claim forms and online services as well as offering courses in budgeting and money management. We will help people get back to work by offering approximately 270 courses in employability, literacy, numeracy and ICT through the Learndirect scheme. We will make sure that vulnerable families are aware of the help we can provide such as, information, access to computers and the internet, and free activities for children.

## **The Universal Offers for Library Services**

3.6 The Society of Chief Librarians established in 2013 four 'universal offers' that all libraries should be expected to provide. The four 'universal offers' are health, reading, digital and information. The aim of each of the offers is to develop a core package of partnerships, resources and advocacy messages at a national level which can then be delivered locally and shaped to meet differing local needs. We are in the process of delivering on these offers.

3.7 The digital offer is crucial to supporting delivery of the other offers because of the role the internet plays enabling access to information and learning resources online. We will continue to promote internet access and online information to increase the number of sessions on library computers and will deliver a countywide staff training programme focusing on helping customer's access digital information as well as health and reading. This is due to be completed in 2015/16. We're aiming to deliver this in-house so that there are no significant financial implications. This training will give staff the skills to promote use of online services, such as Universal Jobmatch, an online service offered through Government Gateway, which is designed to help match employers with job seekers.

## **Developing a Strategic Commissioning Strategy for our Library Service**

3.8 In 2015/16 we will begin work on a Strategic Commissioning Strategy for libraries. The County Council has identified Strategic Commissioning as the approach which we will use to plan the services we provide. It's about securing the best outcomes for East Sussex residents, by understanding need, matching supply with need and making the most effective use of all available resources. This approach will focus on the four agreed priority outcomes to guide spending decisions and use of resources listed on page 2 of this Portfolio Plan. It will also follow our One Council ethos, to ensure that we are commissioning and delivering services as effectively as possible, without duplication of effort or making changes in one service area which have an adverse effect on services in another.

3.9 Ceremonies will return to Southover Grange, the splendid Grade II\* listed 16<sup>th</sup> century manor house in Lewes, after we took over ownership of the entire building. This follows an exchange with Lewes District Council for The Maltings, the historic home of the East Sussex Record Office, which has now moved to The Keep. We previously leased part of the first floor of Southover Grange, but have been unable to provide ceremonies there for over a year due to the layout and facilities of the building that restricted access for people with limited mobility. We will embark on an £1.2m programme of refurbishment in 2015/16 that will see a suite of new ceremony rooms on the ground floor and make the first floor interview rooms accessible for all with a lift.

3.10 Hastings Registration Office will move in 2016/17 to be co-located with the modernised Hastings Library building in the town centre. The new registration office will offer modern facilities for local residents to register births and deaths and two new, fully-equipped ceremony rooms. Like Southover Grange, the new venue is in a prime location that will prove popular with local residents and people from outside the county.

3.11 We also provide a non-statutory nationality checking service and a settlement checking service, to assist applicants who are applying for either British Citizenship or indefinite leave to remain in the UK. For a modest fee, we can check their applications and supporting documentation to ensure it has a good chance of success before sending it off to the Home Office. This also enables them to retain their original documentation as we copy and certify it for them before sending it off. In 2013/14, 936 people used this service. Once they have been

granted British Citizenship, they are then required to partake in a Citizenship Ceremony which is a statutory provision we provide and we receive payment from the Home Office for each applicant. We can alternatively offer them a Private Citizenship Ceremony for an additional fee.

## **Promoting our Culture**

3.12 East Sussex has a distinctive character and is well known for its excellent, innovative and varied cultural offer. Our aims and approach to promoting our culture and heritage is set out in the East Sussex Cultural Strategy. The strategy is monitored and supported by the East Sussex Cultural Advisory Board, which has representatives from Council, the East Sussex Cultural Leaders Network, Borough and District Councils, Team East Sussex, South Downs National Park and Arts Council England. The three priorities of the strategy are to:

- create an environment where great cultural experiences are available to everyone to enhance their quality of life;
- create an environment which enables the cultural and creative economy to expand and enhances our ability to attract and retain other businesses; and
- develop and promote well packaged cultural tourism offers which celebrate the identity of East Sussex, raise its profile and attract more visitors and businesses to the County.

3.13 Delivery plans (all subject to securing finance) to deliver these priorities include:

- ‘Open Sesame’ to develop skills with those working in Early Years settings to deliver cultural education. We have secured £75,000 of Arts Council England funding for 2015/16 – 2016/17 to deliver this is in partnership with Children’s Services, Culture Shift, Glyndebourne, Towner and Brighton University.
- ‘Open Ended’ which is targeted at people living with memory problems, in partnership with Towner and Age Concern.
- Cultural Destinations Consortium is bidding for the development of the Coastal Cultural Trail and the introduction of the Artists in the Sussex Downs Trail. We are applying to Arts Council England with the aim of funding being in place by October 2015.
- Employer led skills programme in partnership with the South East Local Enterprise Partnership wide cultural subgroup and local partners.

## **Archives**

3.14 The Keep provides a state of the art archive facility to the residents of East Sussex and beyond. Its electronic archive catalogue, with a full online search facility, gives people remote access to information on the wealth of material in the collections. We are looking at the most effective ways of making images available online in future. We are continuing to deliver an excellent educational programme; the growing collections provide an opportunity for learning and engagement. From school visits to community events, we lead and participate in projects that bring communities closer to their historical archives. Our aim is to preserve our unique collections, to make them accessible to all and to promote archives as a source of enjoyment, knowledge and inspiration.

3.15 The First World War website ([www.eastsussexww1.org.uk](http://www.eastsussexww1.org.uk)), created to commemorate the centenary of the First World War and the role played by East Sussex, has now been

visited by over 9,500 people since it was launched in August 2014 to end of March 2015; they viewed the site a total of 45,000 times in this period. Members of the public, schools and interest groups are encouraged to submit their own stories and memories and post details of related events: to date, there have been over 100 stories and events submitted to the website. All website content will be archived within The Keep's digital catalogue at the end of the centenary activities as a permanent legacy. A project entitled 'Recording Remembrance,' a joint collaboration with Brighton & Hove City Council and West Sussex County Council, invites people to research war memorials in Sussex and over forty records within East Sussex have now been completed. We are due to lay two memorial paving stones in July and August 2015 to commemorate local men who were awarded the Victoria Cross during the First World War. A further two are to be laid in 2016 and 2018. The ceremonies to unveil the paving stones are being planning in partnership with Borough, District, Parish and Town Councils.

## **Voluntary and Community Sector**

3.16 The voluntary and community sector makes a significant contribution to the quality of life in East Sussex by providing services, support and facilities that are not provided by public bodies or the private sector. We recognise and value the contribution that the sector makes to the county. The 2011 study 'Valuing the Voluntary Sector' identified that the sector contributed £476m to the local economy and employs more than 10,000 people across the county. Looking forward, our priority is to support voluntary and community sector organisations to build greater capacity, capability and resilience in the sector.

3.17 We will continue to invest in development and support services that enable organisations to play an active role and help us deliver our priority outcomes. The Commissioning Grants Prospectus for 2015 is being developed and will set out the grants that will be made available by Council departments and the NHS for organisations who provide services that strengthen communities. We provide support in the form of information, skills, knowledge and assets which can be crucial in helping voluntary and community sector organisations to access funding from different sources, make the best use of their resources, influence policy and mobilise their volunteers and benefactors. We support efforts by the sector to improve how they operate and are structured to promote good governance, community involvement and become more self-sufficient.

3.18 Our investment will generate the following outcomes:

- a comprehensive generic infrastructure service that works in partnership with local voluntary and community organisations and delivers services to meet their needs, on a cost effective basis;
- a minimum standard of generic infrastructure service available to all voluntary and community organisations throughout East Sussex and inclusive of all protected characteristics; and
- better alignment between generic infrastructure delivery organisations and the public sector.

## **External Funding**

3.19 Our External Funding Team play an important role in helping voluntary and community organisations identify and apply for funding from a wide range of external sources. This includes grants, loans, crowd funding and sponsorship. We understand that sometimes the rules and requirements for funding applications can be confusing, so we will work with the

sector to quality check their draft applications, provide training on bid writing and spread best practice. In 2014/15 we helped 187 organisations and voluntary groups gain funding expertise and successfully bid for funding worth just under £900,000.

3.20 Local government funding is under considerable pressure and we are seeking new and diverse ways of funding services that matter most to local residents. One way to do this is to increase the amount of income that we get from external sources, particularly European funding. The new Corporate Funding Strategy has resulted in more staff being aware of the support and funding opportunities available. We plan to deliver more training and offer more targeted support to maximise the take up of funding opportunities.

## **Customer Focus**

3.21 Customer focus is an important transformational programme for the Council. It is about embedding a consistent approach to interacting with customers across all of our services. New technology, particularly online services and information management, have the potential to offer our customers a better and more convenient way of using our services. There is particular emphasis on developing intelligent insight into the needs of our customers and understanding how they use different ways of contacting us, such as face to face, telephone, letters, email, our website and social media. Our approach to customer focus is still being developed, but will cover the following themes:

- developing a single, holistic view of the customer across different services;
- promoting a consistent 'One Council' approach; and
- use of feedback to improve services.

3.22 In 2013/14 we received 1,482 requests for information made under the Data Protection, Environmental Information Regulation (EIR) and Freedom of Information (FOI) Acts. This represents a six fold increase between 2006/07 and 2013/14. To manage this demand, we will proactively publish our FOI and EIR responses on our website so the public can see information that we have previously released. We already publish information on our website about senior staff salaries, contracts, financial transactions and parking and will be releasing further information to fully comply with the Government's revised Transparency Code. This sends out a key message that we are transparent and accountable to the public.

3.23 The number of formal complaints made in 2014/15 (1,059) declined by 9% compared with the previous year (1,123). We are focusing on identifying themes of complaints to understand and tackle the underlying reasons for people's complaints, so that we can get it right, first time. Our aim, as part of our approach to customer focus, is to reduce the number of complaints being made by dealing with the problem at source. We have also taken steps to simplify the complaints process to refer complainants to the Local Government Ombudsmen much earlier. This results in a quicker outcome for the complainant and makes best use of resources.

## Performance data and targets

Performance Measures CP = Council Plan	2013/14 Outturn	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Outturn	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of services with a new online payment facility	Introduction of online payment facilities delayed to 2014/15	4 new online payment services	Live payments halted because of issues with VAT aspect of some payments	6 new online payment services	To be developed following business case appraisals	tbc
Deliver Cultural Destinations Action Plan as resources are secured CP	Engagement events held with the sector to plan actions for 2014/15	March 2015	Action Plan agreed	Secure investment to deliver action plan	Continue to grow Coastal and Cultural trail and develop new trail (if funding secured)	Deliver Coastal Cultural Trail and new trail (if funding secured)
Agree Employer led skills development programme for SELEP Cultural Sub Group [tbc depending on availability of funding]	n/a	n/a	New measure	Agree action plan	Secure investment to deliver action plan	Deliver action plan
The number of Weddings and Civil Partnerships where one or both are residents of East Sussex	1341	Increase on 2013/14	1540 weddings /CPs	Sustain level at 2014/15	To be set pending 2015/16 outturn	To be set pending 2016/17 outturn
The number of Weddings and Civil Partnerships where neither are residents of East Sussex	781	Increase on 2013/14	815 weddings /CPs	Sustain level at 2014/15	To be set pending 2015/16 outturn	To be set pending 2016/17 outturn
Modernise and refurbish Southover Grange for Registration services	n/a	n/a	New measure	Commence construction/refurbishment	Refurbishment and modernisation works completed	No target set after 2016/17
Publish responses to Freedom of Information (FOI) requests on our website	New measure	FOI published to website	Responses should be available online from the summer of 2015	Publish FOI responses on website	No target set after 2015/16	No target set after 2015/16
Freedom of Information (FOI) responses provided within timescales	New measure	≥ 95%	96%	≥ 96%	≥ 98%	100%
Modernise Hastings Library and move the Register Office to a new town centre location	n/a	n/a	New measure	Commence construction /refurbishment	Refurbishment and modernisation works completed	No target set after 2016/17
Develop and implement a Strategic Commissioning Strategy for the Libraries Service	n/a	n/a	New measure	Undertake needs assessment	Produce Strategic Commissioning Strategy	Consult on Strategic Commissioning Strategy, amend as required
In partnership with Learndirect and other funding organisations provide online learning (including skills for life and ICT courses) in libraries CP (subject to contract)	617 courses completed	450 courses completed	431 courses completed	270 courses completed	To be set 2015/16	To be set 2016/17
Online access to government websites including Universal Jobmatch and NHS Choices	New measure	Establish baseline	713,821 hits	725,000 hits	750,000 hits	775,000 hits
Number of sessions on library computers (the People's Network)	325,895	325,000 sessions	327,450 sessions	327,000 sessions	330,000 sessions	332,500 sessions
Number of customer orders for original material at The Keep	New measure	Establish baseline (anticipate 10,000 orders)	13,424 orders	Minimum 14,000 orders	Minimum 14,000 orders	Minimum 14,000 orders

Performance Measures CP = Council Plan	2013/14 Outturn	2014/15 Target	2014/15 Outturn	2015/16 Target	2016/17 Target	2017/18 Target
Number of onsite service users at The Keep	New measure	Establish baseline (anticipate 10,000 orders)	8,012 users	>8,500 users	>8,500 users	>8,500 users
Number of visits to The Keep website	New measure	Establish baseline (anticipate 60,000 user visits, 750,000 pageview)	79,666 user visits; 568,324 page views	80,000 users visits; 580,000 pageviews	80,000 users visits; 700,000 pageviews	80,000 users visits; 700,000 pageviews
Attendance at activities which enable education, research and lifelong learning, both at The Keep and off site	New measure	Establish baseline (anticipate at least 3,000 people)	3,277	Attendance of at least 3,000	Attendance of at least 3,000	Attendance of at least 3,000

Revenue	2013/14 Budget	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Gross Budget (A)</b>	11,517	11,203	12,311
<b>Government Grants (B)</b>	(296)	(300)	(295)
<b>Fees and Charges (C)</b>	(2,228)	(2,257)	(2,296)
<b>Other Income* (D)</b>	(651)	(662)	(1,669)
<b>Net Budget (A-B-C-D)</b>	8,342	7,984	8,051

\* Other income in all years includes contributions from other organisations

Capital Programme £000							
Capital	Description		Total for Scheme	Previous Years	2015/16 Budget	2016/17 Budget	2017/18 Budget
<b>New Archive and Record Office - "The Keep" - Phase 1 &amp; 2</b>	Build New Archive Building	<b>Gross</b>	20,636	19,906	730	0	0
		<b>Net</b>	13,536	13,025	511	0	0
<b>Rye Library</b>	Refurbishment of Rye Library	<b>Gross &amp; Net*</b>	52	21	31	0	0
<b>Hastings Library</b>	Expansion and refurbishment of Hastings Library	<b>Gross &amp; Net*</b>	9,916	1,793	8,123	0	0
<b>Newhaven Library</b>	New Library in Newhaven	<b>Gross &amp; Net*</b>	1,754	1,597	157	0	0
<b>Southover Grange</b>	Refurbishment of Southover Grange for Registration Service	<b>Gross &amp; Net*</b>	1,200	54	1,146	0	0
<b>Library Refurbishment</b>	General refurbishment of libraries	<b>Gross &amp; Net*</b>	1,983	1,565	418	0	0

\*Fully funded by ESCC

## Budget Summary

Revenue	2013/14 Budget	2014/15 Budget	2015/16 Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Community Services	8,342	7,984	8,051
Management & Support #	1,246	890	1,292

# This Management & Support budget is shown in two other portfolios: SMED and Transport and Environment