

## **Communities, Economy and Transport – Q2 2024/25**

### **Summary of progress on Council Priorities, issues arising, and achievements**

#### **Economy and environment**

##### **Employability and Skills**

The Council aims to support young people in the county by giving them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their careers. 190 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q2 with activities such as career talks and Open Doors workplace visits. A series of events for employers are being held as part of an ongoing recruitment drive to increase the number of Industry Champions.

39 pupils attended Open Doors visits in Q2. The Careers Hub also ran 2 Apprenticeship Roadshow events in Hastings and Eastbourne. 850 young people, parents and adult job seekers attended the events. The Careers Hub also ran 2 Teacher Encounter events in July. These events help teachers, tutors and career leaders to embed the latest innovations from industry in the curriculum.

The Council also helps adults improve their numeracy skills through Multiply, a government-funded programme. 8 numeracy interventions were in progress in Q2, in addition to the 6 begun in Q1. East Sussex College Group is delivering maths interventions for the hospitality sector and a maths through payslips short course.

##### **Apprenticeships**

We are continuing to see the steady rollout of apprenticeships for all new and many existing frontline staff within residential and community-based Children's Services. These apprenticeships have now superseded the previous mandatory training within Children's Services at a significant financial saving. The most recent cohort of management training offered by the Apprenticeship & Qualifications team within ASC enrolled within Q2. This included the apprenticeship tailored for those members of staff who aspire to be managers and are taking on some supervisory responsibilities in order to achieve this qualification. In addition, four new entry level apprentices have started during Q2 in administration positions.

The new Government is making significant changes to what the apprenticeship levy can be used for and we are expecting to see more information on the detail of these changes in Q3. It is currently anticipated that there will be a stronger focus on entry level apprenticeships, targeting young people. Under the management of a new organisation 'Skills England', entry level apprenticeships will be shorter in length and reported to be more flexible in the ways employers can apply them. Further proposed changes include Level 7 apprenticeships no longer being eligible to be funded from the Levy. These are equivalent to master's degrees and typically aimed at senior leaders.

##### **Cultural investment and recovery**

The Local Visitor Economy Partnership agreed a Strategy for Growth in Q2. This strategy was also signed off by the interim board of the partnership as well as East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council. The strategy is now being designed.

##### **Business support programme**

The Economic Development team has designed and commissioned a new business support programme. The programme, Big Ambitions Essentials, will assist growing businesses with specialist advice. Digital Islands run the programme which will match businesses with specialist advisers in a number of fields. These fields will include marketing, search engine optimisation, E-commerce, product development and finance, amongst others. Up to 18 hours of support is available to help businesses grow and employ additional staff. The programme is scheduled to run until the end of March 2025.

## Broadband

The Broadband Project is moving through formal contract closure processes which will take several months due to the data that needs to be verified. The Broadband Team is continuing to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its Project Gigabit programme. The team have attended meetings with BDUK and Cityfibre, who have been appointed as the BDUK's supplier for East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. Cityfibre have updated the Council's Highways team on Project Gigabit, and the potential work that is likely to be needed on the county's roads, pavements and other publicly maintained land. The Broadband team have also continued to work with BDUK and Cityfibre on the social value requirements in the contract. There hasn't been any update on the possible reopening of the Gigabit Voucher scheme run by BDUK. The team is continuing to push for details of how BDUK plans to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county.

## Job creation

The Newhaven Business Grants programme has created 14 jobs so far in 2024/25. We expect the programme to create further jobs during the rest of 2024/25. We expect the Rural Business Grants programme to create over 32 further jobs during 2024/25.

## Environment and climate change

We have continued to reduce the Council's carbon footprint. We work both across the organisation and with partners to develop and deliver county-wide carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. We have also continued to develop the local nature recovery strategy. In Q2 this included:

- launching a new round of the bicycle salary sacrifice scheme for employees. The new scheme runs until March 2025. We are also offering personalised travel planning for new starters
- beginning work on the development of a housing retrofit strategy with partners
- carrying out the first phase of an assessment on whether it would be feasible to develop a solar farm on the closed landfill site at Pebsham. This will be followed up by a more detailed technical assessment and review of the potential business case
- continuing our extensive engagement with stakeholders to inform the priorities for the local nature recovery strategy. A final version of the strategy is scheduled to be published in summer 2025

## Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined with the statutory determination period in Q1. 100% of County Council development applications were also determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time during Q2.

## Highways, transport and waste

### Highways improvements and road condition

We completed 214 patch repairs across 142 sites in Q2. This has had an impact on the condition of the network and has enabled us to carry out works above and beyond our usual programmes.

We replaced or repaired 64 road signs in Q2, with another 47 identified for cleaning. We delivered 163 minor drainage schemes in Q2. These schemes included replacing gully covers and clearing significant blockages. 23 larger schemes were also carried out. We have allocated the whole budget for the refresh of road markings for 2024/25, with 377 jobs completed in Q2.

We repaired 3,552 potholes in Q2, with 2,551 of these being carriageway potholes; the remainder were primarily footway potholes. Amongst the carriageway potholes, we completed

94.2% of these within the required timescales. We completed 13 road improvement schemes in Q2 to improve the condition of the roads. Overall, 81 road improvement schemes have been completed in Q1 and Q2 2024/25. Improved planning enabled the highways contractor to work more efficiently this year and complete more schemes earlier in the year before the start of wetter weather in the autumn.

### **Road safety**

12 road safety schemes were implemented in Q2. A further 10 schemes are due to be completed in Q3, while we're awaiting quotes for 2 additional schemes. The Council runs courses aimed at giving children and adults the skills they need for riding their bikes on the road. 141 Bikeability courses were delivered to 966 individuals in Q2. 106 'Wheels for All' sessions were also delivered to 1,328 attendees.

### **Transport and parking**

The Council has received 90% of the £4.441m allocated to East Sussex from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund. The funding will support the delivery of on street electric vehicle charge points in the county. The remaining 10% will be paid once a draft contract has been approved by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV). Cabinet has approved the plan to proceed with the procurement of a contract to deliver the charge points. This procurement is scheduled to begin following the balance of payment from OZEV and their approval of the procurement documentation. This was scheduled to happen in Q2, but the latest timetable issued by OZEV suggest this this will now be in Q3. The aim is to proceed with the procurement of a chargepoint operator in Q3.

After a review of the Council's pay and display parking machines, a number of machines which had low usage numbers and an alternative machine within a short walking distance were removed in Q2. The Planning Committee reviewed parking restrictions in Rother in July 2024. The committee approved changes to the restrictions and these are scheduled to be implemented in Q3.

### **Waste**

The Q1 outturn (reported a quarter in arrears) for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially was 55%. There is forecast to be more compostable material in 2024/25, driven by weather conditions early in the year. This will offset an expected reduction in dry mixed recycling.

### **Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites**

We completed 80% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q2. Planned vegetation work has continued over the summer. Although the wet weather has increased the amount of reactive work, lowering the outturn in Q2, performance is still exceeding the target for the year.

### **Communities**

#### **Trading Standards**

Trading Standards made 47 active interventions in Q2, to protect vulnerable people. 21 interventions were to new victims identified through support sessions. These victims were offered advice and support. 26 interventions were direct interventions with new victims who were offered individual support. This included an intervention to ensure a refund of £3,000 to an elderly resident who paid for work from known rogue traders. 124 businesses received training or advice from Trading Standards in Q2.

#### **Libraries**

6,602 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in Q2, exceeding the target of 5,200. There were 117 assemblies in schools, promoting the challenge to over 27,000 children. Promotion

also took place in libraries, in printed media and on social media. 95 volunteers were recruited to support the challenge in libraries, giving them experience in the workplace. 3,880 children completed the challenge and certificates are being prepared to celebrate their success.

301 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q2. 133 were in Wider Family Learning programmes. 58 were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes. There were also 100 further enrolments on combined programmes. 20 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q2. The Education and Skills Funding Agency have announced that the type / categorisation for Family Learning is going to change, with the focus no longer solely on Family Learning, English, Maths and Language and Wider Family Learning programmes. As a result, it is recommended that the target for 2024/25 is amended **(ref i)**.

### **Revenue Budget Summary**

The CET revenue budget is £72.495m and is forecast to underspend by £609k. There are underspends across the department following the recent introduction of vacancy and other spending controls during August and September and these account for £241k of the current forecast underspend. The main business as usual underspend is in Waste in Transport and Operational Services where higher than budgeted recycling income and lower Private Finance Initiative contract prices due to lower inflation, is partly offset by reduced electricity income. The budgeted Waste Risk Reserve draw requirement of £1.6m is not required mainly due to slippage and reduced requirement for improvements at transfer stations **(ref iv)**. The largest overspend is in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted **(ref v)**. There has been additional spend on consultants' fees to support the increase in planning applications/appeals and associated works **(ref vii)**. The overspend in Economy reflects the potential cost of closing Adult College for Rural East Sussex that is over and above the current reserve balance **(ref vi)**. £659k of the planned Parking saving will not be achieved this year due to lower levels of income than was forecast and delays in removing parking machines and therefore the need to continue to pay the costs **(ref ii)**. The £60k Environmental Services saving will not be achieved and will be addressed going forward **(ref ii)**.

### **Capital Programme Summary**

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £68.927m and there is slippage of £18.167m, spend in advance of £8.041m, and overspend of £246k. The largest slippage is in the Bus Service Improvement Plan scheme where the upcoming elections has restricted the application for traffic regulation orders and so construction will start in 2025/26 **(ref ix)**. There has been delays and negotiations with the bridges contractor and so works on bridges will not start until after the winter period when the ground is not waterlogged **(ref xv)**. Objections to compulsory purchase orders will be heard at the planning enquiry, delaying progress on the Exeat Bridge scheme **(ref xiii)**. There has been a realignment of works between the phases of the Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package resulting in a net spend in advance of £1.416m. Phase 2b detailed design will be completed in Q3, so works can start in January 2025 **(ref xi and xii)**. No new projects have been started on the Climate Emergency scheme pending a decision on the future funding of the programme **(ref viii)**.

The main spend in advance is in Highways Structural Maintenance where additional patching will be undertaken this year in preparation for the large programme of surface dressing planned for the summer of 2025/26 **(ref xiv)**. The Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling Package received lead member approval in September, but works will not start until 2025/26 **(ref x)**.

**Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)****Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth**

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q2 24/25 outturn	Note ref
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)	2,051 enrolments	<b>Target amendment requested from:</b> 1,300 enrolments across Family English, maths and Language (FEML) and Wider Family Learning (WFL) programmes <b>To:</b> 1,300 enrolments across Family Learning programmes	<b>G</b>	<b>AD</b>			Q2: 301 enrolments undertaken	<b>i</b>

**Savings exceptions 2024/25 (£'000)**

Service description	Original Target For 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Parking	-	745	86	659	-	ii
Environmental Services	-	60	-	-	60	iii
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>60</b>	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes 1			0	0	0	
<b>Total Savings and Permanent Changes</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>805</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>659</b>	<b>60</b>	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding <sup>2</sup>	Part of reported variance <sup>3</sup>	Total	Note Ref
	-	659	659	
	-	60	60	
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>719</b>	<b>719</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Where agreed savings are reasonably unable to be achieved other permanent savings are required to be identified and approved via quarterly monitoring.

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

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

**Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)**

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	5,903	(4,256)	1,647	7,366	(5,808)	1,558	(1,463)	1,552	89	
Customer and Library Services	9,589	(4,061)	5,528	9,554	(4,193)	5,361	35	132	167	
Communities	3,368	(927)	2,441	3,125	(1,034)	2,091	243	107	350	
Transport & Operational Services	114,213	(71,357)	42,856	118,736	(76,538)	42,198	(4,523)	5,181	658	iv
Highways	21,556	(4,941)	16,615	21,338	(4,311)	17,027	218	(630)	(412)	v
Economy	3,999	(1,829)	2,170	4,056	(1,833)	2,223	(57)	4	(53)	vi
Planning and Environment	5,833	(4,595)	1,238	6,479	(5,051)	1,428	(646)	456	(190)	vii
<b>Total CET</b>	<b>164,461</b>	<b>(91,966)</b>	<b>72,495</b>	<b>170,654</b>	<b>(98,768)</b>	<b>71,886</b>	<b>(6,193)</b>	<b>6,802</b>	<b>609</b>	

**Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)**

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q2	Actual to date Q2	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q2 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
The Keep	1,096	1,096	172	-	130	42	-	42	-	
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	700	700	70	-	70	-	-	-	-	
Peacehaven Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	773	519	725	48	-	48	-	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	65	52	65	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	19	246	(246)	(246)	-	-	
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	141	5	141	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	547	12	129	418	-	418	-	
Climate Emergency Works	8,859	8,859	3,336	1,753	2,218	1,118	-	1,118	-	viii
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	963	963	758	220	1,000	(242)	-	-	(242)	
Flood Management SuDS	420	420	218	25	298	(80)	-	-	(80)	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	135	74	135	-	-	-	-	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	4,541	4,541	400	-	-	400	-	400	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	3,181	3,181	180	73	250	(70)	-	-	(70)	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	18,500	18,500	6,933	445	1,418	5,515	-	5,515	-	ix
BSIP Passenger Transport	3,815	3,815	1,251	311	1,251	-	-	-	-	
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	5	0	5	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Gateway Road	-	-	-	636	-	-	-	-	-	
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	746	69	1,053	(307)	-	-	(307)	
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	990	8	170	820	-	820	-	x
Hailsham/Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	134	36	200	(66)	-	-	(66)	

## APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q2	Actual to date Q2	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q2 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	2,079	206	821	1,258	-	1,258	-	xi
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	22	258	2,696	(2,674)	-	-	(2,674)	xii
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,646	66,646	3,157	1,337	3,412	(255)	-	-	(255)	
A22 Corridor Package	3,393	3,393	2,143	-	2,143	-	-	-	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	379	7	123	256	-	256	-	
Emergency Active Travel - Tranche 2	(3)	(3)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	150	6	6	144	-	144	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	316	(15)	350	(34)	-	-	(34)	
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	9,689	9,689	706	294	400	306	-	306	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	5,340	185	2,980	2,360	-	2,360	-	xiii
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	120	1	3	117	-	117	-	
Urban Tree Challenge	262	262	85	-	22	63	-	63	-	
Core Programme – Highways Structural Maintenance	499,675	499,675	24,704	14,780	29,017	(4,313)	-	-	(4,313)	xiv
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	504	42	250	254	-	254	-	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	7,945	900	3,073	4,872	-	4,872	-	xv
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,561	39,561	3,835	1,406	3,659	176	-	176	-	
Core Programme - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme	2,961	2,961	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement	10,417	10,417	588	269	588	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)</b>	<b>969,180</b>	<b>971,296</b>	<b>68,927</b>	<b>23,933</b>	<b>59,047</b>	<b>9,880</b>	<b>(246)</b>	<b>18,167</b>	<b>(8,041)</b>	