

MINUTES

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

MINUTES of a MEETING of the EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, at County Hall, Lewes on 20 MAY 2025 at 10.00 am

Present Councillors Roy Galley (Chairman), Abul Azad (Vice Chairman), Sam Adeniji, Matthew Beaver, Colin Belsey, Nick Bennett, Bob Bowdler, Charles Clark, Chris Collier, Anne Cross, Godfrey Daniel, Johnny Denis, Penny di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Kathryn Field, Gerard Fox, Nuala Geary, Keith Glazier, Alan Hay, Julia Hilton, Ian Hollidge, Stephen Holt, Johanna Howell, Eleanor Kirby-Green, Tom Liddiard, Philip Lunn, Wendy Maples, Carl Maynard, Matthew Milligan, Steve Murphy, Sarah Osborne, Peter Pragnell, Paul Redstone, Christine Robinson, Pat Rodohan, Phil Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Alan Shuttleworth, Bob Standley, Colin Swansborough, Georgia Taylor, David Tutt, John Ungar and Trevor Webb

1. To elect a Chairman of the County Council

Councillor Azad (Vice Chairman of the County Council) in the Chair

1.1 The following motion as moved by Councillor Glazier and seconded –

‘To elect Councillor Galley to serve as Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year’.

1.2 The following motion was moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded –

‘To elect Councillor Daniel to serve as Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year’.

1.3 Voting was by roll call, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE ELECTION OF COUNCILLOR DANIEL AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

Councillors Cross, Collier, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, Maples, Murphy, Osborne, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar, and Webb.

FOR THE ELECTION OF COUNCILLOR GALLEY AS CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNTY COUNCIL

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Councillors Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Geary, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Milligan, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

ABSTENTIONS

Councillors Adeniji, Daniel Shing, and Stephen Shing.

- 1.4 The Vice-Chairman declared Councillor Galley elected as Chairman for the ensuing year. Councillor Galley made a declaration of acceptance of office and took the Chair.

Councillor Galley in the Chair

- 1.5 The Chairman thanked the Council for re-electing him as Chairman for a further year.

2. To appoint a Vice Chairman of the County Council

- 2.1 The following motion as moved by Councillor Glazier and seconded –

‘To elect Councillor Azad to serve as Vice Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year’.

- 2.2 The following motion was moved by Councillor Robinson and seconded –

‘To elect Councillor Daniel to serve as Vice Chairman of the County Council for the ensuing year’.

Voting was by roll call, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR DANIEL AS VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillors Cross, Collier, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, Maples, Murphy, Osborne, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar, and Webb.

FOR THE APPOINTMENT OF COUNCILLOR AZAD AS VICE CHAIRMAN

Councillors Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, Clark, di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Geary, Glazier, Hay, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Milligan, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

ABSTENTIONS

Councillors Adeniji, Daniel Shing, and Stephen Shing.

- 2.3 The Chairman declared Councillor Azad elected as Vice Chairman for the ensuing year. Councillor Azad made a declaration of acceptance of office and took his seat as Vice Chairman.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 March 2025

- 3.1 RESOLVED – to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the County Council held on 20 March 2025.

4. Apologies for absence

- 4.1 Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Carolyn Lambert, James MacCleary and Brett Wright.

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5. Chairman's business

CHAIRMAN'S ACTIVITIES

5.1 The Chairman reported that he had attended a number of engagements since the last County Council meeting, including: a Royal Visit at Newhaven Fort, Lunch with the Lord Lieutenant, Forest Row Parish Council – Meet and Greet, Fundraising Event at Seaford Rugby Club with the Mayor of Seaford, Black Tie and Tiara Charity Ball with the Mayor of Eastbourne, Ashdown Forest Meeting with Mark Pearson, Chief Executive, Spring Tea with Head of Buxted CE Primary School and Seahaven Branch of Royal Society of St George – St George's Day Service followed by refreshments The Chairman also reported that he hosted a Volunteering Networking Event at Hellingly Community Hub.

5.2 The Chairman thanked the Vice Chairman for his ongoing support, including his attendance at Lord Brett McLean's 50th Birthday Charity Fundraising Concert at Pebsham Community Hub, Official switching on Ceremony of SUDwell's new manufacturing equipment (with Lord McLean), Mayor Making Ceremony with Rye Town Council and Mayor (Elect), VE Day Celebrations and Anniversary Tea with Bexhill Town Council, VE Day Celebrations with the Chair of Wealden District Council, Grand Opening of Collington Park Lodge, and a quiz hosted by the Chair of Rother District Council.

PETITIONS

5.3 The following petitions were presented before the meeting by Councillors:

Name of Presenting Councillor	Subject of Petition
Councillor Cross	Stop Stagecoach from changing the 51 service to Eastbourne to hourly from half-hourly.

PRAYERS

5.4 The Chairman thanked Right Revered William Hazlewood, Bishop of Lewes, for leading the prayers before the meeting.

6. Record of Delegations of Executive Functions

6.1 In accordance with the Constitution, Councillor Glazier presented a written record to the Council of the appointment of the Deputy Leader and appointments to the Cabinet, their portfolios and his delegation of executive functions. A copy of the Leader's report is attached to these minutes.

7. Declarations of Interest

7.1 Councillor Holt declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest in Item 15 on the agenda, as Leader of Eastbourne Borough Council.

8. Reports

8.1 The Chairman of the County Council, having called over the reports set out in the agenda, reserved the following for discussion:

Governance Committee report – paragraph 1 (Appointment of Members to Committees, Sub-committees, Panels and other bodies).

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Cabinet report – paragraph 1 – (Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Inspection of East Sussex Local Area Partnership)

People Scrutiny Committee report – paragraph 1 (Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service), paragraph 2 (Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service)

Standards Committee report – paragraph 1 (Annual report of the Standards Committee)

9. Report of the Governance Committee

Paragraph 1 (Appointment of Members to Committees, Sub-committees, Panels and other bodies).

9.1 Councillor Glazier moved the reserved paragraph, including the revised allocations circulated, of the Governance Committee's report.

9.2 The motion was CARRIED.

10. Appointments to Committees and Sub-Committees

10.1 Councillor Bennett moved, and it was seconded, that appointments be made to the Committees and Sub-Committees, listed in item 8 of the agenda, in accordance with the published list of nominations from political groups.

10.2 The motion was CARRIED.

11. Appointment of Members to other Committees and Panels

11.1 Councillor Bennett moved, and it was seconded, that members be appointed to serve on the Committees and Panels listed in item 9 of the agenda, in accordance with the political balance provisions and the published list of nominations from political groups.

11.2 The motion was CARRIED.

12. Confirmation to the continuation of other bodies

12.1 Councillor Bennett moved, and it was seconded, that the bodies listed in agenda item 10 be continued, that the political balance provisions shall not apply to these Panels and that members be appointed by the Chief Executive as the need arises.

12.2 The motion was CARRIED.

13. Appointment to the Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel

13.1 Councillor Bennett moved, and it was seconded, that the political balance provisions would not apply to the membership of the Discretionary Transport Appeal Panel and that members be appointed in accordance with the published list of nominations from political groups.

13.2 The motion was CARRIED (with no member voting against).

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14. Appointment of Chairs and Vice Chairs

14.1 The following motion, moved by Councillor Bennett and seconded, was CARRIED:

To appoint the following members to positions listed below:

Committee	Chair	Vice-Chair
Regulatory	Chris Dowling	
People Scrutiny Committee	Howell	Field
Place Scrutiny Committee	Beaver	Hilton
Audit Committee	Swansborough	Fox
Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Belsey	Robinson
Governance Committee	Glazier	
Planning Committee	Liddiard	Lunn
Pension Committee	Fox	
Standards Committee	Belsey	

15. Questions from members of the public

15.1 A copy of the questions from members of the public and the answers from Councillor Claire Dowling, Lead Member for Transport and Environment, and Councillor Carl Maynard, Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health are attached to these minutes. Five supplementary questions were asked and responded to.

16. Report of the Cabinet

Paragraph 1 – Area Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) Inspection of East Sussex Local Area Partnership

16.1 Councillor Standley moved the reserved paragraph of the Cabinet's report.

16.2 The paragraph was noted after the debate.

17. Report of the People Scrutiny Committee

Paragraph 1 - Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to close the Linden Court Day Service for people with a learning disability and merge it with Beeching Park day service

17.1 Councillor Howell moved paragraph 1 of the People Scrutiny Committee report.

17.2 The following amendment was moved by Councillor Tutt and seconded:

The People Scrutiny Committee recommends the County Council to -

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☆ consider the matter in relation to the decision made by Cabinet on 25 February to reduce the funding for Linden Court and (delete the following wording) ~~what action if any to take~~ [add the following words] *refer the matter back to the Cabinet setting out the Council's views as set out below.*

The council's views are: Council wishes to thank the parents and carers of the Linden Court community for the work that they have done in surveying the families of the users of this facility and for presenting their findings to Councillors. In light of this information and the possible increase in costs to the Authority should Linden Court close, Council resolves this facility should be kept open pending work with the families, to assess the costs implications and that the outcome of these be reported to Cabinet as part of its reconsideration.

17.3 The amended motion was CARRIED.

Paragraph 2 - Call-in: decision made by Cabinet regarding the proposal to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service

17.4 Councillor Howell moved paragraph 2 of the People Scrutiny Committee report.

17.5 The following amendment was moved by Cross and seconded.

The People Scrutiny Committee recommends the County Council to -

☆ consider the matter in relation to the decision made by Cabinet on 25 February to reduce the funding for the Housing-Related Floating Support Service and (delete the following wording) ~~what action, if any, to take~~ [add the following words] *refer the matter back to the Cabinet setting out the Council's views as set out below.*

The council's views are:

- *Since the call in by People Scrutiny in March, District's & Boroughs have engaged in dialogue with BHT Sussex regarding contributing towards contract funding – Cabinet should examine these proposals before making a final decision.*
- *Cabinet should give adequate consideration to proposals from BHT Sussex for a reduced service at £2m*

(BHT Sussex who currently provide the service suggested an alternative proposal to reduce the contract value by £2 million (46% reduction) instead of the proposed 88.4%. They have indicated that this would enable 3,500 people to be supported based on the current commissioned service model and noted that further remodelling of the service could further increase the number of people supported and safeguard service quality and successful outcomes.)

- *Given that it is counterproductive to close services that will have to be restarted by the future unitary councils, Cabinet is asked to find funding from reserves to make up the £1m shortfall. (500k already committed by ESCC to continue + 5000k being committed by Ds&Bs + 1m shortfall to make £2m proposal of BHT Sussex)*
- *Given the rises in demand and costs for children's services, we would like the Cabinet to fully assess how cutting the homelessness support would impact the demand for children's services in the short to medium term and how this will affect the budget. (The Children's services team provided an answer to a question from their recent briefing about the impact of homelessness on children's services:*

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“Demand for homelessness prevention services is high across East Sussex, some areas of the county report rates of homelessness twice that of the England average. There are currently over 1,200 households living in temporary accommodation. This trend can have a significant negative affect on these households and is also creating an unsustainable financial pressure on the local system.”)

17.6 A recorded vote on the amendment was requested and taken. The amendment was LOST, the votes being cast as follows:

FOR THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Cross, Collier, Daniel, Denis, Field, Hilton, Holt, Maples, Murphy, Robinson, Rodohan, Scott, Daniel Shing, Stephen Shing, Shuttleworth, Swansborough, Taylor, Tutt, Ungar, and Webb.

AGAINST THE AMENDMENT

Councillors Azad, Beaver, Belsey, Bennett, Bowdler, di Cara, Chris Dowling, Claire Dowling, Fox, Galley, Geary, Glazier, Hollidge, Howell, Kirby-Green, Liddiard, Lunn, Marlow-Eastwood, Maynard, Milligan, Pragnell, Redstone, and Standley.

ABSTENTIONS

There were none.

17.7 As the Council had considered the matter and no other proposed courses of action having been tabled, the Chairman moved onto the next item.

18. Report of the Standards Committee

Paragraph 1 – Annual report of the Standards Committee

18.1 Councillor Belsey moved the reserved paragraph of the Standard Committee’s report.

18.2 The paragraph was noted after the debate.

19. Questions from County Councillors

19.1 The following members asked questions of the Lead Cabinet Members indicated and they responded:

Questioner	Respondent	Subject
Councillor Rodohan	Councillor Claire Dowling	Delays to Victoria Place, Eastbourne.
Councillor Murphy	Councillor Standley	Closure of Burfield Academy.
Councillor Tutt	Councillor Claire Dowling	Monitoring of bus service reliability.
Councillor Daniel	Councillor Claire Dowling	Traffic management on the A21.

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Councillor Scott	Councillor Glazier	Highway improvement works and impact on businesses in Sedlescombe Road North.
Councillor Stephen Shing	Councillor Claire Dowling	Repainting of single yellow lines.
Councillor Field	Councillor Claire Dowling	Lorries on Battle High Street

20. Urgent decisions

20.1 The Chairman informed the Council of two urgent decisions taken by the Cabinet at its meeting on 20 March, and 22 April 2025 under urgency provisions.

20.2 The report was received and noted.

THE CHAIRMAN DECLARED THE MEETING CLOSED AT 1.12 pm

The reports referred to are included in the minute book

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Delegations approved by the Leader of the Council – 20 May 2025

(a) *names of the County Councillors appointed to the Cabinet*

The Cabinet comprises the following members

Portfolio	Appointment
Strategic Management and Economic Development	Councillor Keith Glazier
Resources and Climate Change	Councillor Nick Bennett
Economy	Councillor Penny di Cara
Transport and Environment	Councillor Claire Dowling
Adult Social Care and Health	Councillor Carl Maynard
Children and Families (designated statutory Lead Member for Children's Services)	Councillor Bob Bowdler
Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	Councillor Bob Standley

(b) *the extent of any authority delegated to cabinet members individually as portfolio holders will remain as set out in the [Constitution of the County Council](#) or alternatively hard copies are available at County Hall, Lewes (please contact Member Services – 01273 335089) and below.*

In overall terms the areas of responsibility for each portfolio holder includes the following (subject to any subsequent amendment by the Leader at his discretion) principal services to be interpreted broadly. In accordance with the wishes of the Leader, principal services are not to be construed restrictively. In the event of any doubt in connection to a decision made by a Lead Member, the Leader confirms that he has delegated full executive authority to that decision maker:

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Portfolio	Scope
Strategic Management and Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chairing and managing the executive and its work • Any executive function including overall strategy and policy for the Council • Local Government Reorganisation and Establishment of a Mayoral Combined County Authority • Principal service area responsibilities: Communications Strategic Economic Planning Policy and Performance Health and Social Care Integration/Health and Wellbeing Board Equalities South East Seven Partnership Transport for South East (SNTB) Member Services all ancillary activities
Resources and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any executive function including strategy and policy for all corporate resources matters • Principal service area responsibilities: Financial Management Property asset management Risk management Procurement Internal audit ICT Personnel and Training Legal Orbis Coroner services Council lead on Climate Change all ancillary activities

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Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any executive function including strategy and policy for all economic development and regeneration and all ancillary activities Principal service area responsibilities Economic Development Culture Skills (shared with Education) all ancillary activities Trading Standards
Transport and Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any executive function including strategy and policy for all Transport and Environmental matters Principal service area responsibilities: Operational services Planning and developmental control Transport strategy Archives and records Customer Services Emergency Planning Gypsies and travellers Libraries Registration Services Road Safety Environmental and waste strategy all ancillary activities
Adult Social Care and Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any executive function including strategy and policy for all Adult Social Care and Public Health matters Principal service area responsibilities: Services for vulnerable adults including older people, learning disability, physical disability, mental health, public health and all ancillary activities Community Safety Voluntary Sector

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Children and Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any executive function including overall strategy and policy for all Children's Services (social care) matters• Principal service area responsibilities: Child protection and family support Fostering and adoption for children Residential care for children Other aspects of social care for children Youth justice Youth service all ancillary activities
Education and Inclusion, Special Educational Needs and Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Any executive function including strategy and policy for all Children's Services (education) matters• Principal service area responsibilities: Quality and standards in educational establishments Special educational needs School admissions and transport Early years and childcare School organisation and place planning Skills (shared with Economy) all ancillary activities

(c) *appointment to the position of Deputy Leader*

Councillor Bennett to be appointed Deputy Leader of the County Council

(d) *the terms of reference and constitution of the Cabinet and any executive committees together with the names of cabinet members appointed to them*

The terms of reference and constitution of the Cabinet and any executive committees will remain as currently set out in the Constitution of the Council

(e) *the nature and extent of any delegation of executive functions to local committees*

There is no delegation of executive functions to local committees

(f) *the nature and extent of any delegation to officers*

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The delegations of executive functions to Officers will be as set out in the Constitution. The delegations to Officers can be viewed via the following link:

[Constitution - Delegations to Officers](#) (Part 3 Table 6) or alternatively hard copies are available at County Hall, Lewes (please contact Member Services – 01273 335089)

Urgent Executive Decisions

There were no executive decisions taken during 2024/25 where the making of the decision was agreed in accordance with Regulation 11 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012.

Councillor Keith Glazier
Leader of the Council

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

1. Jeremy Richardson - Etchingham, East Sussex.

The water on the A265 near the junction of A267 has been an issue for many years, so why has it been allowed to persist for 5 years and when is it going to be resolved? It has been dug up on three occasions, the Council's contractor has told me it is a mains leak under a slab of concrete in the middle of the road, the water company insist it is not theirs. It is stated that water causes a great amount of damage to the roads, yet nothing has been done in 5 years.

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

East Sussex Highways has carried out several drainage investigations in the area which have shown our highway drainage system is functioning correctly. This, along with the presence of water during dry weather, supports our belief that the source of the water is not related to highway drainage, and would point to a water leak. We have notified the water company and will continue to pursue this avenue and will, if necessary, seek remedy through enforcement. The Highways Service will keep you updated.

2. Councillor Jo Walker – Hastings, East Sussex

I am the ward councillor in the ward of Ore, Hastings. We have a footpath on Victoria Avenue which has been collapsed and fenced off for at least three years now. The issue being that the footpath is next to woodland and badgers make their dens under the pavement, causing various areas of subsidence, leading to collapse. There are two areas currently fenced off. The section between is also uneven and in need of repair. I understand the need for a licence for work where badgers are present, but every autumn we are told the work will commence and it never does. Despite annual assurances that work would commence, no repairs have been undertaken. Given the need for a licence to work in areas inhabited by badgers, I would like to know: What specific actions are planned to restore and future-proof this footpath, so residents have a safe, usable pavement?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

East Sussex Highways (ESH) has been in contact with the owner of the land adjacent to the highway on Victoria Avenue, Hastings. The owner has consented ESH access to land for works associated with the management and control of the badger movements and the permanent works once designed.

Separately, ESH has also commissioned an ecology report that confirms the area may have active badger setts. Badgers and their setts are protected by law. It will be necessary for ESH to obtain a licence from Natural England as it is likely that the proposed works will disturb badgers in their sett and / or damage their sett.

At this stage, ESH is unable to be specific on actions and dates to re-open the footway until the badger issue is resolved.

Notwithstanding, ESH is committed to getting resolution to this challenging issue as soon as practically possible.

3. Andi Jaffay - Hailsham, East Sussex.

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What were the reasons for the Discretionary East Sussex Support Scheme (DESSS) fund being cut?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Historically, payment of the DESSS was based on the provision of a welfare grant to the local authority via the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). The actual ring-fenced grant ended in 2014/15. From 2015/16, in East Sussex, it was decided to continue the provision of DESSS on a discretionary basis and the service was consequently funded as part of core County Council budgets.

Prior to October 2018 the scheme provided food vouchers, utility vouchers, and assistance with the provision of white goods and household furniture. DESSS also provided some discretionary funding to the District and Borough Councils to provide loans for deposits and rent in advance payments.

In June 2018, following staff, public and key stakeholder consultation, Cabinet agreed a reduction in the budget and scope of the scheme as part of the Council's required savings.

Since 2018/19:

- £110,000 of the DESSS has been provided as a grant to the District and Borough Councils with the intention that is used primarily to provide temporary loans for things such as rent in advance or deposit payments.

Where the DESSS is used to fund rent in advance or deposits, it was the intention, as per the service agreement, that the District and Borough councils would recoup the loan amounts from tenants once the tenancy had been secured and housing and other welfare benefits were in place.

- £20,000 for welfare grants, has been administered through Adult Social Care and Health's Health and Social Care Connect (HSCC) team.

Since 2018/19 only 5 awards have been made from the DESSS fund administered by HSCC, with the last award made in 2020.

A significant part of what the DESSS was historically used for is now covered by the Household Support Fund (HSF). The updated HSF guidance provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP) states that *"The primary objective of The Fund is to provide crisis support to vulnerable households in the most need with the cost of essentials. The secondary objective is to provide preventative support to prevent vulnerable households from falling into – or falling further into – crisis"* ([1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026: Household Support Fund guidance for county councils and unitary authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)), and therefore all delivery partners have flexibility in how they administer the Fund within the guidance to meet these two key objectives.

As part of the Household Support Fund (HSF) in East Sussex for 2025/26, which totals £6,867,965.88 for the full year, District & Borough Councils have been allocated £1,375,601. The remainder of the Fund is allocated to ESCC Children's Services, Voluntary Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) partners and other local delivery partners across East Sussex who are best placed to reach eligible households. This includes over £400,000 to Food Banks and Partnerships.

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In summary, the reasons why the DESSS funding has been discontinued are that Household Support Fund monies, to a significant extent, duplicates the purpose of the DESSS funding. No awards had been made from the proportion of the DESSS administered by ASCH since 2020 and a significant proportion of the DESSS provided to Districts and Boroughs was always expected to be recouped once tenancies were secured and welfare benefits began to be paid.

The DESSS funding from Government ceased in 2015. Since then, the DESSS funding in East Sussex has been discretionary. Given the Council's financial position and the need to set a balanced budget, and for the reasons summarised above, it was agreed to cease discretionary funding from 2025/26.

4. Josh Babarinde MP – Eastbourne, East Sussex

Can the Cabinet Member confirm the total cost of redundancy payments for staff at Linden Court?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

As the staff consultation at Linden Court has not concluded it is not yet possible to confirm redundancy costs. Our intention is to provide suitable alternative employment wherever possible to protect staff jobs and retain the skilled and experienced colleagues within our services.

There are enough suitable alternatives to offer equivalent roles to all the staff at Linden Court should the proposal go ahead, and at this time the indication is that there will be no redundancies.

In February 2025, the report to Cabinet on ASCH savings proposals allowed for £350,000 to £500,000 for associated redundancy costs across all savings proposals. Of the savings proposals enacted to date, only two staff from older people's services, out of a total of 85 staff affected, will incur any redundancy costs. We anticipate that final redundancy costs will therefore be significantly below the original estimates.

5. Tania Bilton – Eastbourne, East Sussex

It is clear from the client assessment survey that we have conducted that not many parent/Carers will be able, or willing to use Beeching Park as a provision.

ESCC have a legal obligation to provide or recommend suitable alternative services in their clients local community. As the Satellite service you are proposing only accommodates 15 clients, 2 days a week you will need to find additional Eastbourne based services which is likely to incur further expenses.

With all the consequential costs we have identified, wouldn't retaining Linden Court in some format appear to be the best option for clients and the most cost effective for ESCC?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

Until the scrutiny (call-in) process is completed, the outcome for Linden Court is known and reviews have been undertaken for the adults currently attending Linden Court, we will not be

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able to confirm the number of adults who want to attend Beeching Park or want to explore alternative options.

We have, however, undertaken financial modelling for the likely scenarios if the proposals for Linden Court go ahead. The modelling shows that the proposal for Linden Court will deliver savings to the Council which are required to balance the budget.

ESCC has a duty to meet Care Act eligible needs, and we will ensure that duty is met. We will work with adults and parent/carers to agree the best alternative provision and to put in place a transition plan where appropriate.

For these reasons we do not consider that retaining Linden Court is “the most cost effective for ESCC” and we believe that alternative provision to meet eligible needs can be sourced for the adults currently attending Linden Court.

6. Teresa Currie – Pevensey, East Sussex

Have the transport and staff costs been assessed for regular trips back to Eastbourne from Beeching Park? This enables clients to be integrated into their local community back in Eastbourne, which is a legal requirement upon ESCC.

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

If Linden Court were to close, we are confident that alternative day opportunities could be identified to meet the eligible needs of adults who currently attend Linden Court. This could be at Beeching Park in Bexhill, at the satellite provision that we are proposing to deliver 2 days a week in Eastbourne, with a provider from the independent sector or a combination of these.

Without having undertaken reviews for each of the adults currently attending Linden Court and agreeing a new support plan, we cannot yet know the precise transport costs that may be associated with their new support plan. However, when calculating the potential saving options, we included an amount for additional vehicles and drivers, linked to the Beeching Park service, which could provide transport for more people, if required

Our legal duties relate to meeting peoples’ assessed eligible needs under the Care Act 2014. As part of an adult’s review, any transport required to meet the person’s eligible needs will be identified and met.

7. Catherine Jessup – Eastbourne, East Sussex

The Linden Court Community created an evidence finding form, why have ESCC not gathered this information themselves to seek possible options from the parents and carers to provide a clear indication of what alternatives will be required for the clients of Linden Court?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

We cannot start re-assessments or reviews of adults attending Linden Court and their parent/carers until the outcome of the scrutiny (Call-in) process is known.

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If the outcome of the call-in process is that that Cabinet decision to close and reprovision Linden Court can proceed, we expect that all adults will have a review within five weeks of the outcome being known. Unpaid carers will be offered a carer's review in the same period.

We will work with adults and their parents/ carers to identify eligible needs and the best alternative services to meet those needs.

8. Inge Keats – Eastbourne, East Sussex

During the last County Council meeting Mark Stainton stated that no one would be going into residential care as a result of Linden Court closing. I can confirm that as a result of Linden Court closing we will be looking to place our daughter into residential care, due to the lack of local day care provision that will support our family. Since that last meeting the parents/carers group have done evidence gathering and it appears that I am only 1 of a possible 9 families who would be seriously considering residential care if Linden Court was to close.

Does the council now acknowledge that there are some families identifying residential care as their only option if the Linden Court closure proceeds?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

The Care Act eligible needs of adults are determined through their assessment – there is then a support planning process to identify how these needs can be met.

From our knowledge of provision in the local area we believe that there are suitable alternative day opportunities for adults currently attending Linden Court (including retaining a small ASCH provision in Eastbourne).

We are not aware of any reason why the proposal for Linden Court would require any one to need residential care.

Similarly, we recognise that people's needs change over time and, when this happens, a different package of support may be required. There are several options for adults when their needs require 24/7 support away from their family home including: Shared Lives, Supported Accommodation, Supported Living and Residential Care.

However, as above, we are not aware of any reason why the proposals for Linden Court would necessitate a move into residential care and we will work closely with adults and their families to identify alternative day opportunities to meet eligible needs.

9. Sophie Ticehurst – Eastbourne, East Sussex

The 3 local alternative services proposed by ESCC are not deemed to be suitable or appropriate options. Our parents/carers survey has identified Beeching Park is not a creditable option for most Linden Court clients and goes against the wellbeing you are required to deliver under the Care Act. What strategy are ESCC proposing to protect the wellbeing of clients and their families/carers if Linden Court is closed and Beeching Park is not accessible to them?

Response by the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health

MINUTES

If the proposal for Linden Court goes ahead the adults involved, and their parent/carers, will have reviews to ensure their eligible needs are understood and met and we will work together to agree alternative provision.

We will also create transition plans, as appropriate, to ensure that adults and parents/ carers are fully supported throughout the change. We have extensive experience and skill in doing this as a transition plan is often required for new starters in our services or when adults change their current provision for any reason. This will support the wellbeing of adults' and their parents / carers.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 44

1) Question from Councillor Field to Councillor Claire Dowling

Many residents are changing from petrol and diesel to electric vehicles. Whilst investment by local authorities in placing charging points in public car parks is welcomed it is often difficult, if not impossible, for residents without a driveway to charge their cars safely. This includes employees of emergency services who need to charge their cars.

What actions and policies has the County Council put in place to support and encourage residents to implement suitable systems to charge their vehicles at their own homes where they do not have access to a driveway?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

The County Council has secured £4.4m of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding to enable to delivery of on-street chargepoints across the county. It will also lever in private investment, and is expected to deliver approximately 2000 chargepoints at around 300 locations in East Sussex. We will shortly be procuring an on-street chargepoint operator and expect roll out to commence in autumn 2025.

We also want to support residents without access to off street charging and/or nearby chargepoints, so welcome the Governments recent guidance for cross-pavement solutions for charging electric vehicles. [Cross-pavement solutions for charging electric vehicles - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/cross-pavement-solutions-for-charging-electric-vehicles). Based on this guidance, we are currently working on developing a policy and licensing process to support this as well as work with manufacturers of cross pavement channels to identify the most suitable and appropriate solutions. In doing so, we will need to consider the risks and technical issues that may be present at each location and how to survey these correctly to identify the potential risks to users of charging channels and those using footways. It is also important to consider how the installation of a single channel may prevent the installation of adjacent channels later due to the minimum physical distance required between installations connected to separate earthing systems.

Once developed, I have asked for the cross-channel pavement policy to be reported to my decision-making meeting for consideration and this will give Councillors the opportunity to comments on the policy's content.

2) Question from Councillor Lambert to Councillor Claire Dowling

A number of Seaford residents have raised concerns about pedestrians walking into Seaford from the Cuckmere Inn along the verge of the A259. Highways are carrying out their statutory duties in maintaining this verge, but it is a verge and not an adopted footpath. Pedestrians using this route therefore do so at their own risk.

However, it is becoming increasingly clear that despite the dangers, people are continuing to try to use this as a route into Seaford although there is a safe route over the fields behind the Cuckmere Inn. The problem is exacerbated as the whole area around Exceat and the Seven Sisters is viewed as a pilgrimage route by visitors from South Korea.

This includes overseas visitors walking from East Dean to the coast along the side of the road where there is no path of any kind.

MINUTES

With the continued increase in visitor numbers to this part of the county, will the County Council now take action, in partnership with others as appropriate, to prevent accidents and to encourage visitors to take safe action to protect themselves?

Will the County Council arrange for:

- better signage at either end of the footpaths across the fields, including signage at the A259 end of Cuckmere Lane pointing out the safer route for pedestrians.
- Signage at either end of the bank/verge making it clear this is not a footpath and not suitable for pedestrians.
- better on line information for our visitors raising awareness of the dangers on the cliffs and the roads, including consideration of QR codes in Korean.
- Coverage of safety messages on social media and TikTok, also in Korean.

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Thank you for your written question regarding the issue of pedestrians using the A259 to walk from the Cuckmere Inn into Seaford.

This is a complex matter, and it involves several distinct, but related, areas of County Council work. For example, road safety, highway management, culture and tourism and public rights of way.

Also, there is the need to receive positive support from other stakeholders if the promotion of any alternative off-road routes is to be in some way effective.

Specifically, the South Downs National Park Authority (which owns and manages Seven Sisters County Park) and the Cuckmere Inn would likely need to promote the off-road route. The National Trust (landowner of most of the off-road footpath route) and residents of Chyngton Lane may also have views on the promotion of a route over land they have an interest in.

Many visitors to the area will also use popular apps, such as Google Maps, Instagram or TikTok to plan their visit. This is a difficult area of visitor information to influence. For example, Google Maps identifies the on-road A259 route as this first option for walkers from the Inn to Seaford and only recommends the off-road footpath route if specific details, most likely not known to visitors, are typed into the directions. Another issue is the high number of overseas visitors so, displaying concise and clear signage in languages other than English becomes challenging.

Regarding your four specific requests for action:

- Better signage at either end of the footpaths across the fields, including signage at the A259 end of Cuckmere Lane pointing out the safer route for pedestrians:

This can be investigated by the Rights of Way & Countryside Team. However, while it should be straightforward to provide signage, there may be site specific limitations and it would also be necessary to consult other stakeholders, such as the Cuckmere Inn and National Trust. Signage is not guaranteed to be successful, however, with visitors often preferring to trust a smart phone app for directions. It can also be easily overlooked in a busy location.

- Signage at either end of the bank/verge making it clear this is not a footpath and not suitable for pedestrians.

MINUTES

As mentioned above, Google Maps unfortunately recommends the A259 as a direct walking route, which visitors may be inclined to follow.

The public do also have a right to walk along the A259, and that can only be suspended with a Traffic Regulation Order. (That would include verges and footways within the highway boundary, as is the case here.)

All signs available for use on the public highway are contained within a document produced by the Department for Transport entitled 'The Traffic Signs, Regulations and General Directions 2016'.

Whilst this document allows for informational signage, the only letters that are prescribed for use are the English/Roman alphabet, with other alphabets not permitted.

Whilst we understand tourists could use Google Translate (or a similar translation tool) on their mobile devices to understand English signs, pictorial signs advising of the A259's suitability would be easier to read and would avoid groups of tourists congregating around signage to translate them.

Whilst there is a sign that advises of a prohibition of pedestrians on a section of public highway, it could easily be confused by foreign tourists as one that is permitting and encouraging pedestrians to use the route.

In England, a circular sign with a red border is widely recognised as a prohibition of something, in other countries, this may not be case. (The sign diagram is shown below for reference.) Considering this, the Road Safety team are unable to agree to progressing a Traffic Regulation Order for prohibiting pedestrians on the public highway at this location.



Figure 5-23 Diagram 625.1 (S3-2-22) Pedestrians prohibited

- Better online information for our visitors raising awareness of the dangers on the cliffs and the roads, including consideration of QR codes in Korean:

As detailed above, effective online information is a difficult area to influence, given the various ways visitors chose to plan their journeys. QR codes may be useful on physical signage, although they would need to be relevant visitors from all countries.

- Coverage of safety messages on social media and TikTok, also in Korean:

There is a piece of work, currently being led on by Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC), looking at visits to the whole Beachy Head, Birling Gap and Seven Sisters area. We have also made Experience Sussex, a new visitor economy development programme covering East and West Sussex, aware of the specific Cuckmere Inn/A259 issue. Experience Sussex does have a website and active social media, but, given the plethora

of other information online, this is a difficult area to influence. Additionally, both EBC and Experience Sussex's work is at an early stage.

3) Question from Councillor Murphy to Councillor Claire Dowling

Road Studs (Cat's Eyes) are a safety feature on county rural roads where there is no street lighting. These cats' eyes are an invaluable county asset in guiding the driver along roads in darkness, particularly in rain and fog. Many of these units are wearing out and are not functioning. On our rural roads, road studs are the only night aid there is, apart from carriageway centre white lines. The carriageway centre white lines should aid drivers, but these are also far below a reasonable reflective standard in some areas.

- Is there a scheduled maintenance replacement program when the studs reach the end of their safe working life?
- Do the local highways stewards inspect the condition of cat's eyes at night?
- How can the stewards carry out inspections of road studs safely whilst driving on their own, on high speed roads?
- How is it possible to carry out road stud inspection in daylight?

To give a few examples of road studs missing, the B2124 Laughton Road has only about 10% of road studs working, the A22 from Golden Cross to Forest Row has even less. The A271 from Hailsham to Bexhill is also missing many units, as is the A267 from Hailsham to Tunbridge Wells. There is a patch of road at Fives Ashes that has been resurfaced recently but the road studs have not yet been replaced.

- Is the County Highways Department satisfied that the contractors are fulfilling their contractual obligations in replacing worn out studs?
- If there is a KSI accident and the subsequent police report identifies missing road studs may have contributed to the accident, what liability falls to East Sussex County Council as it is ultimately the Highways Department's responsibility?

Response by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment

Is there a scheduled maintenance replacement program when the studs reach the end of their safe working life?

There is currently no dedicated highway maintenance budget for a scheduled road stud replacement programme. However, the activity is covered as part of East Sussex Highways' revenue-funded reactive / core maintenance programme (only capital when delivered as part of programmed structural maintenance scheme). There is a requirement contained within the Highway Safety Inspection Manual stating that Highway Stewards should be inspecting for missing road studs.

The County Council is currently reviewing its Highway Asset Management Strategy, Policy, and Plans and it is intended to provide clarity on the inspection and maintenance of road studs ensuring greater reference to Well Maintained Highways, Traffic Signs Manual Ch.5, DMRB: Road Layout CS 126 Inspection and assessment of road markings and road studs (formerly TD 26/17).

- **Do the local highways stewards inspect the condition of cat's eyes at night?**

MINUTES

There are no programmed safety inspections carried out at night. If there is a need for an inspection to be undertaken "out of hours" for a specific reason i.e. when traffic volumes are lighter, then this will be accommodated. Nighttime inspections of this nature are currently beyond the scope of the highway maintenance contract.

- **How can the stewards carry out inspections of road studs safely whilst driving on their own, on high speed roads?**

Monthly driven safety inspections are carried out by two Highways Stewards, one driving and one observing the network.

- **How is it possible to carry out road stud inspection in daylight? To give a few examples of road studs missing, the B2124 Laughton Road has only about 10% of road studs working, the A22 from Golden Cross to Forest Row has even less. The A271 from Hailsham to Bexhill is also missing many units, as is the A267 from Hailsham to Tunbridge Wells. There is a patch of road at Fives Ashes that has been resurfaced recently but the road studs have not yet been replaced.**

During a monthly driven inspection (in daytime) the Highway Steward would be able to identify missing studs or those that were visibly damaged. This meets with the requirement of the contract.

With respect to the locations referenced, these have been shared with the Highway Stewards and will be reviewed in the next monthly driven inspection and any remedial works programmed accordingly.

- **Is the County Highways Department satisfied that the contractors are fulfilling their contractual obligations in replacing worn out studs?**

The ESCC Highways Contract Management Group believe that the contractor is carrying out the highway inspections in line with the inspection manual and contract requirements.

- **If there is a KSI accident and the subsequent police report identifies missing road studs may have contributed to the accident, what liability falls to East Sussex County Council as it is ultimately the Highways Department's responsibility?**

Highway authorities have a duty to maintain the highway and ensure it is safe for road users, and this includes appropriate asset management. If a road incident were to occur attributable to missing road studs, this can lead to liability if a dangerous condition results in an accident or injury.

By way of context, Section 41 of the Highways Act 1980 places a non-delegable statutory duty on highway authorities to maintain the highway, including making it safe for traffic. If a highway authority fails to properly maintain the highway due to negligence, particularly inadequate asset management, they may be liable for damages caused to road users, including personal injury, property damage, or other losses. A dangerous state of the highway, resulting from a lack of proper maintenance or inadequate asset management, can be the basis for a claim against the highway authority. To establish liability, a claimant would need to demonstrate that the highway was dangerous due to poor maintenance, that the highway authority was negligent in failing to maintain it properly, and that the claimant's losses were a direct result of the dangerous condition.