

Council Plan 2025/26

Introduction

This Council Plan sets out our ambitions and what we plan to achieve by 2028 for our four overarching priority outcomes: driving sustainable economic growth; keeping vulnerable people safe; helping people help themselves; and making best use of resources now and for the future.

The Council provides services used by all residents, businesses and communities in East Sussex, including providing care and support for children, families and elderly people, maintaining the roads, providing library services, and working to boost the local economy.

We provide services to some of the most vulnerable people in the county. These services are vital in helping to keep people safe and in helping them to help themselves.

Ongoing cost of living challenges and the legacy of COVID-19 have had a significant impact on the lives of many people in East Sussex. As a result of national factors beyond local control, the Council has seen a significant increase in the demand for, and cost of providing, vital services for our residents, particularly for the most vulnerable. Current and forecast economic conditions, combined with the increased demand for services contribute to a very challenging period for the Council over the coming years. The Council is facing the most difficult financial outlook in its history.

The cost of providing care services for the most vulnerable children and adults in the county make up over two thirds of our net revenue budget. Without significant additional funding the current demand for services and ongoing projections presents an increasingly difficult financial position in the short and medium term, which may impact on our ability to provide certain services. Since 2010 we have identified substantial savings of £140m, and there are few remaining options to further reduce our spending. We will continue to focus our stretched resources on helping those most in need and where we can make the most impact.

We will plan for and respond to national reforms in major, demand-led service areas, such as adults' and children's social care and special educational needs and disability.

We remain committed to addressing and adapting to the impact of climate change on our county. With that in mind, we will consider the impact of the choices we make about using resources across all that we do. The Council has updated its corporate Climate Emergency Plan. As a member of the Environment Board for East Sussex the Council is playing a key role in delivering some of the programmes and projects set out in the East Sussex Climate Emergency Road Map.

We do not work in isolation. We will continue to work with all our partners to make sure there is a shared view of priorities and that we make the most of opportunities and resources available. We lobby hard to protect and promote the interests of East Sussex.

We work closely with local businesses to identify and promote the conditions needed to grow our local economy in a sustainable way, helping improve access to quality jobs, goods and services for our communities. The Council published the new [economic strategy for East Sussex](#) in 2024/25. The strategy aims to create a more

productive economy which will mean increased wealth for our businesses and residents. We have a vision for a more innovative, productive and sustainable East Sussex economy, and the strategy sets out the steps we will take to achieve that. We will develop an investment plan during 2025/26 as part of this work.

We will build on our long-established partnerships with health and care organisations to help deliver joined-up care. This will ensure that the most vulnerable receive the support they need in a timely manner. A key partner in East Sussex is the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. VCSE organisations are often the first to respond to the needs of communities, and provide specialist support that is often not available from other providers. By working together we can ensure that our residents get help to access the different types of support they need to live an independent life.

We consider equality, diversity and inclusion impacts throughout all aspects of our business planning processes. This ensures that we understand local needs and diversity when planning our priorities. We work to identify and respond to opportunities to remove barriers and maximise positive outcomes. We monitor the outcomes for people sharing different characteristics so that we understand our impact.

Our planning for the years ahead continues to be underpinned by a relentless focus on our priority outcomes and their supporting delivery outcomes. These priority and delivery outcomes shape the Council Plan performance measures and targets that are the main tool we use to assess our progress. We also keep track of a wide range of related key data evidencing local need in East Sussex.

The performance measures help us assess our impact more fully and respond appropriately when we need to do so. We review this data when making our plans and publish them with our State of the County report each year. A selection of this information is provided throughout the plan and listed in more detail at the end.

Our priorities and delivery outcomes

The Priority Outcomes

The Council has four overarching priority outcomes: driving sustainable economic growth; keeping vulnerable people safe; helping people help themselves; and making best use of resources now and for the future. Making best use of resources now and for the future is the gateway priority through which any activity and accompanying resources must pass. For each priority outcome there are specific delivery outcomes.

Driving sustainable economic growth - delivery outcomes

- East Sussex businesses are supported to succeed and grow sustainably
- The county is an attractive place to live, work and do business
- Individuals, communities and businesses thrive in East Sussex with the environmental, and social infrastructure to meet their needs
- The workforce has and maintains the skills needed for good quality employment to meet the needs of the current and future East Sussex economy
- The value of our role as both a significant employer and a buyer of local goods and services is maximised
- All children progress well from early years through school and into post-16 education, training and employment

Keeping vulnerable people safe - delivery outcomes

- All vulnerable people in East Sussex are known to relevant local agencies and support is delivered together to meet their needs
- People feel safe at home and well supported by their networks
- Children grow up supported by enduring, loving relationships
- People feel safe with support provided
- We work with the wider health and care system to support people to achieve the best outcomes possible

Helping people help themselves - delivery outcomes

- Commissioners and providers from all sectors put people first when providing services and information to help them meet their needs
- The most vulnerable get the support they need to maintain their independence and this is provided at or as close to home as possible
- Through working well with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, individuals, families and communities are supported to thrive
- We work to reduce health inequalities and maximise opportunities for our residents to live healthier lives

Making best use of resources now and for the future - delivery outcomes

- To help tackle Climate Change East Sussex County Council activities are carbon neutral as soon as possible and in any event by 2050
- We work as One Council
- We work in strong and sustained partnership with the public, voluntary community, social enterprise and private sectors to ensure that our collective resources and influence are used to deliver maximum benefits
- Ensuring we achieve value for money in the services we commission and provide

- Maximising the funding available through bidding for funding and lobbying for the best deal for East Sussex
- We are an employer of choice and support our staff to achieve and develop, ensuring we have the workforce we need to deliver services both now and in the future

Priority - Driving sustainable economic growth

Priority Overview

A thriving economy in East Sussex is key to the wellbeing of the county. Ensuring that local people have access to relevant training and employment, well designed local infrastructure and services, a positively managed environment and accessible cultural activities, will have a positive impact on their wellbeing, enabling them to live independently of public sector support or benefits. Supporting our economy to grow sustainably will help our communities to be more resilient and our businesses to be more competitive.

1.1 Economic Recovery

Delivery outcome: East Sussex businesses are supported to succeed and grow sustainably

Working with partners we have published a new economic growth strategy 'East Sussex Prosperity'. The strategy is designed to create a more productive economy which will mean increased wealth for our businesses, residents and communities. During 2025/26 we will develop an investment plan to help realise the aims of the strategy. Support will include using Shared Prosperity Funding from our district and borough partners to deliver a specialist business support programme across the county. We will also work to attract more investment into the economy.

Trading Standards will continue to offer assistance to businesses in East Sussex to ensure they continue to adapt and thrive. We provide advice and training to businesses, enabling them to market their goods, confident that they are legally compliant. We will continue to advise businesses on legislative requirements, particularly for businesses importing or exporting goods and services to other European countries. We also work with Newhaven Port to develop and support inspection regimes which ensure that only safe and compliant goods are imported and available to the public.

1.2 Employment and productivity

Delivery outcome: The county is an attractive place to live, work and do business

We will build on the county's economic strengths and unique characteristics to drive economic growth in sectors with the most potential to grow and provide employment. We will build on the areas where the county performs strongly, such as the creative industries, the visitor economy, construction, engineering, health and social care, and food and drink production. We will also look to the future to attract and retain new businesses that will provide the jobs of tomorrow.

We will continue to deliver programmes for local businesses, to support job creation and sustainable growth, and will deliver the Newhaven Town Deal Grants programme on behalf of Lewes District Council.

We will continue to work with the district and borough councils in East Sussex to implement the schemes and projects funded by the Government through their Town Deals and Levelling Up Fund, Levelling Up Partnerships and the new Long Term Plan for Towns.

Following a Government reorganisation of Local Enterprise Partnerships, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) closed in 2024/25. The Council has

taken on responsibility for legacy SELEP funded projects and programmes. During 2025/26 we will also take on the strategic economic planning and business representation functions. This will involve the Council working with partners through Team East Sussex, our local economic strategic advisory board, to develop an investment plan for the area.

1.3 Local infrastructure

Delivery outcome: Individuals, communities and businesses thrive in East Sussex with the environmental and social infrastructure to meet their needs

Businesses can only thrive if they have the local infrastructure they need and access to the right skills in the local workforce. The Council's highway maintenance contract with Balfour Beatty Living Places includes strong quality requirements, carbon reduction targets and social value benefits, including providing apprenticeships and training and community benefits. We are continuing to put resources into our highways to maintain safe road conditions. This includes a programme of resurfacing and patching work along with a larger programme of surface dressing, which helps prolong the life of a road.

We also coordinate street works, deliver public realm schemes and local transport infrastructure improvements to cope with the changing but increasing demand on the network. A number of infrastructure projects will continue or be delivered in 2025/26, including improvements to Terminus Road in Eastbourne, walking and cycling improvements in Eastbourne and Bexhill and progressing the project to replace Exceat Bridge. Following the adoption of the Local Transport Plan 4 in 2024/25, we will update the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and Bus Service Improvement Plan as well as developing new Rail and Freight Strategies in 2025/26.

Business in the 21st century needs modern digital infrastructure. Our e-Sussex project to rollout super and ultra-fast broadband across the county has improved access to services, jobs and education, and has helped support flexible working.

We are now closing our final broadband contract to provide higher broadband speeds for residents and businesses with over 99% of the county now having access to superfast speeds of over 30mbps and 72% having access to gigabit-capable speeds. We will continue to work with Government to support its plans to deliver gigabit-capable broadband infrastructure, ensuring East Sussex receives as much investment as possible and that any new contract generates social value benefits for our businesses and residents.

Transport for the South East (TfSE) is a sub-national transport body representing 16 Local Transport Authorities. TfSE's [Transport Strategy](#), first published in 2020, sets out how transport improvements can grow the economy of the South East. This was followed up by a 30-year strategic investment plan detailing the evidence-based interventions to meet the ambitions of the Transport Strategy. In 2025/26 TfSE will complete a refresh of the Transport Strategy which will include post-pandemic travel patterns, national policy direction and changes to trade arrangements through major international gateways.

The Council will continue to deliver its Bus Service Improvement Plan in 2025/26. The plan was developed following the launch of the National Bus Strategy 'Bus Back Better'. The East Sussex Bus Service Improvement Plan has begun to deliver the highest possible quality bus services to East Sussex residents and visitors that

provide frequent and comprehensive choice, reduces congestion, and makes a positive contribution to better air quality and decarbonisation. East Sussex received a funding allocation of £41.4m to March 2026, the third highest for shire/rural authorities, and the highest per head of population amongst these authorities. Changes to services that have been rolled out, or will be rolled out in 2025/26, include improvements to existing services, delivering flexible services, fare reductions and improvements to bus stop infrastructure.

The Council is part of the Environment Board for East Sussex and hosts the Sussex Nature Partnership and the Sussex Air Partnership. The Council will work with partners to develop a Local Recovery Strategy for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove in 2025/26, which is a requirement of the Environment Act. The Act also outlined a number of changes to waste and recycling services. We are working with our partners to implement these changes by 31 March 2026.

1.4 Workforce skills

Delivery outcome: The workforce has and maintains the skills needed for good quality employment to meet the needs of the current and future East Sussex economy

We want all local people to have the skills they need to succeed and for businesses to have access to a skilled workforce. We will work with post-16 providers, strategic partners, and businesses through Skills East Sussex (SES) and priority sector task groups to understand and respond to local skills needs and economic priorities. This includes the priorities set to be achieved by 2030 for recovery, upskilling the workforce, supporting the unemployed and looking ahead to the skills the economy will need for a net-zero and digitised future.

Through our partnerships we will deliver a range of programmes to improve careers provision for young people and promote and deliver work-based training via schemes such as Apprenticeships and T-Levels. We will support those who are furthest from the workplace through careers, pre-employment and digital inclusion initiatives.

We are a major employer in East Sussex and are committed to supporting the ongoing investment in continuous professional development of our staff. The Council has been paying the Apprenticeship Levy of approximately £1m per year since 2017. We have successfully implemented a workforce-based approach and have developed a strategy and action plan to maximise our draw down of the Levy to support employing new apprentices and to support current staff receiving qualifying apprenticeship training. We will continue to address identified areas of skills and employment shortages within the county by also using the levy scheme to fund apprenticeships in local small and medium businesses. From 2024/25 we have been able to pass on up to 50% of our annual Apprenticeship Levy spend in this way, compared to 25% previously. Given the new higher amount we are working to maximise this opportunity.

1.5 Our role

Delivery outcome: The value of our role as both a significant employer and a buyer of local goods and services is maximised

As a body with significant spending power in the county we constantly review our procurement processes to ensure they are accessible to local suppliers, maximise the use of local providers in the supply chains, and secure added economic, social and environmental benefits. The Council is also dedicated to its responsibilities on mitigating modern slavery in supply chains. Our updated Supplier Code of Conduct provides suppliers and officers with a practical approach to delivering positive activities and behaviours related to ethical and sustainable outcomes and aligns with our social value, net zero and modern slavery priorities.

The four year Planned Maintenance Framework, to manage and maintain building structures and systems such as heating, plumbing and electrics, is expected to deliver the equivalent of £5.4m worth of social value commitment (around 14% of the framework value). There is also a commitment to deliver 65% of the framework value through local supply chains. The commitments from the contractors who have secured a place on the Framework include delivering apprenticeships, creating local jobs, providing training to local small businesses, providing work experience for local schools and colleges and various employment initiatives, such as attending Skills Fairs and supporting the Open Doors project. In response to the current recruitment and retention challenges within certain occupational groups, the Council is seeking to maximise the use of apprenticeships, traineeships, intern arrangements and more flexible working arrangements in these areas as a way of attracting new talent. To support this we will attend events such as careers fairs to maximise our presence with job seekers. We are also linking in with organisations that support people back into employment to extend our reach into sections of the labour market that are underrepresented or face significant barriers to employment.

The adult social care sector in East Sussex provides employment for around 20,500 people. We will continue our key role in shaping and supporting a sustainable market so that the wider adult social care sector can continue to make a valuable contribution to the local economy.

1.6 Children

Delivery outcome: All children progress well from early years through school and into post-16 education, training and employment

We want local people to have the skills they need to succeed and all children to progress well from early years through school and into education, training and employment.

Our vision, as set out in our [Excellence for All Vision](#) 2024-2030, is for all children and young people in East Sussex to be part of an excellent, inclusive, and equitable education system. This system will foster a meaningful sense of belonging from early years through school and into post-16 education, training, and employment. Our inclusive system will be driven by outstanding leadership and supported by good governance. Young people and their families will feel confident, cared for and ready to reach their full potential. Excellence for All is a shared, long-term vision for our education system in East Sussex. It underpins the strategic work of our partnerships,

the Council, and our education providers as we drive towards an ambitious set of goals for 2030.

Our partnership infrastructure remains the key local mechanism for delivering our shared vision. This will be further supported as we work collaboratively to build capacity across the system for school-led improvement. It will also strengthen our multi-agency partnership across education, health, care, and economy. This is particularly important to fulfilling our set of responsibilities relating to vulnerable children and young people. This includes those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

To deliver this vision we will focus on improving outcomes for all pupils including those with SEND. We will work with educational settings, including nurseries, schools and colleges, to provide advice, support and training to enable them to deliver inclusive high-quality education to all children. We will continue to develop and commission a range of alternative provision for pupils who have been excluded or are at risk of exclusion. This includes introducing a new provider for the pupil referral unit in Spring 2025, and expanding our alternative provision directory. Working with partners across Children's Services we will develop and deliver a School Readiness Strategy which we plan to publish in September 2025. This Strategy will aim to ensure children are ready for school and lifelong learning and get the support they need early. Across all our work there is a commitment to ensuring we are building leadership capacity at all levels across the system and improving the transition of pupils between all phases of education. We will do this by careful targeting our services that support vulnerable pupils at key transition points and improving co-ordination of support across our partners.

Educational attainment is negatively affected by poor rates of attendance. We will maintain our focus on supporting schools. We will work closely with providers to secure good attendance. We aim to reduce the level of suspensions and exclusions for all groups of children and young people. We have set out how we will do this in our [Attendance Delivery Plan](#). We will provide support to families and monitor children and young people who have long-term poor attendance.

We will work with our partners to promote and secure participation in post-16 education and training. This includes support for vulnerable groups, and young people with special educational needs and disabilities. We will ensure that we prepare young people for work. We will do this by providing good-quality careers guidance and work experience. We will continue to provide targeted 1-to-1 support for vulnerable groups via the Youth Employability Service. We will implement robust tracking and data analysis. This will help inform interventions that will improve transition and progression to post-16 education, training, and employment.

We will continue to pilot key reforms outlined in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and Alternative Provision Green Paper Implementation Plan. East Sussex is one of thirty-one local authorities selected by the Government to take part in this national change programme.

1.7 Planned work

Examples of planned work during 2025/26

- We will develop an investment plan to help realise the aims of the new economic strategy

- We will deliver a digital tourism marketing plan to promote the county within the UK and internationally
- We will deliver at least 60% of the Council's circa £400m procurement spend through local companies
- We will make full use of the newly implemented Procurement Act 2023 and National Procurement Policy Statement to drive additional benefit from procurement
- We will work with stakeholders to further evolve the approach to social value, targeting areas where sector-specific factors require tailored approaches. This includes working with areas where supply chains are characterised by high levels of VCSE sector contribution
- We will work to improve the transition for children to post-16 education and to develop the range of provision on offer at post-16 including supported employment opportunities

Priority - Keeping vulnerable people safe

Priority Overview

Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults is one of our key priorities and responsibilities to the community.

There will always be children and adults who cannot be looked after at home by their families. For vulnerable children who cannot be looked after at home by their families, we aim to intervene early and find permanent or long-term placements for them through fostering or adoption where appropriate. We will be ambitious so that they can achieve their best. We will also ensure that vulnerable adults are safeguarded whether they are looked after at home or somewhere else.

2.1 Vulnerable people

Delivery outcome: All vulnerable people in East Sussex are known to relevant local agencies and support is delivered together to meet their needs

One of our key objectives is that there is an effective multi-agency early help and child protection system, which ensures that children and young people who are, or are likely to be, at risk of harm are identified, supported and protected. This is part of a wider multi-agency safeguarding system, underpinned by strong statutory multi-agency governance and scrutiny by the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership.

The Council is part of the Children and Young People's Trust network of organisations. Through the Trust we aim to work across public services such as health, social care, education, criminal justice and probation, in addition to working alongside partners in the statutory and voluntary sector, to progress our joint priorities.

We are investing in transformation programmes across the children's system, responding to national change to help drive improvements in outcomes and reduce costs. We will be responding to the national policy changes in guidance alongside our statutory agency partners to help drive improvements in outcomes and ensure that families receive the right help at the right time.

The number of children in our care and the complexity of children's needs has continued to rise. We want children to stay close to the people and places they know, where it is best for them to do so. This is not always possible because demand outstrips supply of care placements locally and nationally. We are working to overcome these challenges through investing in earlier intervention and support to families, further investment in recruitment and retaining our foster carers, and our ability to secure the right care for the right child for the right length of time, through an approach called Valuing Care.

As part of our work to support children to grow up in supportive, safe environments we will continue to support families with complex needs through the Government's Supporting Families programme. We continue to extend the number of teams and services taking a whole family approach both internally and also in the work we commission.

The Council has set five priorities for our Adult Social Care and Health services. These are prevention, waiting times, safeguarding, quality, and value for money. 'Prevention' refers to our work to ensure that people can stay healthy and

independent for as long as possible. 'Quality' refers to how we define, measure and continually improving the quality of our services and those we pay others to provide for us. These priorities have been informed by our Local Government Association Peer Review and, the financial context. They align to our residents' priorities in our adult social care strategy, and will help drive a range of work to deliver positive outcomes for residents.

The Council will work to ensure residents can receive timely Care Act assessments and reviews through our adult social care and health teams to support them to live as independently as possible. Where people are required to wait, we will ensure we prioritise their wellbeing and safety and strive for excellent communication.

We will continue our work to safeguard vulnerable adults through the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB). This is a multi-agency partnership, made up of statutory and voluntary partners as well as lay members, established to promote well-being and oversee Safeguarding Adults work county-wide. We will also introduce new reporting arrangements and oversight, to enable us to continually monitor and improve safeguarding.

It is important that vulnerable adults and their families can access the information and support they need. Health and Social Care Connect, the Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) contact centre, continues to provide a single point for information, advice and access to community health and social care services seven days a week, from 8am to 8pm.

The Council is a lead member of the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) which brings together the NHS, Local Authorities, and other partners in Sussex through the statutory Sussex Health and Care Assembly and NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board. The Council also jointly facilitates the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership with the local NHS, to ensure a strong focus on the health and care needs of the East Sussex population. This is driven by the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the priorities set out in our East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy Healthy Lives, Healthy People 2022 – 2027.

We will continue to pursue a range of projects and initiatives aimed at improving the mental health and wellbeing of East Sussex residents. We are committed to supporting people in crisis, including those at risk of suicide. We will work with colleagues across Sussex to progress the recommendations of the Sussex Suicide Prevention Strategy (2024-27). This is delivered through a local programme of activity, including work to reduce gambling harm and continuation of our efforts to reduce deaths at coastal locations.

We will continue to work in a cross-county partnership to ensure all migrants and the communities they settle in can achieve independence and wellbeing. East Sussex has welcomed arrivals from many countries through dedicated resettlement and visa schemes. We will continue to facilitate the East Sussex Migration Partnership to make sure we fulfil our duties and coordinate our activities with partners, including ensuring our communications about and with migrant communities are positive and inclusive and continuing to roll out staff awareness training.

2.2 Safe at home

Delivery outcome: People feel safe at home and well supported by their networks

We work with partners, including health services, police, ambulance, and fire and rescue services, to ensure people are safeguarded and able to live independently and free from abuse. We will raise awareness of safeguarding issues and enquire into concerns of abuse.

We support the most vulnerable families, helping them to find ways to manage independently and cope with problems so that they can stay together where possible and achieve better outcomes for children and parents.

Early Help services support families to tackle their problems before they become more difficult to reverse. We will continue to deliver this through an integrated service with health visitors as part of the 0-19 Early Help service alongside the continued development of Family Hubs. The aim is to provide earlier support and prevent escalation to more intensive specialist services as this is better for families and helps to manage demand for higher cost services. The new Early Intervention Partnership Strategy sets out a system wide approach, working with health, education and community and voluntary services to shape our priorities. Part of the delivery of the strategy work includes earlier identification of needs, keywork with vulnerable families and early years family support services integrated with delivery of the Healthy Child Programme by our health visitors. It will also include provision of earlier emotional wellbeing support and evidence-based youth work with vulnerable young people.

Our Early Help offer has been further enhanced by an investment in our Early Help level 2 keywork team. The team works in collaboration with education colleagues to ensure a joined-up approach to improving attendance, working with schools, young people and their families.

We also offer universal, open-access and drop-in early help services for children, families and young people where these are fully externally funded. We provide support to young people and families through our network of 11 family hubs and four youth centres.

We work in partnership to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse and help victims to stay safe from harm. This includes providing support services, raising awareness of domestic abuse across the county, and delivering our White Ribbon action plan. Through our partnership work we also continue to support East Sussex residents to address drug and alcohol misuse, sustain their recovery and to reduce the number of deaths of people receiving drug and alcohol treatment.

Our Trading Standards service helps to protect vulnerable people from exploitation such as rogue traders and cold callers. We also investigate food fraud, illicit tobacco and counterfeit alcohol to protect people from the increased risks associated with these. These services are provided in partnership with the police and other agencies to ensure an effective level of prevention and support work is offered to the residents and businesses of East Sussex.

2.3 Supportive relationships

Delivery outcome: Children grow up supported by enduring, loving relationships

Our aim is to ensure that all children grow up supported by enduring, loving relationships. We will continue to embed the family safeguarding approach and our Connected Families team which delivers earlier intensive multi-disciplinary support and interventions to families of children in need and children subject to child protection planning. This model involves professionals from different agencies working together to support families to identify and implement the changes they need to make to ensure children can remain safely at home.

2.4 Support services

People feel safe with support provided

While we aim to help people stay safe and independent, this is not always possible. For children, we will intervene early, for the minimum time necessary. Where children do need to be cared for, we will work with their wider family network. Where this is not possible, we will identify the right placement for the children's needs for the right amount of time, focusing on quality and best value. We are committed to enabling children to be reunified with their families where this is possible and safe to do. Vulnerable adults that cannot cope by themselves need to have support services that are safe and of good quality. We will continue to monitor satisfaction with our commissioned services including through service user evaluations.

Together with our residents and partners, the Council has developed What Matters to You, an adult social care strategy for the county. The strategy includes six residents' priorities for adult social care that complement and align to the strategic plans set locally in [Healthy lives, healthy people: East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board strategy](#) and the [Improving Lives Together strategy - Sussex Health and Care](#). The strategy will support delivery of the Council's vision for Adult Social Care and Health, where we want everyone in East Sussex to 'live in the place we call home, with the people and things we love, in communities where we look out for one another, doing the things that matter to us.' We will deliver key actions resulting from the strategy including developing new methods to deliver training, communicating more clearly what adult social care can offer, and ensuring our assessments and support are personalised and build on people's strengths.

2.5 Health

Delivery outcome: We work with the wider health and care system to support people to achieve the best outcomes possible

We will work collaboratively with partners in education, employment, housing and planning to achieve better health, building on community assets, social prescribing and resilience aligned to the wider programmes of the Sussex Shared Delivery Plan. The Council's One You East Sussex service provides support to people to quit smoking, improving their lives and the lives of those around them.

The [Sussex Integrated Care Strategy](#) Improving Lives Together builds on our [East Sussex Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#), and sets out our 5-year ambition for a healthier future for everyone in Sussex. The approach will have a greater focus on keeping people healthy, supporting all aspects of people's lives and the specific

needs of children and young people, as well as living well and ageing well as adults and having a good end of life. To support this a 5-year Shared Delivery Plan has been developed. The Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) includes our ongoing East Sussex collaborative programmes for children and young people, mental health and improving health outcomes. The SDP also includes the Sussex Health and Care Assembly's priority to maximise the potential of partnerships and a new joined-up community approach through the development of Integrated Community Teams, aligned to our five district and borough footprints.

The Council continues to work to support the care market in the county and ensure people receive the most appropriate level of care in the most appropriate setting. Discharge To Assess / Home First pathways support timely discharges from hospital freeing up capacity in the NHS. Our Joint Community Reablement team also support people discharged from hospital with their recovery, helping them to maintain their independence and reduce their need for ongoing care.

2.6 Planned work

Examples of planned work during 2025/26

- We will deliver a project to ensure adults can receive timely Care Act assessments and reviews to support them to live as independently as possible, and stay informed and safe while they wait
- We will continue to deliver the Safeguarding Adults Board strategic plan and develop how we monitor and improve safeguarding processes to keep adults safe from abuse and neglect
- We will work with partners to continue to implement Integrated Community Teams, with an initial focus on delivering proactive care to vulnerable people and those with complex needs
- We will further develop our early help offer, working in partnership with schools, health and VCSE sector to deliver even earlier support to children, young people and families and reduce demand on statutory services
- We will continue to implement the Connected Families service to enable more children and young people to live safely within their families
- We will work with the South East Regional Commissioning Co-operative to improve our ability to access the right homes for our looked after children, and develop integrated commissioning with health partners for children with more complex needs
- We will continue to deliver the actions in the adult social care strategy "What Matters To You", including work to improve our communication and information and provide personalised care and support
- We will support people who have been a victim of sexual violence and domestic abuse through the specialist domestic abuse and sexual violence services
- We will continue to help prevent vulnerable people from becoming a victim of mass marketing fraud and intervene if people have already become a victim
- We will continue to protect people from the increased risks associated with food fraud, illicit tobacco and counterfeit alcohol through the risk based investigations undertaken by Trading Standards

Priority - Helping people help themselves

Priority Overview

Whilst we must keep vulnerable people safe, people prefer and need to be independent. If we can encourage families and communities to work together to build better local communities, meet local need, and support individuals to stay independent, we can meet our objectives of breaking dependency, while reducing demand for services and therefore costs. Helping people to be self-supporting will become increasingly important as the resources available to public services decline.

3.1 Putting people first

Delivery outcome: Commissioners and providers from all sectors put people first when providing services and information to help them meet their needs

One of the best things we can do to support people is to focus very clearly on their needs when designing and providing services and when we make information available so people can help themselves.

Our focus is to provide people with the support they need as early as possible to help them remain healthy and independent. When they need them, our services will be provided by integrated health and care teams, meaning their care will be more efficient and personal, delivered by one system.

By providing support as early as possible it should mean that people don't need health and care services as much. But when they do, we will make sure they can get services quickly, easily and, before they reach crisis point.

We want to ensure that local people receive the right support, in the right place, at the right time. This may mean they access support and use services differently. We aim to empower them with the knowledge of how to best to live well, use available health and social care services, and how to best get the support they need.

We will provide information and advice for all those seeking care and support. We will provide support that reduces the need for social care in the longer term and/or prevents the need for a more expensive service. We will continue to work with health partners to support hospital discharge. We will also work with partners in the NHS and the VCSE, and with carers and carers' organisations, to develop a new strategic carer's partnership plan to help support the needs of carers. This will include increased identification of carers taking account of those who may not access services as early as others such as carers from minority communities, those living with disabilities, or those with multiple caring roles.

We provide online access to information, for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, about services and expertise available in the area from a range of local organisations, including providers of education, health and social care. We will use feedback from service users to improve the quality and accessibility of this information and address any gaps.

We help improve the lives and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, helping them to achieve their full potential at home, in school, educational settings and in their communities. This includes being well-prepared for adult life. Our [Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy](#) sets out how we will work across education, social care, and health to improve access to provision and support for

children and families. We will carry out statutory assessments of children with SEND where there are significant barriers to learning and we will work with educational settings to secure the right education provision and support them.

We are committed to ongoing co-production and participation activities to ensure the voice of children and young people and their families and users of adult support services is central to the development of services and decision making.

3.2 Maintaining independence

Delivery outcome: The most vulnerable get the support they need to maintain their independence and this is provided at or as close to home as possible

It is often best if people in need of care and support receive this at home, if possible, with the help of friends and family. We work to ensure that people's homes are safe, providing access to care services, and personal budgets so that people can choose the care and support they need.

We will develop our community equipment offer through expanding equipment assessment capacity with a Trusted Assessor approach and providing advice and self-assessment options for people who choose to purchase equipment.

Education is a protective factor against many of the risks to good mental health and wellbeing that face children and young people across East Sussex. Working with partners to deliver the East Sussex SEND Strategy, we will provide opportunities for schools and settings to develop communities which promote good mental health and wellbeing.

Mental Health Support Teams (MHSTs) continue to operate in 94 targeted schools, covering approximately 85% of our school age population. The teams deliver high quality interventions to support children and young people with mild to moderate difficulties who are referred to the service. 30% of referred children are identified by schools as having SEND and all staff are trained in adapting materials for neurodivergent children. Since summer 2023, the team has expanded to offer support for all other schools in East Sussex to support the development of a whole-school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as providing direct support for parents and carers.

Packages of training for school staff have now been developed, including support for Senior Mental Health Leads and training on understanding trauma and anxiety. Our priorities for the forthcoming year include improving schools' understanding of self-harm and suicide prevention, as well as working with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to ensure schools are making appropriate referrals to services and consulting with MHSTs where children and young people have higher level needs to ensure children have their needs met.

3.3 Local mutual support systems

Delivery outcome: Through working well with the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, individuals, families and communities are supported to thrive

People, families and communities across East Sussex have huge potential to thrive and to support each other. There is a substantial infrastructure of both public and voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector work across the county that can seek to help local people achieve their ambitions.

We work with partners and residents across the county to help local communities thrive and tackle some of the most difficult issues that impact on people's happiness and wellbeing, such as loneliness.

We are working with partners across health, social care, VCSE and others to increase community and personal resilience in East Sussex. We aim to increase volunteering, improve and coordinate support to strengthen communities, and help individuals to improve their own health and well-being and take action to prevent disease and ill health.

The Council is working to commission a Community and VCSE Development Programme. The programme will strengthen the shift to more person-centred and community-based approaches to health and wellbeing. It will embed ways of working which improve the health of the population, mobilise assets within communities, encourage equity and social connectedness, and increase people's control over their health and lives.

The Council provides cost of living support webpages to help residents access information about money advice, employment and skills, and how to access benefits and grants. The Council is also part of a multi-agency financial inclusion steering group with representatives from a range of statutory sectors and the VCSE sector. Amongst its priorities is to maximise income by administering Government funds to alleviate hardship and targeted communications to help residents access benefits, in particular people who are seldom heard or at risk of poor outcomes.

Collisions on our roads can have a terrible human cost. We will complete 24 infrastructure schemes at high-risk sites in 2025/26 to improve the safety on our road network. Cycling supports an active lifestyle, benefitting fitness and general wellbeing. To encourage cycling and improve road safety we will deliver Bikeability training to 4,000 pupils and complete 350 Wheels for All sessions in 2025/26.

3.4 Living Healthier Lives

Delivery outcome: We work to reduce health inequalities and maximise opportunities for our residents to live healthier lives

Health inequalities are avoidable, unfair and systematic differences in health between different groups of people. We will ensure that tackling health inequalities is a principle applied throughout all aspects of our business planning processes and service delivery.

Our Public Health service aims to improve life expectancy and the quality of life by addressing health inequalities with partners which include the Government, the Sussex Integrated Care System, district and borough councils, education, business, and the VCSE sector. We will address local need and Public Health programmes will be delivered (in line with the conditions and statutory obligations of the Public Health Grant) to ensure our residents have better beginnings, and healthier and longer lives. We will work in a wide range of settings through local outbreak planning and management, screening, immunisation and emergency planning and preparedness, to ensure the combined efforts of all relevant agencies and professions have the maximum impact. We will take steps to reduce smoking prevalence, understand and reduce alcohol-related harm, and create healthy and green spaces – particularly for those living with highest levels of deprivation. This includes using behaviour change

approaches to help entrenched smokers and supporting earlier diagnosis and smoother transitions of care to reduce alcohol-related harm.

The Council has developed a prevention strategy for Adult Social Care that describes how we will support and enable people to grow and maintain their wellbeing and independence for as long as possible. In 2025/26 we will set out an action plan to deepen our systematic approach to prevention (both within the Council and in collaboration with a range of people and organisations) and build on our work to sustain and improve people's physical wellbeing.

3.5 Planned work

Examples of planned work during 2025/26

- We will continue to develop the Local Offer website which provides information and advice to families and children with SEND
- We will continue to communicate our enhanced mental health and emotional wellbeing (MHEW) information, advice and guidance offer, working in partnership with the wider Sussex MHEW system to ensure consistency in signposting young people, families and professionals for MHEW support
- We will continue to work with partners to identify carers in the community and help them access the support they need, through our Carers Partnership Plan
- We will help people to maintain their independence by providing rehabilitation support services and intermediate care
- We will develop an action plan to deliver our new Adult Social Care Prevention Strategy including setting out a systematic approach to prevention and building on our work to sustain and improve people's physical wellbeing
- We will help people to quit smoking through our One You service, reach entrenched smokers, and close smoking-related health inequalities
- We will deliver road safety training for the most vulnerable road users in the county through Bikeability training and Wheels for All sessions
- We will design and implement road safety infrastructure schemes at high-risk sites to make our roads safer

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

Priority Overview

This priority underpins all our activities and is a key measure of success for all our priority outcomes. It applies to all the resources available for East Sussex, not only within the Council, but across the public sector, voluntary community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector and private partners, and within local communities. We will work as a single unified organisation to deliver our priorities; ensuring high quality, streamlined services are commissioned and developed in partnership; working to reduce demand for services and focusing on our residents and communities. We will ensure that the decisions we take are sustainable both now and for the future, ensuring they provide best value for money and support our ambitions to become carbon neutral.

4.1 Carbon Neutral

Delivery outcome: To help tackle Climate Change East Sussex County Council activities are carbon neutral as soon as possible and in any event by 2050

We will build on our earlier work to ensure Council activities are carbon neutral as soon as possible and in any event by 2050. We will implement our updated corporate Climate Emergency Plan for 2025/26. This includes reducing the carbon emissions from our buildings. Between 2009 and 2024 we invested £14.8m into over 260 projects. These have generated total estimated savings on energy bills of over £1m per year.

We aim to improve the environmental and financial sustainability of our assets. We work to make our premises more efficient, to reduce running costs and carbon emissions. To support this, during 2025/26, we will seek new opportunities for appropriate grant funding, as well as areas to implement our buildings maintenance programme. We will also deliver energy efficiency training and support behavioural change to help deliver these outcomes. Alongside this we will also continue to encourage sustainable transport options for business travel and commuting.

We will continue to reduce carbon emissions from our supply chain, by asking more suppliers to report on, and reduce, their carbon emissions. We will begin to adapt key services to the unavoidable effects of climate change.

4.2 One Council

Delivery outcome: We work as one Council

We will ensure that we work in a unified way so that resources are focused on delivering our priority outcomes. We will focus on delivering services close to local people in the most cost-effective way possible.

We will continue to work to use our assets as effectively as possible, exploiting technology as an enabler for providing efficient services, and ensuring that we use our property assets as efficiently as possible by aligning them to our needs.

We will continue to review our office estate as part of this work, ensuring that it is the right size for our future needs. Continued hybrid working practices will drive efficiency, as well as significantly reducing carbon emissions through a reduced requirement for staff travel and a reduced office footprint.

We continue to identify new opportunities to harness technology, including Artificial Intelligence, to support new ways of working, connect with partners and support the delivery of resident and community outcomes through our Strategic Digital Framework. We will put people at the centre of our approach to implementing new technologies, whilst ensuring that these support our focus on reducing costs and enhancing productivity.

The Oracle programme will continue the work to implement a new Oracle Fusion system to replace the Council's core finance and Human Resources systems. The improvements delivered by the new system will help support our new working practices, and will provide greater resilience to maintaining essential activities such as paying staff and suppliers.

4.3 Working in partnership

Delivery outcome: We work in strong and sustained partnership with the public, voluntary community, social enterprise and private sectors to ensure that our collective resources and influence are used to deliver maximum benefits

We will work in partnership across the public, VCSE, and private sectors to ensure that all appropriate available resources are used to deliver maximum benefits to local people. We will be proactive in making the best use of our assets, sharing property, staff, technology and data with partners so we work as efficiently as possible, removing duplication and increasing flexibility.

Orbis, our partnership with Surrey County Council and Brighton and Hove City Council for some of our back-office services, has allowed us to provide efficient and resilient services while achieving savings which are being used to sustain services for residents of all three areas.

The Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES) is a partnership programme made up of the County Council, district and borough councils, NHS Trusts, Emergency Services, NHS Sussex, Further Education, the VCSE sector and other Government bodies from within East Sussex. The partnership aims to make best use of public sector assets, working together collaboratively where possible to deliver benefits in asset utilisation and in other property based areas such as Carbon Net Zero, Regeneration and Housing, and Health and Social Care. During 2025/26 SPACES will continue to deliver One Public Estate and Brownfield Land Release Fund projects ranging from medical centre investments to town centre regeneration and provision of housing. SPACES will continue to work in partnership to find new opportunities for improving efficiency within all the contributors' property portfolios.

4.4 Value for money

Delivery outcome: Ensuring we achieve value for money in the services we commission and provide

Across all our resources, services, and partnerships we will seek to achieve the maximum positive impact to deliver our priority outcomes for people in East Sussex.

We will ensure the best value for money from our spend with third parties. We are actively working to strengthen our planning processes to enable better strategic decision making in this area and maximise value for money.

We are continuing to review our properties (excluding schools) to assess the needs of the organisation and ensure these are being used in the most efficient way. This includes reviewing the potential for income generation or capital receipts from our properties.

Work continues to ensure our office spaces are suitable for Council staff and services. We will continue to look for opportunities to rationalise our property estate, ensuring that the property portfolio is an appropriate size and fit for purpose. Any reduction will add to the strategic decisions we have made to reduce our occupied footprint and maintain suitable service standards. A reduction in occupied office space will also support the Council's commitment to reduce carbon emissions.

We continue to identify opportunities to use digital and data capabilities across the Council, in particular Generative Artificial Intelligence and process automation, to enhance productivity and help free up staff capacity for key corporate priorities.

4.5 Maximising funding

Delivery outcome: Maximising the funding available through bidding for funding and lobbying for the best deal for East Sussex

We will continue to take all opportunities to raise the distinct funding needs of the Council with Government, to address the long-term fair funding needs of our services. We will work with partners to press for the best outcomes for the county, lobbying with our local MPs and with our local, regional and national partners including the South East 7, County Councils Network (CCN), Society of County Treasurers and Local Government Association (LGA).

However, the current and forecast economic conditions present the most difficult financial outlook ever facing the Council. There is a substantial and growing gap between the costs of delivering essential services and the incoming resources to support East Sussex residents, communities and businesses with the core services they need in the future.

4.6 Employer of choice

Delivery outcome: We are an employer of choice and support our staff to achieve and develop, ensuring we have the workforce we need to deliver services both now and in the future

We are committed to the development of our workforce and continue to embed our People Strategy into our culture. The People Strategy, which has been updated for 2024-2027, helps support our managers and staff to respond to the changing and challenging environment in which the Council is operating, most notably future savings requirements and recruitment and retention challenges. The Strategy is built around the four pillars of: i) Employee Health and Wellbeing, ii) Employee Engagement and Inclusion, iii) Performance and Development, and iv) Leadership and Management.

We will continue to develop our employer brand 'We Choose East Sussex' and continue our work to establish the Council as an 'employer of choice'. This work includes making updated recruitment materials available, as well as ensuring our workforce policies and approaches support individuals to remain in work, such as our financial wellbeing services, wellbeing offer, occupational health and absence management services.

We continue to support the development of our managers to ensure they are best equipped to meet the continuing challenges we face as an organisation. This is informed by our Leadership and Management Capability Framework which sets out the management and leadership expectations in support of the Council's priority outcomes and operating principles.

4.7 Planned work

Examples of planned work during 2025/26

- We will continue on the pathway towards our ultimate carbon reductions goals, seeking to reduce carbon emissions and make our buildings more energy efficient
- We will maintain or reduce the number of working days lost to sickness absence
- We will update the Council's computer estate during 2025/6 to move to the Windows 11 operating system, thereby ensuring we remain on a supported system
- We will replace the existing telephony system with a new system that will underpin modernisation of working practices and reduce our carbon footprint
- We will continue to review our use of assets to ensure effective utilisation of our property and land, with consideration of cost and carbon implications

Equality objectives

The Council recognises the diverse needs of our communities and is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and diversity in employment and service delivery. We challenge discrimination and encourage respect, understanding and dignity for everyone living, working and visiting East Sussex. We do this through our influence in the community, strategic planning and policy formation in employment and service delivery. The Council has reviewed its equality objectives and updated them to define our focus for 2025/26:

- We will lead by example, delivering services that are informed by the views, strengths and needs of our communities and providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for our staff. To help achieve this we will take practical actions on equality, diversity and inclusion as set out in the Corporate Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2025-26.
- We will ensure that the workplace adjustment pathway and other associated changes are implemented and integrated and will review and evaluate their impact.

Revenue budget: gross and net

The charts below show how we will spend your revenue budget money in 2025/26, and where the money will come from (gross and net). More information on our revenue budget can be found in our [financial budget summary](#) which explains the difference between the gross and net budgets.

Please note that totals may differ from the sum of components due to rounding.

How we will spend your money (gross)

Chart to be added

How we will spend your money (net)

Chart to be added

Where the money comes from (gross)

Chart to be added

Where the money comes from (net)

Chart to be added

Revenue Spending

The diagrams below are a visual representation of our gross revenue budget for 2025/26. They also show East Sussex County Council spend inclusive of partnership working, where we are the lead authority. More information on our revenue budget can be found in our [financial budget summary](#).

Please note that totals may differ from the sum of components due to rounding.

Chart to be added

Adult Social Care

Chart to be added

Public Health

Chart to be added

Business Services

Chart to be added

Children's Services

Chart to be added

Communities, Economy & Transport

Chart to be added

Governance Services

Chart to be added

Revenue Data

Table to be added

Capital programme

Capital programme: projects in the year ahead 2025/26

The planned capital programme supports the Council's Capital Strategy to 2045/46. It comprises targeted basic need investment that supports services in the delivery of priority outcomes and is supported by a planned programme to 2034/35. It includes providing for essential school places, investments in roads and transport infrastructure, support for climate change initiatives, enhancing the life of existing assets and ensuring they are fit for purpose, as well as support for strategic investment. Details of the full current capital programme are in our [financial budget summary](#) and updated as part of our State of the County report. Below are examples of key projects (to be added) that will be undertaken in 2025/26 at a cost of £(to be added) million.

Chart to be added

Economic Growth & Strategic Infrastructure

Example work to be added

Community & Social Care Facilities

Example work to be added

Highways & Structural Maintenance

Example work to be added

Integrated Transport Schemes

Example work to be added

Schools

Example work to be added

Building Maintenance & Efficiency

Example work to be added

Climate and Environment Projects

Example work to be added

Capital Resourcing 2024/25 to 2026/27

Because capital projects may take several years to deliver, we need to know how we will fund the full £(to be added) million programme to 2026/27. Details of where this money will come from are given below.

Chart to be added

Promoting equality of opportunity

Equality impact assessment summary report for Council Plan 2025/26

Date of assessment: 02/01/2025

Summary of findings: There are no disproportionate negative impacts on people sharing any specific characteristics. The Council Plan as a whole is designed to support our objectives to promote equality and to address known inequalities. Many services or programmes will have benefits for all people in the county, across all legally protected characteristics. The Council's approach is to integrate consideration of equality impacts into planning, implementation and monitoring of all activities, so specific needs, assets, barriers and opportunities are assessed individually to maximise positive impacts and avoid or minimise negative impacts.

Summary of recommendations and key points of action plan: Our Council Plan priorities and delivery outcomes are designed to help address identified inequalities in outcomes for different groups in our local community and incorporate our equality objectives. We will take additional actions to mitigate against the potential issues we have identified.

Potential issues	Mitigating actions
Identification of potential disproportionate impacts or issues relating to people sharing specific characteristics that have not been identified at this stage.	The planned work set out in the Council Plan will be taken forward through specific programmes of activity within individual directorates. Robust equality analysis will be undertaken on each planned activity, to ensure that these are designed and implemented in a way that maximises opportunities to promote equality, whilst minimising any adverse impacts.
Our resources do not reflect the demand for services, which may mean we will have to adjust our services to match the funds we have.	Priorities will continue to be defined based on local evidence of need and what works and makes a difference locally. We will continue to be democratic, open and honest in determining the best level and quality of services we can provide, within available resources, and in communicating priorities.
The population of East Sussex is changing, and people's needs and assets change.	We will work closely with partners, including the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector, to make the most of opportunities, resources and links with diverse communities available locally. We recognise that VCSE organisations are often the first to recognise and respond to the needs of diverse communities and that they provide safe, accessible, and inclusive spaces for individuals, groups and the wider community, that support inclusion and belonging.

<p>COVID19 and the lockdowns and social restrictions have impacted some people and communities sharing protected characteristics worse.</p>	<p>We continue to work to understand the ongoing ways in impacts of the pandemic on people sharing specific characteristics and to address the inequalities that have been revealed and/or worsened. Work across the Council and with statutory and VCSE partners is co-ordinating support and identifying ways to maximise access for vulnerable residents to the advice and support available. Portfolio Plans and service plans identify tailored responses to identified needs.</p>
<p>The effects of the national rise in the cost of living are being disproportionately felt by some people more than others, linked to their characteristics.</p>	<p>Work across the Council and with statutory and VCSE sector partners is co-ordinating support and identifying ways to maximise access for vulnerable residents to the advice and support available. Portfolio Plans and service plans identify tailored responses to identified needs.</p>

We will also continue to monitor our impact on outcomes for the people of East Sussex, including differences between outcomes for people sharing different protected characteristics. We will use this information to inform future business planning activities as part of our annual State of the County exercise. We will report quarterly on progress against the activities in the Council Plan, including any issues, as part of our Council Monitoring reports. We will also report on our progress in delivering the actions in this Council Plan that will advance equality as part of our Annual Report, which will be published in Autumn 2025.

More information on equality and diversity can be found on our [equality and diversity web page](#).

Performance measures and targets

Targets – Driving sustainable economic growth

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Deliver East Sussex Skills priorities for 2021-2026	(a) Deliver six interventions that meet the Skills East Sussex priorities b) Deliver six embedded numeracy interventions)	a) Deliver six interventions that meet the Skills East Sussex priorities b) 400 people enrolled on the Connect to Work employment programme c) Eight Level 3 sector related Skills Bootcamp courses delivered (subject to funding)	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Training providers are developing a curriculum which is informed by sector skills evidence and our local businesses are actively engaged in supporting training provision in the county, supporting sustainable economic development
East Sussex Careers Hub	(East Sussex Careers Hub to support schools to achieve an average of 5 national benchmarks 210 Industry Champions support schools and colleges in the county)	To be set March 2025 (subject to funding)	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Our young people and adults are helped to become aware of careers opportunities available to them, supporting sustainable economic development
Deliver new economic strategy	(Economic strategy endorsed and adopted by key stakeholders including Team East Sussex)	Investment Plan developed	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Support the creation of the conditions needed to sustainably grow the East Sussex economy

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Design and deliver a tourism digital marketing plan Proposed new measure	New measure 2025/26	Deliver a marketing plan including 2 thematic headline campaigns	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	The visitor economy is grown by raising the visibility of Sussex, enhancing perceptions, increasing the number of visitors to the coast, increasing length of stay and spend.
Job creation from East Sussex Programmes	(45 jobs created)	To be set March 2025 subject to funding	To be set 2025/26 (subject to funding)	To be set 2026/27 (subject to funding)	The East Sussex economy has grown and more jobs are created by supporting the growth of businesses through capital investment
Percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance	(7%)	7%	7%	7%	A satisfactory standard of road condition across all road types is achieved and maintained
Percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance	(8%)	8%	8%	8%	A satisfactory standard of road condition across all road types is achieved and maintained
Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance	(25%)	25%	25%	25%	A satisfactory standard of road condition across all road types is achieved and maintained

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Deliver a range of Family Learning programmes across East Sussex to provide high quality learning opportunities for parents/carers and their children to develop English, maths and language skills and to support a culture of learning in the family (subject to external funding)	(1,300 enrolments across Family English, maths and Language (FEML) and Wider Family Learning (WFL) programmes)	1,300 enrolments across Family Learning programmes	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Families, particularly those from areas of deprivation, have intergenerational learning opportunities and develop positive attitudes to learning
Provide volunteer supported IT for You sessions in libraries	(2,000 sessions available)	1,750 people attend sessions	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	People have support to go online, improve their digital skills, increase their employment chances and have better access to health information and services
The number of businesses receiving advice and support through training and bespoke advice provided by Trading Standards	(350)	350	350	350	Businesses in East Sussex are equipped to thrive, comply with the law, and are supported to “get it right first time”
The Council's Apprenticeship Levy strategy supports the Council's workforce development and training plans	(Where appropriate Standards exist, to ensure apprenticeship training is available and taken up (subject to the needs of the business), which addresses skills shortages in the Council)	Where appropriate Standards exist, to ensure apprenticeship training is available and taken up (subject to the needs of the business), which addresses skills shortages in the Council	To be set in 2025/26 once the detail of the new Growth and Skills Levy is understood	To be set in 2025/26 once the detail of the new Growth and Skills Levy is understood	Apprenticeships in the Council provide a positive opportunity for staff to develop and grow, enhancing the Council's workforce and career opportunities

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
The percentage of Council procurement spend with local suppliers	(60%)	60%	60%	60%	Local businesses are supported and we help drive economic growth and employment in the county through use of our purchasing power
Economic, social and environmental value committed through contracts, as a percentage of our spend with suppliers	(≥10.0%)	≥10%	Measure to be reviewed/replaced 2026/27	Measure to be reviewed/replaced 2026/27	The Social Value Measurement Charter is used to provide robust measures in eligible contracts that commit suppliers to deliver the Council's social value objectives
The percentage of eligible 2 year olds who take up a place with an eligible early years provider	(Equal to or above the national average)	Equal to or above the national average	Equal to or above the national average	Equal to or above the national average	All children engage, attain and progress well from early years into education, training and employment
The percentage of pupils achieving a "good level of development" at the Early Years Foundation Stage	(Ac Year 2023/24 Equal to or above the national average)	Ac Year 2024/25 Equal to or above the national average	Ac Year 2025/26 Equal to or above the national average	Ac Year 26/27 Equal to or above the national average	All children engage, attain and progress well from early years into education, training and employment
Average Attainment 8 score for state funded schools	(Ac Year 2023/24 44.0)	Ac Year 2024/25 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2025/26 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2026/27 TBC March 2025	All children engage, attain and progress well from early years into education, training and employment

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving at least the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	Ac Year 2023/24 40.2% Nat Av: 45.5%	Ac Year 2024/25 40.5%	Ac Year 2025/26 41.0%	Ac Year 2026/27 41.5%	The gap for disadvantaged pupils at all Key Stages is kept as small as possible so that all children attain and progress well from early years into education, training and employment
The average Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils	(Ac Year 2023/24 30.5)	Ac Year 2024/25 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2025/26 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2026/27 TBC March 2025	The gap for disadvantaged pupils at all Key Stages is kept as small as possible so that all children attain and progress well from early years into education, training and employment
The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 16, including unknowns	(Equal to or below 5%)	Equal to or below national average	Equal to or below national average	Equal to or above national average	Young people participate in education, training or employment with training until they are at least 18 improving their long-term employment and health prospects
The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 17, including unknowns	(Equal to or below 7%)	Equal to or below national average	Equal to or below national average	Equal to or above national average	Young people participate in education, training or employment with training until they are at least 18 improving their long-term employment and health prospects

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Average Attainment 8 score for Looked After Children (LAC)	(Ac Year 2023/24 19)	Ac Year 2024/25 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2025/26 TBC March 2025	Ac Year 2026/27 TBC March 2025	Looked after Children participate in education, training or employment with training until they are at least 18 improving their long-term employment and health prospects
The percentage of LAC participating in education, training or employment at academic age 16 (Year 12)	(80%)	80%	80%	80%	Looked after Children participate in education, training and employment with training until they are at least 18 improving their long-term employment and health prospects
The percentage of LAC participating in education, training or employment at academic age 17 (Year 13)	(70%)	70%	70%	70%	Looked after Children participate in education, training and employment with training until they are at least 18 improving their long-term employment and health prospects

Targets – Keeping vulnerable people safe

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Median waiting time for Adult Care Act assessments	(≤21 days)	≤21 days	To be set	To be set	Care Act assessments are provided in a timely manner to identify what needs the person may have and what outcomes they are looking to achieve to maintain or improve their wellbeing
Median waiting time for Carers' Care Act assessments	(≤7 days)	≤7 days	To be set	To be set	Carers' Care Act assessments are provided in a timely manner to identify what needs the carer may have and what outcomes they are looking to achieve to maintain or improve their wellbeing
Median time from proposed start date to actual start for adult reviews	(≤6 days)	≤6 days	To be set	To be set	Adult reviews are provided in a timely manner to ensure the person's care and support plan remains relevant to their needs and aspirations
Median time from proposed start date to actual start date for carer reviews	(≤6 days)	≤6 days	To be set	To be set	Carer reviews are provided in a timely manner to ensure the person's care and support plan remains relevant to their needs and aspirations

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Number of people with a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) episode awaiting allocation of a Best Interest Assessor	(≤650 people)	≤650 people	To be set	To be set	People with a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) episode are allocated a Best Interest Assessor (residential and nursing) in a timely way to assess whether the person needs to be deprived of liberty in their own best interests
Percentage of potential safeguarding concerns initially reviewed within 3 days	(≥99%)	≥99%	≥99%	≥99%	Potential safeguarding concerns are reviewed in a timely manner to protect the person's right to live in safety, free from abuse and neglect
Percentage of Health and Social Care Connect referrals triaged and progressed to required services within 24 hours	(95%)	95%	95%	95%	Services are provided in a timely manner
Health and Social Care Connect – % of contacts that are appropriate and effective (i.e. lead to the provision of necessary additional services)	(95%)	95%	95%	95%	Contacts from health professionals are appropriate and effective
The percentage of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have improved safety/support measures in place upon leaving the service	(90%)	90%	90%	90%	Vulnerable people who have been affected by domestic violence are enabled to feel more in control of their life, and better able to make decisions to increase their safety

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
When they leave the service the percentage of those affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse who have improved coping strategies	(88%)	88%	88%	90%	Vulnerable people who have been affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse, are protected and provided with skills which enable them to be more in control of their lives and more optimistic about the future
Deaths in drug and alcohol treatment as a proportion of all in drug and alcohol treatment	New measure 2025/26	≤1.2% rolling 12-month figure	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	The number of drug and alcohol related deaths amongst people in treatment is reduced
Rate of children with a Child Protection Plan (per 10,000 children)	(64.4 (661 children))	59.8 (620 children)	56.9 (590 children)	54.1 (562 children)	Children at risk from significant harm are kept safe
Rate (of 0-17 population) of referrals to children's social care services (per 10,000 children)	(≤556)	≤556	≤556	≤556	Children at risk from significant harm are kept safe
Rate (of 0-17 population) of assessments started by children's social care services (per 10,000 children)	(≤558)	≤558	≤558	≤558	Children at risk from significant harm are kept safe
Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000 children)	(61.8 (635 children))	61.8 (640 children)	58.1 (602 children)	54.6 (566 children)	Children at risk from significant harm are kept safe
The number of active interventions for vulnerable people who have been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse	(200)	200	200	200	Residents of East Sussex are safe in their own home and protected from criminals. Residents are empowered to feel safe and supported to say "no" to criminals and deter and disrupt criminal activity

Targets – Helping people help themselves

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Road Safety: Deliver targeted cycle training activities to vulnerable road users	(Deliver Bikeability Training to 4,000 individuals and 100 Wheels for All sessions)	Deliver Bikeability Training to 4,000 individuals and 350 Wheels for All sessions	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	The confidence and skills of cyclists is improved by delivering cycle training to cyclists through targeted Bikeability training sessions delivered at Schools and training centres across the county
Road Safety: Implement infrastructure schemes on identified high risk sites/routes to improve road safety	(Implement 24 safety schemes)	Implement 24 safety schemes	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	The number of crashes and casualties at identified high risk sites/routes sites is reduced through the implementation of infrastructure improvement schemes to improve outcomes for residents, businesses and visitors to East Sussex
National outcome measure: Proportion of working age adults and older people receiving direct payments	($\geq 25.2\%$)	$\geq 25.2\%$	$\geq 25.2\%$	To be set 2025/26	Adults who require support are able to live as independently as possible
Number of people receiving support through housing related floating support	(7,282)	5,461	5,461	5,461	Adults can maintain their independence

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Percentage of respondents who strongly agree or agree that the professionals who are involved in organising and providing their care communicate well with each other and share information to make sure their support is the best it can be (Listening To You)	(>56%)	>56%	>56%	>56%	Through joint and partnership working as part of the East Sussex Health and Care Partnership and Sussex Integrated Care System all available resources are used to deliver maximum benefits to local people and achieve value for money
The proportion of people who received short-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing support	(>90.5%)	>90.5%	>90.5%	To be set 2025/26	Effective early intervention is provided to ensure people are given the support they need as quickly as possible, also reducing the need for more expensive intensive interventions at a later date ensuring the most effective use of resources
National outcome measure: Achieve independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care	(>90%)	>90%	>90%	To be set 2025/26	Effective early intervention is provided to ensure people are given the support they need as quickly as possible; also reducing the need for more expensive intensive interventions at a later date ensuring the most effective use of resources
Proportion of all new EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks (a) Including Exception Cases (b) Excluding Exception Cases	((a) 65% (b) 70%)	(a) 65% (b) 70%	(a) 65% (b) 70%	(a) 65% (b) 70%	All children and young people with SEND with an agreed need for an EHCP receive their plan in a timely way to ensure that they receive appropriate support to achieve their full potential

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
The proportion of respondents to the feedback surveys who agree that things have changed for the better as a result of getting targeted support from the 0 – 19 Early Help Service	(80%)	80%	80%	80%	The services provided are making a difference to the lives of service users
The number of smokers that achieve a four-week quit of the smokers that have set a quit date	New measure 2025/26	≥50% four-week quits achieved	≥50% four-week quits achieved	≥50% four-week quits achieved	There is an increase in the number of people who quit cigarette smoking and lead healthier lives
The percentage of people who achieve 5% weight loss as part of a One You East Sussex intervention	New measure 2025/26	≥25%	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2025/26	There is an increase in the number of people who achieve clinically significant weight loss and lead healthier lives

Targets – Making best use of resources

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Number of working days lost per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employee due to sickness absence in non-school services	(9.10)	9.10	9.10	9.10	The use of resources is maximised and staff and customer wellbeing improved
Deliver the Property Asset Investment Strategy	(6 business cases completed)	8 business cases completed	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Income generation from property and capital receipts are optimised and our strategy helps promote economic growth across the county

Performance measure	2024/25 Outturn (Target)	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2025 – 2028 Outcome Summary
Review use of corporate buildings	(Implement reduction of office footprint identified in 2023/24)	Implement reduction of office footprint at County Hall identified in 2024/25	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	Our corporate buildings better utilise space and enable new ways of working, leading to reduced cost of occupancy in our core corporate buildings
Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations	(50% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 6,211 tonnes CO2e))	57% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 5,403 tonnes CO2e)	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	A reduction in the amount of CO2 arising from Council operations is recorded on an annual basis, thus reducing the cost of energy to the Council and shrinking the carbon footprint in line with our carbon budget
Progress on implementation of Carbon reduction schemes	(23 energy saving schemes implemented)	10 energy saving schemes implemented	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	The Council's carbon footprint is reduced and our operations support a more sustainable approach going forward
Delivery of Corporate Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan actions planned for the year	(Deliver the key actions within the action plan)	To be set January 2025 pending approval of Corporate Equality Board and CMT	To be set 2025/26	To be set 2026/27	We lead by example, delivering services that are informed by the views, strengths and needs of our communities and providing an inclusive and supportive working environment for our staff
Achievement of key milestones for the Workplace Adjustments Review	(Implementation and monitoring of new Workplace Adjustments activity)	Workplace adjustments integrated and a review completed	Not applicable - review expected to be completed in 2025/26	Not applicable - review expected to be completed in 2025/26	The key changes will be implemented and reviewed by 2025/26. The work will then be subject to periodic review on a needs basis to ensure it continues to meet the evolving needs of the organisation

State of the County data

We review a wide range of data to help us understand the context for our plans and the impact we are having through our work and in partnership. We publish this data each year in [State of the County – Focus on East Sussex](#), when we start the planning process that leads to this Council Plan. A selection of this data is listed below. Unless otherwise stated the data refers to 2022/23. Where possible official national statistics are used for comparison with the England average.

Driving sustainable economic growth

2022/23

Measure	East Sussex	England
Percentage of working age residents (16-64) with a level 4 qualification or above (includes degrees, Higher National Certificate, Higher National Diploma and others)	33.8% (2021)	37.1% (2021)
Percentage of working age residents (16-64) with no qualifications or qualified only to National Vocational Qualification 1	10.6% (2021)	12.4% (2021)
Annual gross full-time earnings, median average (residence based)	£34,028 (2023)	£35,100 (2023)
Percentage of working age population (16-64) in employment	73.1% (2023)	75.7% (2023)
People claiming unemployment benefits (JSA and Universal Credit) percentage of population 16-64 year olds at March	3.5% (2024)	3.9% (2024)
New business registration rate per 10,000 people over 16	47.5 (2022)	64.6 (2022)
New houses built, total completed / total affordable	1,702 / 714 (2022/23)	-
Average Attainment 8 score per pupil state funded secondary schools	43.6	46.3
Average Progress 8 score for state funded secondary schools	-0.19	-0.03

2022/23

Measure	East Sussex	England
Percentage of pupils who achieved a 9-5 pass in English and maths GCSEs	41.0%	45.3
Average point score (APS) per entry for level A levels (age 16-18)	32.46	34.16
Attainment of A level students (age 16-18) average point score (APS) per entry, best 3	31.27	34.68
Attainment of A level students (age 16-18) % achieving grades AAB or better at A level, of which at least two are in facilitating subjects	9.18%	15.8%

Keeping vulnerable people safe**2022/23**

Measure	East Sussex	England
Rate per 10,000 (aged 0 –17 population) of Looked After Children	61.5	71
Rate per 10,000 (aged 0-17 population) of children with a Child Protection Plan	64.8	43.2
Percentage of children who ceased to be looked after adopted during the year ending 31 March	7%	9%
Percentage of people (65 and over) who were still at home 91 days after discharge from hospital	91.2%	82.3%
Suicide rate per 100,000 of population three-year average	11.6 (2020 - 2022)	10.3 (2020 - 2022)
Hospital admissions caused by unintentional and deliberate injuries in children aged 0-14 years, rate per 10,000 resident population	107.6 (2021/22)	84.3 (2021/22)

Helping people help themselves

2022/23

Measure	East Sussex	England
Percentage of children aged 4-5 years with excess weight (overweight or obese), by postcode of child	22.1%	21.3%
Percentage of children aged 10-11 years with excess weight (overweight or obese) by postcode of child	32.6%	36.6%
Percentage of adults (aged 18+) classified as overweight or obese	62.7% (2021/22)	63.8% (2021/22)
Percentage of children aged 4-5 years who are underweight	0.5%	1.2%
Percentage of children aged 10-11 years who are underweight	1.3%	1.6%
Long-term support needs of younger adults (aged 18-64) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population per year	13.9	14.6
Long-term support needs of older adults (aged 65 and over) met by admission to residential and nursing care homes, per 100,000 population per year	488.2	560.8
Proportion of older people aged 65 and over who received reablement services following discharge from hospital	1.4%	2.9%
The outcome of short-term services: sequel to service: proportion of people who received short-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing support or support of a lower level	94.7%	77.5%
Emergency hospital admissions due to falls in people aged 65 and over per 100,000	2,523 (2021/22)	2,100 (2021/22)
Number of people killed or seriously injured on the roads	362 (calendar year 2023)	-