

Title: Council Monitoring Report – end of year 2024/25
Report to: Cabinet
Date: 24 June 2025
Report by: Chief Executive
Purpose: To report Council monitoring for the full year 2024/25

RECOMMENDATION

Cabinet is recommended to note the latest monitoring position for the Council

1. Introduction

1.1 This report sets out the Council's position and year-end projections for the Council Plan targets, Revenue Budget, Capital Programme, and Savings Plan, together with Risks at the end of March 2025.

1.2 Broad progress against the Council's four strategic priority outcomes is summarised in paragraph 4 and an overview of finance and performance data is provided in the Corporate Summary at Appendix 1. Strategic risks are reported at Appendix 8.

2. Overview of Council Plan 2024/25 outturns and strategic risks

2.1 We set challenging targets each year that reflect our aim to deliver the best services we can for our local residents and businesses with the limited resources we have available. The ongoing difficult financial position for the Council has meant that services have been working to deliver the priorities within the Council Plan alongside making savings. While our services have had a number of successes over the past year despite this, there are also areas that have experienced challenges. The Departmental Appendices (3-7) provide details of both our achievements and how we are working to improve, where we can, where targets have not been met.

2.2 The overall position at the end of quarter 4 was 43 (72%) of the 60 Council Plan targets had been achieved and 11 (18%) were not achieved. 6 (10%) are carried over for reporting in quarter 1 2025/26. These are measures where the corresponding activity has been completed, but the year-end outturn data is not yet available to report against the target. It should be noted that the percentage of targets met represents an improvement on the year-end position reported in quarter 4 of 2023/24.

2.3 Of the 60 targets, the outturns for 14 (23%) are not comparable with the outturns from 2023/24. Of the remaining 46 measures which can be compared, 14 (23%) improved or were at the maximum (i.e., the most that can be achieved); 4 (7%) remained the same; 22 (37%) had a lower outturn; and 6 (10%) are carried over for reporting in quarter 1 2025/26. Although 22 measures are showing a lower outturn compared with 2023/24, 11 of these met their target for 2024/25. This reflects the difficult decisions we had to make to adjust some targets for 2024/25 based on the resources we had available for this year. This should also be viewed in the context of the results of the inspections and audits that the Council has been subject to, which demonstrate that while we may not always be able to stretch our resources to meet the high ambitions we have for our services, we continue to deliver safe, effective and efficient services.

2.4 The Strategic Risk Register, Appendix 8, was reviewed and updated to reflect the Council's risk profile. Risk 23 (Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution) is new and introduced this quarter. Risk 4 (Health) has an updated risk definition, risk control and risk score. Risk 22 (Oracle) has an updated risk definition and risk control. Risk 1 (Roads), Risk 6 (Local Economic Growth), Risk 9 (Workforce), Risk 15 (Climate), Risk 20 (Placements for children and young people) and Risk 21 (Care Act) have updated risk controls.

3 Budget Outturn

3.1 The detailed revenue outturns for each department are set out in the relevant appendices which show an aggregate total overspend of £21.9m (£24.8m forecast at quarter 3). The main headlines are:

- Children's Services has an overspend of £13.6m (£15.4m forecast at quarter 3); the main areas of overspend being Early Help and Social Care and Home to School Transport. The Early Help and Social Care overspend of £12.4m (£13.1m forecast at quarter 3) is due in the main to staffing costs within Localities, pressures around agency placements and Children's Homes within Looked After Children, although there was a reduction in net costs at Lansdowne Secure Unit due to increased income from recharging other local authorities for placements.

Home to School Transport has an overspend of £3.8m (£4.2m forecast at quarter 3) due to growth in numbers of pupils and unit costs for transport that have far outstripped what was estimated during the budget setting process. The final overspend has improved since quarter 3 due to legal advice confirming the possibility of charging personal transport budgets for children with Education and Health Care Plans to the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant; this meant that £0.6m of transport expenditure could be recharged.

Not included in the figures reported above is the position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), which, in accordance with the Schools and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2020, is required by local authorities to be carried forward on their balance sheets. As of 31st March 2025, the Council has a cumulative DSG surplus of £2.8m, which is very unusual as most local authorities have significant DSG deficits. However, this will not continue as a forecast cumulative deficit is expected by the end of 2025/26. The statutory override is due to expire in March 2026, which means that any deficit will then be offset against useable council reserves.

- The overspend for Adult Social Care is £10.0m (£9.9m forecast at quarter 3) which largely relates to the Independent Sector, where the overspend is £12.4m. This is due to a combination of factors, primarily being increasing complexity of need and pressures arising from demand and demographic growth returning to pre-pandemic levels. There is an underspend in Directly Provided Services of £2.4m due to staffing vacancies which reflects the impact of savings consultations and underlying difficulties in recruitment.
- There is an underspend of £0.4m (£0.4m forecast overspend at quarter 3) for Business Services. This is due to new grant income, higher than budgeted income for services and reduced costs including staff vacancies, offset by increased accommodation and reactive maintenance costs.
- Communities, Economy and Transport is showing an underspend of £1.3m (£0.9m forecast at quarter 3). This is due to higher than budgeted recycling income and lower Private Finance Initiative contract prices, staff vacancies and slippage on completing Road Safety schemes; offset by an overspend in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted and there was an increase in the number of winter service jobs.

3.2 Within Centrally Held Budgets (CHB), including Treasury Management (TM), and corporate funding there is an underspend of £14.3m (£13.0m forecast at quarter 3), which includes the general contingency:

- There is a £2.6m underspend on TM (£1.6m forecast at quarter 3); a reduced in-year capital borrowing requirement alongside an ongoing strategy to delay borrowing in a falling interest rate environment has meant that the Council has delayed new external borrowing; and returns on investments in year were greater than anticipated as the Base Rate did not fall as fast as originally anticipated. It should be noted that there has been a fall in cash investment balances; the level of balances has fallen by 43% in one year to £115.3m at the end of 2024/25.

- Within CHB the underspend is now £8.4m; an increase of £1.3m from the forecast at quarter 3 due to the movement in TM and a decrease in the estimated debt impairment for the year. The underspend is mainly due to the TM variance, the General Contingency of £5.3m, and the decision not to transfer a planned £1.3m contribution to the Capital Programme.
- Corporate Funding budgets have underspent by £5.8m (£5.9m forecast at quarter 3). This is mainly due to the allocation of the Social Care Services Grants totalling £5.4m in February 2024, after the 2024/25 budget was set (as approved by Cabinet on 25 June 2024), plus a net additional £0.4m received for business rates 2023/24 pooling and reliefs.

3.3 The net impact of the above is an unplanned draw from the financial management reserve of £7.6m in 2024/25 (a fall from the £11.8m projected at quarter 3). This is in addition to the planned £14.3m draw to present a balanced position in setting the 2024/25 budget. The Council's projected level of strategic reserves was last assessed to be £4.5m as of March 2029; any reduction in unallocated reserves reduces the flexibility available in dealing with the challenge of addressing next year's projected deficit and setting a balanced budget, without having to seek further savings. In this context, to address the projected in-year overspend and reduce the required draw from reserves, the Council took a number of actions to reduce spending in 2024/25, including:

- Additional controls on spending, including the requirement for purchase orders above £1,000 to be supported by a business case and approved by a reviewing board.
- An updated recruitment protocol, including Corporate Management Team approval of non-core role recruitment.
- Reviewing proposed savings for 2025/26 to identify whether actions can be brought forward into 2024/25.
- Asking departments to identify any further actions to reduce in-year spend across all budgets.

3.4 The Capital Programme Outturn net expenditure for the year is £87.0m against a budget of £106.6m. In previous reporting, a slippage risk factor of £20.0m had been applied to the capital programme to reflect likely slippage based on a risk assessment of historic levels of actual expenditure and slippage at a project/programme level. The risk factor was held at a corporate level to enable services / project managers to manage project budgets at a local level, whilst ensuring greater robustness to the overall planning and monitoring process. The net forecast expenditure at quarter 3 after applying this risk factor was £84.6m, so there was a relatively small movement of a £2.4m increase in the final outturn from the quarter 3 forecast.

- The programme outturn slippage is £19.421m against a quarter 3 forecast of £13.7m across several projects, relating to various project specific factors. The largest areas of slippage included: Integrated Transport A22 Corridor (£1.112m); Other Integrated Transport Schemes (£1.033m) Exeat Bridge Replacement (£2.553m); Eastbourne Town Centre Phase 2b (£1.952m); Youth Investment Fund (£1.745m); Schools Capital Building Improvements (£1.033m); IT & Digital Strategy (£2.191m) and IT & Digital Strategy Oracle (£2.622m).
- The programme outturn shows a small spend-in-advance of £0.333m, against a previously forecast £0.4m, mainly relating to: Learning Disability Supported Living (£0.123m) and Broadband additional vouchers (£0.107m).

4 Progress against Council Priorities

Driving sustainable economic growth

4.1 The Council has spent £382m with 815 local suppliers over the past 12 months. This equates to 60% of our total procurement spend, meeting the target of 60%. £1.8m in Social Value was secured through our Property Frameworks from contracts with a combined value of £11.5m which equates to 16% of the contract value. In total, all applicable contracts in 2024/25 secured 19% of Social Value commitments against a target of 10%. Social Value secured through these contracts included apprenticeship and job opportunities for local people, work experience and career

awareness programmes offered to local schools and colleges, and supporting environmental programmes with local groups, schools and colleges (Appendix 4).

4.2 In 2024/25 the percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance was 5%, against a target of 7%. The percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance was 6% against a target of 8%. The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 31%, against a target of 25%. A lower figure indicates better road condition. These figures are only available at one point each year, with the results published in quarter 4. They are based on specialist laser surveys undertaken in summer 2024 for Principal and Non-Principal roads, and manual surveys for Unclassified roads which were undertaken in early 2025. The outturns refer to the percentage of road length across the entire county that should be considered for maintenance. The surveys measure road condition in 10m sections. All roads are likely to have a mixture of green, amber and red road condition sections. The road condition outturns reported here are the percentage of 10m sections that should be considered for maintenance, which are classed as red. So, for example, a proportion of 5% indicates that 5% of all 10m sections surveyed of that road type should be considered for maintenance (Appendix 6).

4.3 Work on our highways continued in 2024/25 using the extra funding approved by the Council in recognition of the deterioration of the network following last winter's prolonged, wet and cold weather. We completed 510 patches across 381 sites throughout the year. We replaced, repaired or cleaned 350 road signs and refreshed 683 road markings. We also completed 565 minor road drainage schemes, and 75 larger schemes. 117 road improvement schemes were completed in 2024/25 and over 23,000 potholes were repaired (Appendix 6).

4.4 During 2024/25 over 1,500 students have had the opportunity to go on an Open Doors workplace visit, and over 50 employers have committed to offer the visits. An iCan careers event in March 2025 was attended by more than 400 young people from 34 schools. They had the opportunity to explore career pathways, engage in 6 interactive workshops on employability skills, and connect with representatives from 32 different organisations. The Council continued to help adults improve their numeracy skills through 14 Multiply interventions in 2024/25. 1,300 people were supported as part of the interventions (Appendix 6).

4.5 The Council has delivered business support programmes that helped to create 60 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs in 2024/25, against a target of 45 FTE jobs. 29.5 FTE jobs were created through the first round of the Newhaven Business Grants Programme, 18.5 FTE jobs through the first round of the Rural Business Grants Programme, and 12 FTE jobs through the delivery of specialist business support through the 'Big Ambitions' programme (Appendix 6).

4.6 Final data for the average Attainment 8 score for pupils at state-funded schools was released in quarter 4. Both the average score for all pupils and the average score for disadvantaged pupils were below the targets set for this year (43.1 against a target of 44.0 and 30.1 against a target of 30.5 respectively). The performance of four academies in the Bexhill and Hastings area, where average attainment is lower, impacts significantly on the overall outturn for East Sussex. The young people attending those schools account for approximately one fifth of all secondary pupils in year 11. The average Attainment 8 score of Looked After Children was also below target at 14.7 (target was 19.0) (Appendix 5).

4.7 The percentage of eligible disadvantaged children aged 2 years old who took up a funded place in the spring 2025 funding period was 73%. While this is lower than the national average of 74.8% (the target for this measure), it should be noted that performance appears to have been affected by changes in how the data is reported by the Department for Education (DfE). Some eligible disadvantaged children are now able to access a funded place through the working families funding streams implemented in April 2024, which is reducing the cohort counted through this measure (Appendix 5).

4.8 The 2024/25 percentage of young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training at academic age 16 was 4.2% against a target of less than or equal to 5%. This is also an improvement on the 2023/24 figure of 4.4%. For academic age 17 the total was 5.7%, against a

target of less than or equal to 7%. The 2023/24 figure was 6%. The commissioned advice and support that our Youth Employability Service provides has had a positive impact in supporting young people to access education, employment, and training. We continue to work with the DfE and local colleges to expand the courses available at Level 2 and below. Level 2 courses are generally equivalent to GCSEs and can serve as a pathway to Level 3 courses, apprenticeships, or employment (Appendix 5).

Keeping vulnerable people safe

4.9 The rate of children with a child protection plan was 59.8 per 10,000 children aged 0-17 at year-end, below the target of 64.4. This represents an 11% decrease from the outturn for 2023/24 and reflects the continuing positive impact of the support provided by the Connected Families Intervention Practitioners. The rate of Looked After Children reduced slightly in quarter 4 to 67.3 per 10,000 just above the target of 66.6 (Appendix 5).

4.10 We have met all of the targets linked to waiting times in Adult Social Care included within the Council Plan. This is due to improvements in how cases are triaged and how waiting lists are managed (Appendix 3).

4.11 Trading Standards made 290 active interventions in 2024/25 to protect vulnerable people, exceeding the annual target of 200. 360 businesses received training or advice from Trading Standards in 2024/25, against a target of 350. Trading Standards also seized a significant amount of illegal tobacco and vape products in 2024/25, with tobacco and cigarettes with a genuine retail value of nearly £450,000 and illegal vapes with a genuine retail value of £60,000 seized (Appendix 6).

4.12 A new contract to provide safe accommodation (Refuge) in East Sussex will begin in quarter 1 2025/26. The new provider, Interventions Alliance, will take over the 37 existing units of safe accommodation and provide an additional 18 units within the first 3 months of the contract. The new contract is due to last for 3 years. 6 projects awarded via the Domestic Abuse Small Grants Fund started to deliver services in January 2025. These projects consist of: support for victims / survivors from ethnic minority backgrounds, older people, those in temporary accommodation, and adults with multiple compound needs, as well as child to parent abuse initiatives and whole family approaches (Appendix 3).

Helping people help themselves

4.13 Satisfaction with the 0-19 Early Help Service remained high in 2024/25, with 91% of respondents to our feedback survey agreeing that things had changed for the better as a result of the targeted support they received, above the target of 80% (Appendix 5).

4.14 321 carers were supported through short-term crisis intervention in 2024/25, against a target of 390. Together with the provider and NHS Sussex, we have reviewed the service. The contract has been respecified, and the target has been reduced to 300. This reflects the increased needs of carers and the offer of up to 6, rather than the previous 4, visits (Appendix 3).

4.15 The multi-agency Financial Inclusion programme in East Sussex brings together statutory, voluntary and other partners to improve residents' financial wellbeing and resilience. The programme delivered a range of benefits during 2024/25. These benefits included distribution of the Household Support Fund, which made 170,000 awards totalling £7m to support households struggling with the cost of bills and essentials. Benefits maximisation campaigns were carried out, which contributed to increases in resident income through benefits of over £1m per year. The 'Additional Measures' grants programme provided additional funding to the money advice sector during the year, reaching over 3000 clients and delivering £2.7m of increased income and debt reduction (Appendix 3).

4.16 In collaboration with Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise partners, a new Social Enterprise Development Programme began on 1 April 2025 to provide information, advice and support to residents and assist the Council in meeting its duties under Sections 2 and 4 of the

Care Act 2014 including the requirement to prevent, reduce or delay the need for care and support (Appendix 3).

4.17 In February 2025, East Sussex Public Health held our first multi-agency workshop about prevention of gambling-related harm, and there was unanimous support to work together on the development of an action plan. In addition, funding has been secured from the South-East School of Public Health to enable delivery of Wider Workforce Gambling Harms Prevention Training to staff working in organisations across East Sussex (Appendix 3).

Making best use of resources now and for the future

4.18 Throughout 2024/25 corporate lobbying work focussed on using our partnerships and networks at the local, regional and national level to influence policy development in a range of areas, with a focus on the reforms needed in response to growing demand and financial challenges. Significant lobbying in 2024/25, has emphasised the acute need for sustainable resources to meet increasing demand and local government funding reform to ensure the unique needs of the population of East Sussex are recognised and can continue to be met now and in the future. In quarter 4, this included the Council responding to consultations on local authority funding reform and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which highlighted that allocations of the new Recovery Grant did not account for population need in East Sussex. The Leader and Chief Executive have continued to actively raise issues and priorities for the county with our local MPs during 2024/25, including, in quarter 4, through specific updates on our Council Plan and budget for 2025/26. This included the Leader meeting, along with group leaders, with a number of East Sussex MPs in quarter 4 to brief them on proposals included in the budget for 2025/26 and ask for their continued support in lobbying Government (Appendix 7).

4.19 We completed 3 energy efficiency schemes in quarter 4, including 2 window replacement projects and one heat decarbonisation scheme. In total, during 2024/25, 20 schemes have been delivered against a target of 23. This reflects cuts to both the Salix Recycling Fund and the ring-fenced Council budget for directly funded carbon saving projects. Energy consumption and carbon emissions are reported a quarter in arrears, so quarter 3 data is the most up to date information. Carbon emissions for quarter 3 were 2% lower than quarter 3 2023/24. If consumption during quarter 4 is similar to previous years, then the reduction compared to the baseline year 2019/20 would be 36%, against a target of 50% (Appendix 4).

4.20 The Council has continued to work both across the organisation and with partners across a range of environment and climate change areas in 2024/25. This included providing environmental advice to client local planning authorities on nearly 2,000 planning applications. We delivered the 40% of the actions in the East Sussex Climate Emergency Road Map 2022 – 2025 which were assigned to the Council. The remaining 60% of actions are assigned to other partners in the Road Map. We have also continued to develop the local nature recovery strategy, which is currently planned to be published by early 2026 (Appendix 6).

4.21 The Council continued with a project to replace the SAP system used for our procurement, finance and Human Resources processes in 2024/25, as this will not be supported from 2027. The Council made good progress on implementing the Oracle Fusion system to replace it. Most of the modules from Phase 1, and all of Phase 2 (which cover most of the procurement and finance processes) are now live. Phase 3, the final phase of the implementation, will begin to be delivered during 2025/26 (Appendix 4).

4.22 The 2024/25 sickness absence figure (excluding schools) is 9.21 days lost per FTE employee, against a target of 9.10. This is an increase of 0.9% on the 2023/24 figure. The predominant reason for the increase in absence rates is a rise in the number of flu related absences and musculoskeletal related absences (Appendix 4).

4.23 The Council continues to ensure its office hubs are used efficiently and during 2024/25 the space used for staff at County Hall was rationalised and reduced. In quarter 4, the Council vacated both South and East blocks, which involved over 163 teams moving to remaining blocks (Central, North, and West). The vacant blocks are being advertised for office use, marketing commenced in

March 2025. The total work on office rationalisation across the corporate estate, including at Eastbourne and Hastings, has provided significant benefits to the Council including £1.050m of financial benefit, reductions in resource required to support ongoing facilities management and maintenance, and reductions in carbon emissions (Appendix 4).

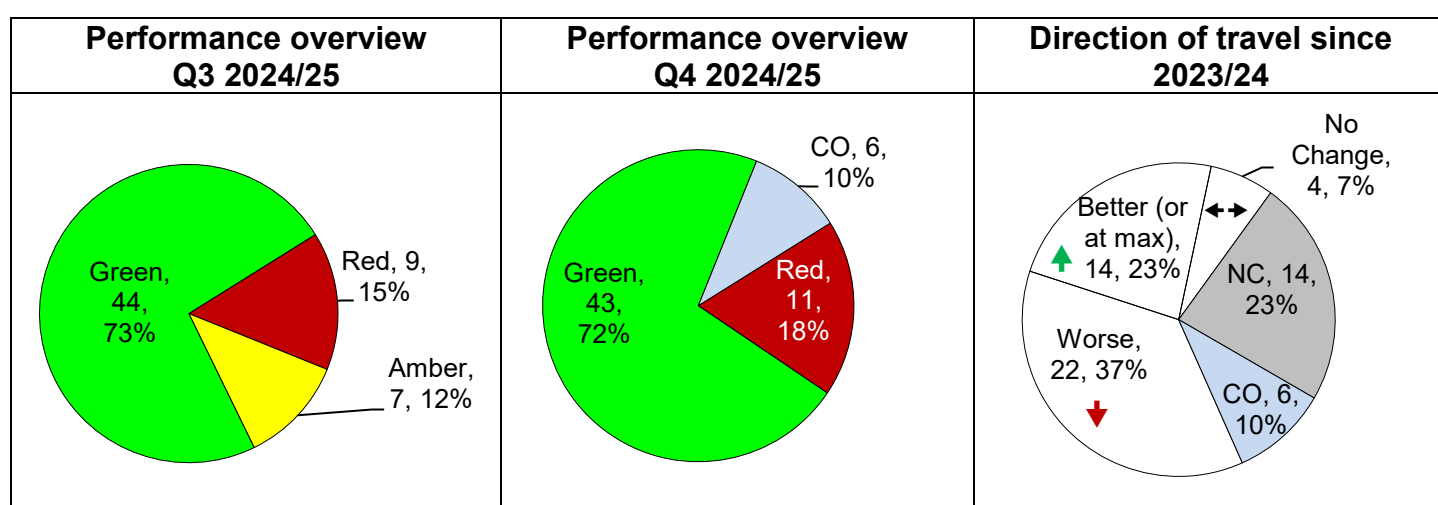
4.24 In December 2024 the Government published its English Devolution White Paper outlining plans to devolve greater powers to newly established Strategic Authorities, alongside a programme for Local Government Reorganisation. The Government invited expressions of interests from upper-tier and neighbouring unitary authorities in joining the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) which would see progress happen at an accelerated pace. In January 2025, following a discussion at Full Council, Cabinet approved a response to Government's invitation which confirmed a commitment to work with partners in West Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council to develop a proposal for a Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA). Confirmation was received in February that Sussex was one of six successful areas accepted on to the DPP and expected to undergo reorganisation and devolution at an accelerated speed. In March, following debates at Full Council, Cabinet agreed a response to Government consultation on the establishment of an MCCA in Sussex and agreed an interim proposal for unitary local government in East Sussex developed jointly with district and borough council partners (Appendix 7).

Becky Shaw, Chief Executive

Council Monitoring Corporate Summary – end of year 2024/25

Council Plan performance targets

Priority	Total	Red	Green	Carry Over
Driving sustainable economic growth	25	5	20	0
Keeping vulnerable people safe	16	2	12	2
Helping people help themselves	12	2	7	3
Making best use of resources now and for the future	7	2	4	1
Total	60	11	43	6



Direction of Travel key:

No Change: ↔, Not Comparable: **NC**, Carry Over: **CO**, Worse: ▼, Improved (or at maximum): ▲

Council Plan year end 2024/25 outturn summary all measures

60 Council Plan target outturns for the full year are reported below. Targets achieved are highlighted in green; targets not achieved are highlighted in red; and carry overs (CO) for reporting at Q1 2025/26 are highlighted in blue.

Detailed information for new exceptions at Q4 is contained in the departmental appendices and these exceptions are highlighted **in bold in the table below**. Details of previous exceptions can be found in the referenced appendices for Q1-Q3 monitoring.

Where available, performance improvement relative to 2023/24 is given under Direction of Travel. Measures marked NC (not comparable) do not have 2024/25 outturns, which are comparable with 2023/24 outturns.

Driving sustainable economic growth – outturn summary

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
BS	The percentage of Council procurement spend with local suppliers	64%	60%	60%	↓
BS	Economic, social and environmental value committed through contracts, as a percentage of our spend with suppliers	31%	≥10.0%	19%	↓
BS	The Council's Apprenticeship Levy strategy supports the Council's workforce development and training plans	252 staff within the Council and schools currently undertaking an apprenticeship 117 staff enrolled on a new apprenticeship in 2023/24 Apprenticeships range from entry level to master's degree Over £275,000 annual levy spend passed onto small and medium employers throughout the county in 2023/24	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	In 2024/25 147 new and existing staff enrol onto apprenticeships. This is a 21% increase on the new starts for 23/24.	↑
CET	Create a pan-Sussex visitor economy group to re-start the leisure, hospitality, culture, retail and tourism economy and enhance existing marketing vehicles	Completion of shared Sussex Story and assets delayed until 2024/25 Shared Sussex Meetings, Inceptive, Conferences and Events (MICE) initiatives developed	Establish a Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership and agree a Strategic Plan	Recruitment of formal Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) board in progress. Strategy for Growth circulated. Additional area of work to support LVEP has included the Sussex Visitor Stories Phase 2	↑
CET	Create a prioritised list of cultural projects ready for and seeking funding over the value of £100k	Pipeline list published and maintained on ESCC website of cultural projects ready for and seeking funding over	Advise four project sponsors	Four project sponsors advised	↑

APPENDIX 1

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
		the value of £100k			
CET	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	1,300 enrolments across Family Learning programmes	1,347 enrolments	NC
CET	Deliver East Sussex Skills priorities for 2021-2026	a) Adult Learning Network established b) 6 interventions delivered that meet the Skills East Sussex priorities c) 17 embedded numeracy interventions delivered	a) Deliver six interventions that meet the Skills East Sussex priorities b) Deliver six embedded numeracy interventions	a) Delivered seven interventions that meet the Skills East Sussex priorities b) Delivered fourteen embedded numeracy interventions	NC
CET	Deliver new economic strategy	Draft economic strategy developed	Economic Strategy endorsed and adopted by key stakeholders including Team East Sussex	The Economic Growth Strategy ("East Sussex Prosperity") was endorsed by Team East Sussex and Cabinet	NC
CET	East Sussex Careers Hub	Schools supported to achieve an average of 5.7 benchmarks 234 Industry Champions in place	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	Schools supported to achieve an average of 5.8 benchmarks 211 Industry Champions are in place and supporting schools/colleges	↔
CET	In partnership with funding organisations provide online learning (including skills for life and ICT courses) in libraries (subject to contract)	88 achievements	75 achievements	99 achievements	↑
CET	Job creation from East Sussex Programmes	No jobs created from East Sussex Invest Fund remains	45 jobs created	60 full time equivalent jobs created	↑

APPENDIX 1

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
		closed to new applications			
CET	Percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance	4%	7%	5%	↓
CET	Percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance	5%	8%	6%	↓
CET	Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance	17%	25%	31%	↓
CET	The number of businesses receiving advice and support through training and bespoke advice provided by Trading Standards	653	350	360	NC
CS	Average Attainment 8 score for Looked After Children (LAC)	Academic Year 2022/23 ESCC: 18.9	Ac Year 2023/24 19	Ac Year 2023/24 ESCC: 14.7	↓
CS	Average Attainment 8 score for state funded schools	Academic Year 2022/23 ESCC: 43.6	Ac Year 2023/24 44.0	Academic Year 2023/24 ESCC: 43.1	↓
CS	The average Attainment 8 score for disadvantaged pupils	Academic Year 2022/23 ESCC: 30.3	Ac Year 2023/24 30.5	Academic Year 2023/24 ESCC: 30.1	↓
CS	The percentage of disadvantaged pupils achieving at least the expected standard in each of reading, writing and maths at Key Stage 2	Academic Year 2022/23 ESCC: 39.2%	Ac Year 2023/24 40.1%	Academic Year 2023/24 ESCC: 40.8%	↑
CS	The percentage of eligible 2 year olds who take up a place with an eligible early years provider	ESCC: 84% (1,045 / 1,241) National Average: 73.9%	Equal to or above the national average	ESCC: 73.5% (808 / 1,100) National Average: 74.8%	↓
CS	The percentage of LAC participating in education, training, or employment at academic age 16 (Year 12)	84% (75 / 89)	80%	85.3%	↑
CS	The percentage of LAC participating in education, training, or employment at academic age 17 (Year 13)	73% (77 / 105)	70%	78%	↑
CS	The percentage of pupils achieving a “good level of development” at the Early Years Foundation Stage	ESCC: 69.9% National Average: 67.2%	Ac Year 2023/24 Equal to or above the national average	ESCC: 69.0% National Average: 67.7%	↓
CS	The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 16, including unknowns	4.4%	Equal to or below 5%	4.2%	↑
CS	The percentage of young people who are in Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at academic age 17, including unknowns	6%	Equal to or below 7%	5.7%	↑

Keeping vulnerable people safe – outturn summary

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
ASC	Health and Social Care Connect – % of contacts that are appropriate and effective (i.e. lead to the provision of necessary additional services)	99.2%	95%	99.2%	↔
ASC	Median time from proposed start date to actual start date for carer reviews	New measure 2024/25	≤6 days	-1 day	NC
ASC	Median time from proposed start date to actual start for adult reviews	New measure 2024/25	≤6 days	6 days	NC
ASC	Median waiting time for Adult Care Act assessments	New measure 2024/25	≤21 days	18 days	NC
ASC	Median waiting time for Carers' Care Act assessments	New measure 2024/25	≤7 days	1 day	NC
ASC	Number of people with a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) episode awaiting allocation of a Best Interest Assessor	New measure 2024/25	<650	429	NC
ASC	Percentage of potential safeguarding concerns initially reviewed within 3 days	New measure 2024/25	>99%	99.5%	NC
ASC	Number of drug and alcohol related deaths in the county	77	72	103	↓
ASC	Percentage of Health and Social Care Connect referrals triaged and progressed to required services within 24 hour	95.7%	95%	95%	↓
ASC	The % of people affected by domestic violence and abuse who have improved safety/support measures in place upon leaving the service	96.1%	90%	CO	CO
ASC	When they leave the service the % of those affected by rape, sexual violence and abuse who have improved coping strategies	90.2%	88%	CO	CO
CET	The number of active interventions for vulnerable people who have been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse	2,669 positive interventions	200	290	NC
CS	Rate (of 0-17 population) of assessments started by children's social care services (per 10,000 children)	399 (4,249)	≤558	413	↓
CS	Rate (of 0-17 population) of referrals to children's social care services (per 10,000 children)	413 (4,400)	≤556	401	↑
CS	Rate of children with a Child Protection Plan (per 10,000 children)	64.6 (688 children)	64.4 (661 children)	59.8 (614 children)	↑
CS	Rate of Looked After Children (per 10,000 children)	61.5 (655 children)	61.8 (635 children)	67.3 (691 children)	↓

Helping people help themselves – outturn summary

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
ASC	GP practices in East Sussex deliver a targeted NHS Health Check service	9% of the eligible population in the 20% most deprived areas (IMD1) received a health check	Increase coverage of IMD1 NHS Health Checks by 9% (i.e., uptake by total eligible population)	CO	CO
ASC	National outcome measure: Achieve independence for older people through rehabilitation / intermediate care	92.5%	>90%	CO	CO
ASC	National outcome measure: Proportion of working age adults and older people receiving direct payments	28.1%	>25.2%	26.7%	↓
ASC	Number of carers supported through short-term crisis intervention	333	390	321	↓
ASC	Number of people receiving support through housing related floating support	8,178	7,282	5,330	↓
ASC	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)	61.6%	>56%	60%	↓
ASC	Successful smoking quits through the OneYou East Sussex service	New measure 2024/25	7% of local smoking population to set a quit date, with 50% achieving four-week quit	CO	CO
ASC	The proportion of people who received short-term services during the year, where no further request was made for ongoing support	95.9%	>90.5%	93.3%	↓
CET	Road Safety: Deliver targeted cycle training activities to vulnerable road users	551 Bikeability Courses delivered to 4,428 individuals 343 Wheels for All sessions delivered to 3,862 individuals	Deliver Bikeability Training to 4,000 individuals and 100 Wheels for All sessions	476 Bikeability Courses delivered to 4,085 individuals 474 Wheels for All sessions delivered to 5,823 individuals	↑
CET	Road Safety: Implement infrastructure schemes on identified high risk sites/routes to improve road safety	24 Safety Schemes implemented	Implement 24 safety schemes	24 Safety Schemes implemented	↔
CS	Proportion of all new EHC Plans issued within 20 weeks	(a) 76.3% (521 / 683)	(a) 65% (b) 70%	(a) 68.5% (370 / 540)	↓

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Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
	(a) Including Exception Cases (b) Excluding Exception Cases	(b) 76.5% (521 / 681)		(b) 71.3% (368 / 516)	
CS	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	Adult - 86% (82 / 95) Young Person 91% (29 / 32) Average - 87%	80%	91%	↑

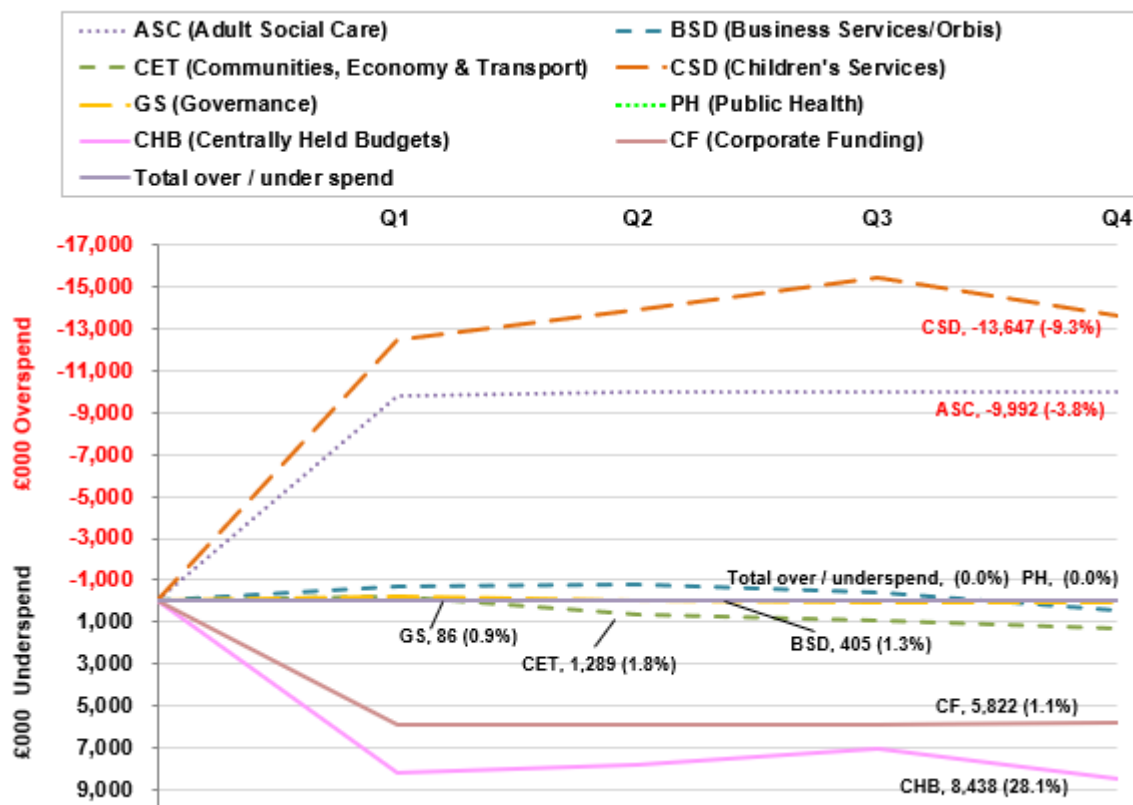
Making best use of resources now and for the future – outturn summary

Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
BSD	Deliver the Property Asset Investment Strategy	4 Outline Business cases brought forward against priority projects	6 business cases completed	12 business cases completed	↑
BSD	Number of working days lost per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) employee due to sickness absence in non-school services	9.13	9.10	9.21	↓
BSD	Progress on implementation of Carbon reduction schemes	25 energy saving schemes implemented	23 energy saving schemes implemented	20 energy saving schemes implemented	↓
BSD	Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations	36% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions	50% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions	CO	CO
BSD	Review use of corporate buildings	Office strategy revised and footprint reduced in Eastbourne and Hastings. Paper on options for County Hall produced. Plans for 2024/25 developed, including consideration of options for County Hall, finalisation of Eastbourne office moves, and further work to reduce the Hastings office footprint	Implement reduction of office footprint identified in 2023/24	Action was taken to rationalise space occupied by staff. In Q4, all County Hall staff moved into Centre, West and North Blocks, involving over 160 teams. South and East Blocks are now vacant and being marketed for non-Council office use following the office moves.	NC
BSD	Achievement of key milestones for the Workplace Adjustments Review	Key milestones from the Workplace	Implementation and monitoring of	Workplace adjustments activity	NC

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Dept	Performance Measure	Outturn 2023/24	Target 2024/25	Outturn 2024/25	Direction of Travel
		Adjustments Review achieved	new Workplace Adjustments activity	implemented and monitored	
GS	Delivery of Corporate Equality Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan actions planned for the year	Key actions delivered from action plan	Deliver the key actions within the action plan	Key actions delivered from action plan	↔

Revenue budget outturn (net £000)



Revenue budget summary (£000) 2024/25

Services:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Adult Social Care	403,329	(141,857)	261,472	442,565	(171,101)	271,464	(39,236)	29,244	(9,992)
Public Health	39,143	(39,143)	-	38,393	(38,393)	-	750	(750)	-
Business Services / Orbis	60,504	(29,751)	30,753	66,497	(36,149)	30,348	(5,993)	6,398	405
Children's Services	458,407	(311,422)	146,985	496,186	(335,554)	160,632	(37,779)	24,132	(13,647)
Communities, Economy & Transport	164,680	(91,807)	72,873	164,775	(93,191)	71,584	(95)	1,384	1,289
Governance Services	9,847	(609)	9,238	9,775	(623)	9,152	72	14	86
Total Services	1,135,910	(614,589)	521,321	1,218,191	(675,011)	543,180	(82,281)	60,422	(21,859)

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Centrally Held Budgets (CHB):

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Treasury Management	19,980	(8,900)	11,080	19,043	(10,562)	8,481	937	1,662	2,599
Capital Programme	2,972	-	2,972	1,941	(269)	1,672	1,031	269	1,300
Unfunded Pensions	4,702	-	4,702	4,763	-	4,763	(61)	-	(61)
General Contingency	5,270	-	5,270	-	-	-	5,270	-	5,270
Provision for Budgetary Risks	6,217	-	6,217	6,217	-	6,217	-	-	-
Apprenticeship Levy	772	-	772	858	-	858	(86)	-	(86)
Levies, Grants & Other	1,382	(2,377)	(995)	1,117	(2,278)	(1,161)	265	(99)	166
Debt Impairment	-	-	-	750	-	750	(750)	-	(750)
Total Centrally Held Budgets	41,295	(11,277)	30,018	34,689	(13,109)	21,580	6,606	1,832	8,438

Corporate Funding:

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
Business Rates	-	(101,362)	(101,362)	-	(101,751)	(101,751)	-	389	389
Revenue Support Grant	-	(4,346)	(4,346)	-	(4,346)	(4,346)	-	-	-
Service Grant	-	(478)	(478)	-	(524)	(524)	-	46	46
Council Tax	-	(373,550)	(373,550)	-	(373,550)	(373,550)	-	-	-
Social Care Grant	-	(56,705)	(56,705)	-	(62,092)	(62,092)	-	5,387	5,387
New Homes Bonus	-	(554)	(554)	-	(554)	(554)	-	-	-
Total Corporate Funding	0	(536,995)	(536,995)	0	(542,817)	(542,817)	0	5,822	5,822

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net
TOTAL	1,177,205	(1,162,861)	14,344	1,252,880	(1,230,937)	21,943	(75,675)	68,076	(7,599)
One-off Use of Financial Management Reserve 2024/25	-	(14,344)	(14,344)	-	(14,344)	(14,344)	-	-	-
Use of FM Reserve to cover overspend	-	-	-	-	(7,599)	(7,599)	-	7,599	7,599
FINAL TOTAL	1,177,205	(1,177,205)	0	1,252,880	(1,252,880)	0	(75,675)	75,675	0

Revenue Savings Summary 2024/25 (£'000)

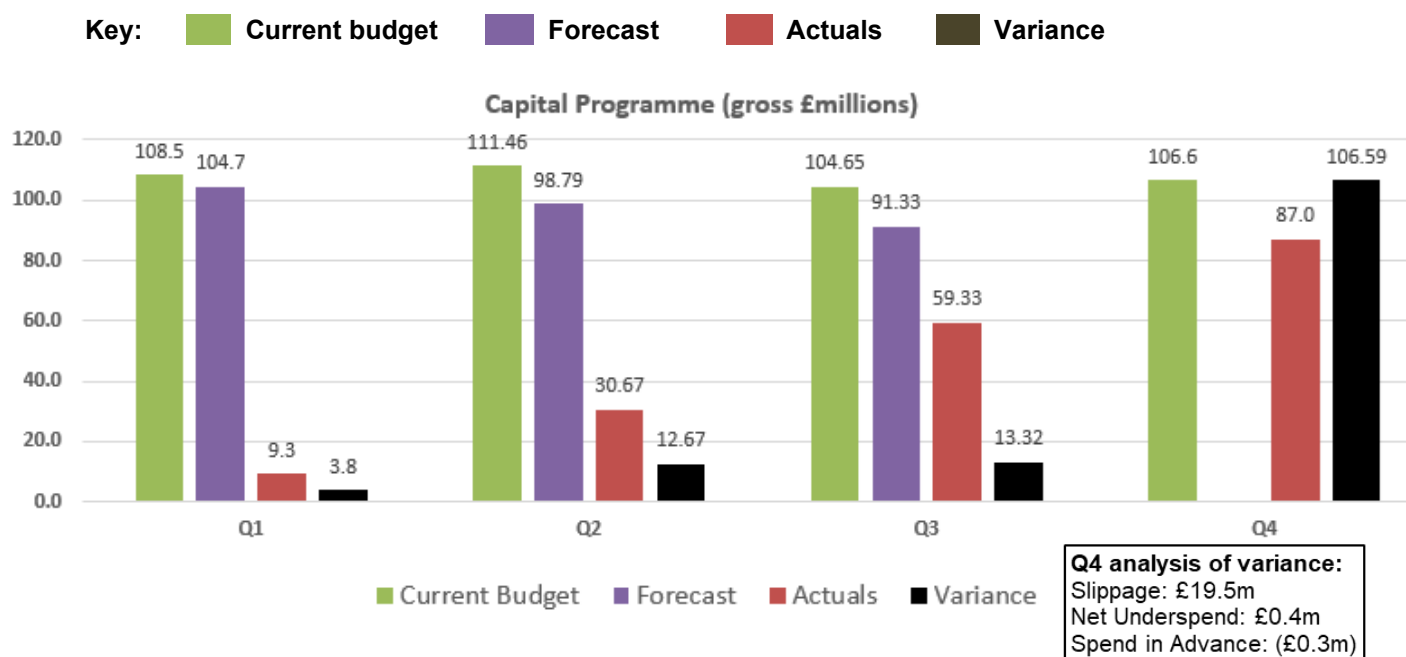
Service description	Original Target for 2024/25	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved
ASC	-	-	-	-	-
BSD/Orbis	693	1,003	1,003	-	-
CS	-	-	-	-	-
CET	-	805	60	745	-
GS	-	-	-	-	-
Total Savings	693	1,808	1,063	745	-
ASC			-	-	-
BSD / Orbis			-	-	-
CS			-	-	-
CET			-	-	-
GS			-	-	-
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0
Total Savings & Permanent Changes	693	1,808	1,063	745	-

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total
ASC	-	-	-
BSD / Orbis	-	-	-
CS	-	-	-
CET	-	745	745
GS	-	-	-
Total	0	745	745

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

² 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).

³ 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).

Capital Programme (gross £ millions) – approved projects**Capital Programme Summary 2024/25 (£'000)**

	Budget 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under 2024/25 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance
Adult Social Care	3,092	3,162	(70)	53	-	(123)
Business Services	39,059	29,116	9,943	562	9,398	(17)
Children's Services	2,599	2,572	27	(117)	144	-
Communities, Economy & Transport	61,838	52,186	9,652	(34)	9,879	(193)
Gross Expenditure (Planned Programme)	106,588	87,036	19,552	464	19,421	(333)
<i>Corporate Slippage Risk Factor</i>	<i>(20,068)</i>	-	-	-	-	-
Net Expenditure	86,520	87,036	(516)	464	19,421	(333)
Developer Contributions	4,621	3,155	1,466	-	-	-
Other Specific Funding	30,444	21,764	8,680	-	-	-
Capital Receipts	4,802	4,802	0	-	-	-
Formula Grants	25,772	23,802	1,970	-	-	-
Reserves and Revenue Set Aside	14,681	9,234	5,447	-	-	-
Borrowing	6,200	24,279	(18,079)	-	-	-
Total Funding	86,520	87,036	(516)	-	-	-

Treasury Management

The Treasury Management Strategy (TMS), which provides the framework for managing the Council's cash balances and borrowing requirement, continues to reflect a policy of ensuring minimum risk, whilst aiming to deliver secure realistic investment income on the Council's cash balances. Cash investment balances as at 31 March 2025 have fallen by 43% in one year, from £202.5m at Q4 2023/24 to £115.3m at Q4 2024/25.

The average level of Council funds available for investment purposes during Q4 was £142.4m. The total amount received in short term interest for Q4 was £1.742m at an average rate of 4.96%, compared to £2.290m at an average rate of 5.10% for Q3 2024/25. The average investment return for the year was 5.26% from the 5.11% assumed at budget setting based on the forecasts from our external treasury management advisors.

The Bank of England Base Rate was cut by 0.25% on the 6 February, the rate at 31 March was 4.50%. The prospect for interest rates is for further reductions into 2025/26 to a 3.75% level by 31 March 2026. Where possible a number of fixed term deposits with local authorities were placed for periods up to 1 year in Q4, this will help secure investment returns into 2025/26.

The investment strategy approach in previous quarters to 'ladder' deposits has created a steady maturity profile, this will ensure the Council's cashflow and liquidity requirements are covered for 2025/26.

Cashflow is monitored on a rolling 18 month forecast and no short-term borrowing was required in Q4. The majority of the Council's external debt, totalling £211.6m at Q4, is held as long-term loans. No long-term borrowing was undertaken in Q4, and no further cost-effective opportunities have arisen during Q4 to restructure the existing Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) or wider debt portfolio. Options to restructure debt will be explored as and when appropriate.

The Treasury Management budget underspent by £2.6m. This is based on the position outlined above with regard to balances held and investment returns. A reduced in-year capital borrowing requirement alongside an ongoing strategy to delay borrowing in a falling interest rate environment has meant that the council has delayed new external borrowing; and returns on investments in year were greater than anticipated as the Base Rate did not fall as fast as originally anticipated.

The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators set in the Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council on 6 February 2024, are set out at Appendix 2.

Reserves and Balances 2024/25 (£000)

Reserve / Balance	Balance at 1 Apr 2024	Forecast net use at Q3	Outturn net use at Q4	Movement	Balance at 31 Mar 2025
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Statutorily ringfenced or held on behalf of others:

Balances held by schools	18,258	-	(2,215)	(2,215)	16,043
Public Health	6,294	(3,607)	(2,296)	1,311	3,998
Other	6,752	(1,635)	(1,261)	374	5,491
Subtotal	31,304	(5,242)	(5,772)	(530)	25,532

Service Reserves:

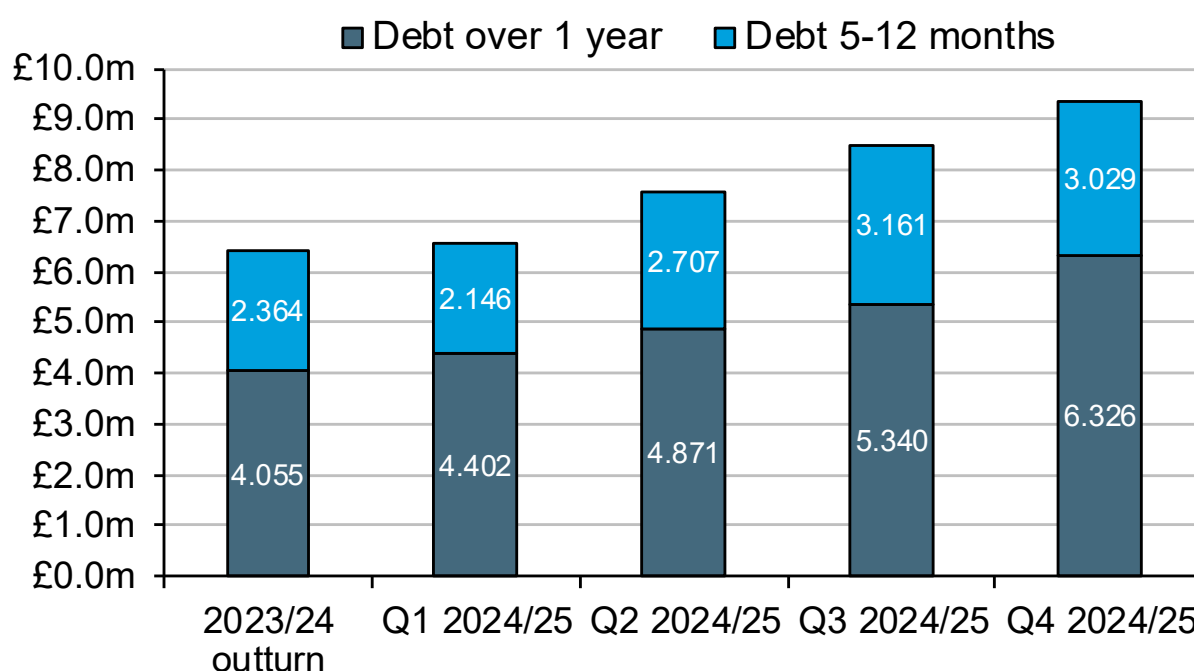
Corporate Waste	19,486	(141)	358	499	19,844
Capital Programme	9,851	(391)	(791)	(400)	9,060
Insurance	7,358	-	320	320	7,678
Adult Social Care	3,034	(2,445)	(3,034)	(589)	-
Subtotal	39,729	(2,977)	(3,147)	(170)	36,582

Strategic Reserves:

Priority / Transformation	7,314	(4,313)	(2,127)	2,187	5,187
Financial Management	35,806	(29,360)	(24,490)	4,869	11,316
Subtotal	43,120	(33,673)	(26,617)	7,056	16,503
Total Reserves	114,153	(41,892)	(35,535)	6,357	78,618
General Fund	10,000	-	-	-	10,000
Total Reserves and Balances	124,153	(41,892)	(35,535)	6,357	88,618

Changes to Fees & Charges

The Escape Cafe at County Hall provides catering facilities for Council employees and external colleagues. At 2025/26 RPPR a 4% increase on prices was approved; during Q4 approval has been given to increase prices by a further 10%. With the possibility of new tenants occupying space in County Hall, this could also generate additional income to the Council.

Outstanding debt analysis (£ millions)

The value of aged debt over 5 months as a proportion of debt raised has increased from 3.93% in 2023/24 to 5.00% in 2024/25.

The majority £8.936m (95.52%) of all debt over 5 months old relates to Adult Social Care (ASC), which has increased by £2.952m compared with the 2023/24 outturn position of £5.984m.

The debt over 5 months related to income due to other departments has decreased by £0.016m to £0.419m, compared with the 2023/24 outturn position of £0.435m.

ASC debt represents most of the Council's debt collection activity and recovery can take a long time due to the circumstances of the debtors. For example, an ASC client may lack capacity to make decisions for themselves and an appointee, deputy or power of attorney therefore needs to be established, or the debt forms part of the administration of an estate.

Recovery of debt continues to be a high priority. As part of ongoing improvement work a Debt Recovery Project was initiated to review and improve the ASC debt recovery model. Work to explore the end-to-end ASC debt recovery processes began and several priority action areas were identified and taken forward. In recognition of the complexity of ASC debt recovery a fuller strategic review is required to identify and take forward any further opportunities for improvement, which is being progressed into the new financial year.

Treasury Management Prudential Indicators – end of year 2024/25

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy published the revised Treasury and Prudential codes in 2021, which now requires quarterly reporting of performance against forward looking prudential indicators. The performance of the Council's treasury management activity, against benchmarks and the key indicators in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, as approved by Full Council at its meeting of 7 February 2024, are set out below.

Investments

Cash investment balances as at 31 March 2025 have fallen by 43% in one year, from £202.5m at Q4 2023/24 to £115.3m at Q4 2024/25, due to a combination of reducing reserve levels and a strategy to meet the capital borrowing requirement from internal balances to delay external borrowing. The average investment return over Q4 was 4.96%, performing above the benchmark rate by 41 basis points (or 0.41 percentage points). Performance has improved as a result of Money Market Fund yields holding value for a extended period following a Base Rate reduction and undertaking a number of short-term investments in the Local Authority market which achieved above benchmark rates due to general lack of liquidity and increased demand in the sector.

Quarter	Average Investment Balance £m	Average Investment return	Average Benchmark Rate*	Difference
Q1	217.354	5.48%	5.19%	0.29%
Q2	204.434	5.36%	5.03%	0.33%
Q3	178.026	5.10%	4.80%	0.30%
Q4	142.417	4.96%	4.55%	0.41%

**the Benchmark rate used is the Standard Overnight Index Average (SONIA); a rate administered by the Bank of England based on actual transactions of overnight borrowing by financial institutions.*

During Q4 we have monitored the security of the Council's investment, to assess the risk of those investments losing their value. These risks were assessed using the financial standing of the groups invested in, the length of each investment, and the historic default rates. Our investment strategy sets an allowable risk level of 0.050% (i.e. that there is a 99.95% probability that the Council will get its investments back). The actual indicator ranged between 0.007% and 0.008%, reflecting the high proportion of investments held in highly secure and/or very liquid investments.

Investment Risk benchmark	0.050%
Maximum investment risk experienced Q4	0.008%

Borrowing

The table below shows the Council's total external borrowing and average rate as at 31 March 2025:

	Balance as at 31 March 2025 £m	Average Rate
PWLB	205.142	4.45%
Market Loans	6.450	4.25%
Total borrowing	211.592	4.44%

The table below shows the outturn position of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) compared to the forecast position within the 2024/25 strategy approved in February 2024. The closing CFR showed an under-borrowed position of £76.274m, compared to the original estimate of £75.000m under-borrowed. The Strategy throughout the year forecast that the level of reserves and balances in the medium term allowed for internal borrowing of up to £75.000m, and therefore no new external borrowing was expected to be required during the 2024/25 financial

year to support the capital programme. This supports the strategic decision to delay borrowing in the current economic environment where interest rates are expected to fall in the short to medium term.

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) (Underlying Borrowing Need)	Original Estimate 2024/25 £m	Outturn Position 2024/25 £m
Opening CFR	280.571	271.303
Borrowing Need	32.143	24.279
Minimum Revenue Provision	(7.406)	(7.743)
Closing CFR	304.684	287.839
External Borrowing as at 31 March 2025	229.684	211.592
Under Borrowing Position	75.000	76.247

The table below shows that the Council is operating within the Operational Boundary and Authorised Borrowing Limits set within the Treasury Management strategy and has sufficient headroom to cover the borrowing need arising from the year's capital programme.

Borrowing Limits	Operational Boundary £m	Authorised Borrowing Limit £m
Limit set for 2024/25	393.000	413.000
Less: PFI & Leases	58.000	58.000
Limit for Underlying Borrowing	335.000	355.000
External Borrowing at 31 March 2025	211.592	211.592
Headroom*	123.408	143.408

**Authorised Borrowing headroom cannot be less than zero*

The maturity profile of the Authority's borrowing is within the limits set within the strategy.

Maturity Structure of borrowing	Lower Limit set	Upper Limit set	Actual as at 31 March 2025
Under 12 Months	0%	25%	2%
12 months to 2 years	0%	40%	3%
2 years to 5 years	0%	60%	7%
5 years to 10 years	0%	70%	22%
Over 10 years	0%	90%	66%

Business Services – end of year 2024/25

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

Key cross cutting programmes

Carbon

In line with our current Climate Emergency Action Plan 2023-2025, progress continued in Q4 on the delivery of energy efficiency projects across the estate. A total of 3 projects were completed in Q4:

- 2 window replacement projects: Bexhill Library and Grovelands Primary School
- 1 Heat Decarbonisation Project: Peasmarsh Primary School

The Council Plan target for 2024/25 was to complete 23 energy efficiency projects and the outturn was 20. This reflects cuts to both the Salix Recycling Fund and the ring-fenced Council budget for directly funded carbon saving projects. However, there were business as usual projects which help make up some of the shortfall in project numbers, albeit with relatively lower carbon savings than targeted low carbon projects. Work to increase training continued, with 2 energy efficiency workshops taking place in Q4, bringing the total delegates trained during 2024/25 to 105, exceeding the target of 40. Ongoing work continued to support the 10 sites in the pilot Site Heating Control Interventions Initiative, with annual savings of £6,300 being achieved from no- or low-cost measures.

Energy consumption and carbon emissions are reported a quarter in arrears, so Q3 data is the most up to date information (**ref i**). Our carbon emissions for Q3 2024/25 were 2% lower than Q3 2023/24, despite the weather being slightly colder. The weather in Q4 will have significantly influenced the total annual consumption but if consumption was similar to Q4 last year, then the projected emissions reduction for 2024/25 would be 1.3% year on year compared to a 13% target. The reduction compared to the baseline year 2019/20 would be 36%, against a target of 50%. Actual outturn consumption and emissions data will be available in Q1/Q2 2025/26. The UK grid carbon emissions factor (which is the figure used to convert electricity consumption from the national grid into equivalent carbon emissions) has remained static since 2023/24, so the Q3 fall in emissions is due to a reduction in the amount of electricity and gas consumed by the Council.

The Council's annual spend on electricity has significantly reduced since 2019/20. The spend figures below have been estimated using the consumption figures from 2019/20 and 2023/24, price-corrected against the average unit rates from 2023/24. The spend figures are based on consumption only (i.e. not including standing charges or any other non-commodity costs).

Year	Spend
2019/20	£7,148,566
2023/24	£5,422,112

These spend figures demonstrate that the introduction of renewable energy creation (e.g. solar PV), a reduction in buildings owned and occupied, energy efficiency measures and initiatives, resulted in an estimated financial reduction of £1,726,454 (24% reduction) when comparing 2023/24 to 2019/20.

Oracle Implementation

Implementation of the Oracle Fusion system continued throughout Q4 with most modules of Phase 1 (Enterprise Performance Management) and all of Phase 2 (Finance with dependent HR processes, Procurement and Helpdesk modules) now live. The Recruitment module is also live and use by hiring managers will follow training in Q1 2025/26. Phase 3 (Payroll and all remaining HR processes) will be delivered during 2025 and 2026.

The programme is now in a 3 month 'hypercare' period of enhanced support from the programme team and partners. The system is proving stable and the majority of queries to the helpdesk are

about system access due to inherent complications with roles and permissions. This is typical in system implementations and improvements have been identified and are being implemented.

Human Resources and Organisational Development (HROD)

During 2024/25 a new People Strategy was developed for 2024-2027. The strategy helps support our managers and staff to respond to the changing and challenging operating environment in which the Council exists. It supports the delivery of the Council's priorities and provides the direction and purpose for our people related activities. Stakeholder engagement confirmed the four themes from the previous strategy remain appropriate. These are: Leadership and Management; Performance, Development and Reward; Employee Engagement and Inclusion; and Employee Health and Wellbeing. Using the evidence gained from our engagement, the strategy includes specific activities and deliverables within each of the four themes. In conjunction with the People Strategy a 'Leadership Management Capability Framework' has been developed which sets out the management and leadership standards expected in support of the Council's priority outcomes and operating principles. Work is continuing with departments to embed this.

In common with many employers, we are experiencing recruitment and retention challenges in some occupational areas as a result of current labour market conditions and cost of living pressures. As part of HROD's work to respond to these pressures a number of actions have been implemented, including:

- Development of a new employer brand – We Choose East Sussex – and updated recruitment materials to identify the Council as an employer of choice. Throughout 2025/26 we will build on our successful recruitment campaign to understand more about what attracts people to join the Council and encourages them to stay.
- Implementation of a number of targeted recruitment and retention strategies such as a new 'refer a friend' scheme an updated relocation policy, employee loans policy, salary sacrifice schemes and financial wellbeing resources. Market supplements are paid for some of our roles, for example social workers in Children's Services.
- Continuation of hybrid working arrangements to broaden our recruitment pool and to respond to new expectations in the workforce on flexible working post-COVID-19. We are also developing digital approaches.
- Use of apprenticeships, traineeships and intern arrangements as a way of bringing new talent into the Council. This will be further developed as the arrangements for the new Growth and Skills Levy become clear.
- Attendance at events, such as careers fairs and shows, to maximise our presence with job seekers, as well as 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.
- Guidance on making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates has now been published and promoted to recruiting managers. The Council's suite of recruitment policies is also currently being reviewed to embed inclusive practice.
- Guidance on the use of volunteers, as a route into the workplace, is in development with the intention being for such opportunities to support people who are out of work to come back into the workplace through gaining confidence and experience of work.
- Guidance on the completion of exit interviews has also been published and a workforce planning toolkit launched in Q4 to support operational managers with forecasting and planning for future workforce capacity.

Attendance Management and Wellbeing

The 2024/25 year-end sickness absence figure for the whole authority (excluding schools) is 9.21 days lost per FTE, an increase of 0.9% since last year. The target of 9.10 days/FTE has therefore been missed.

Key drivers of this increase include:

- Flu-related absence, up by 1,025 days on 2023/24.
- Musculoskeletal (MSK)-related absence, up by 1,037 days on 2023/24 - primarily within Adult Social Care.

Mental health remains the leading cause of absence, though the total number of days lost rose only marginally (+14 days). Notably, stress-related absence fell by 1,306 days, linked to proactive early contact with managers by the Attendance Management team since January 2023. This has helped reduce the average duration of stress-related absences from 24 to 17 days.

Actions underway:

- HR are reviewing short-term flu-related absence data and offering targeted coaching and training for managers as appropriate.
- Building on the success of the stress intervention, a pilot for early intervention for MSK-related absence in ASCH has now commenced, with contact being made with the manager in the first week of absence.
- The dedicated MSK project with Brighton University has completed its Phase 1 evidence gathering with recommendations, implementation will follow in September 2025.

Ongoing health and well-being initiatives include:

- Targeted health workshops addressing key absence reasons.
- Evaluation of well-being support via the "Most Significant Change" method, including feedback from the Time to Talk about Mental Health campaign.
- Expansion of our Mental Health First Aiders network.
- Regular menopause cafés to support staff wellbeing.

This multi-pronged strategy aims to ensure support and interventions are evidence-based, targeted, and responsive to staff needs.

Procurement

Procurement, contract and supplier management activities

The Council has spent £382m with local suppliers over the past 12 months. This equates to 60% of our total procurement spend, against a target of 60%. 815 local suppliers were used. The Procurement team continues to promote contract opportunities to local suppliers, as well as building local supply chain opportunities into tenders where possible.

Social Value

A number of contracts that commenced in 2024/25 secured significant social value commitment, including:

- Building & Washroom Cleaning Services for the Council's corporate and schools estate: The successful supplier committed to a Social Value offer of £1.76m over the initial 3 year contract term (14% of contract spend). Social Value benefits include apprenticeship and job opportunities for local people, including those in priority groups such as long term unemployed and young people not in employment, education or training (NEET); work experience and career awareness programmes offered to local schools and colleges; and initiatives to reduce operational carbon emissions.
- The Joff & Heathfield Youth Centres construction works: The successful supplier committed to a Social Value offer of £4.27m across the 2 contracts (69% of combined contract spend). Social

Value benefits include spend with local supply chains; apprenticeships; professional development opportunities for local people; job opportunities and employability support for local people in priority groups, including long term unemployed; and supporting environmental programmes with local groups, schools and colleges.

- Hollington Youth Hub Works Contractor: The successful supplier committed to a Social Value offer of £700k (30% of contract spend). Social Value benefits include spend with local supply chains; the creation of local jobs; work experience and career awareness programmes offered to local schools and colleges; local volunteering time for staff and initiatives to reduce operational carbon emissions.

The Social Value secured through our Property Frameworks used for the Planned Maintenance Programme in 2024/25 has been reported in Q4. Contracts with a combined value of £11.5m were awarded and secured £1.8m in Social Value, which equates to 16%. The Social Value consists of a number of different measures, including targeted spend with local sub-contracted suppliers and contractors, which is an important contributor to economic growth, and various employment and skills initiatives.

In Q4, a total of 11 contracts commenced, of which 8 were out of scope of the Social Value Measurement Charter, which quantifies the economic, social and environmental benefits of the procurement, as they accessed an existing pre-approved list of suppliers (Frameworks) with predefined contractual terms. The in-scope contracts for Q4 had a total contract value of £14.6m and secured £2.5m in Social Value commitment, which equates to an outturn of 17% against a target of 10%.

These figures bring the final outturn figure for the year to 19% against a target of 10%.

Procurement policy

The Procurement Act 2023 came into force during Q4 and the Policy Team led on ensuring this significant legislative change was embedded into the Council's Procurement and Supply Chain operations. This has included finalising the Procurement & Contract Standing Orders which were recently approved and included officer obligations with respect to Modern Slavery, Environmental Sustainability and Social Value. Internal governance changes have taken place and are being communicated to officers across all departments.

Further work on developing the Council's Social Value Model (SVM) has been undertaken following the previous update to Place Scrutiny Committee in September. This has included the creation of a Needs and Strategies tool which helps buyers to identify and target social value outcomes more closely aligned with existing Council priorities.

Highlights of the Policy Team's work over 2024/25 include:

- Successfully preparing the Council for the implementation of the Procurement Act and National Procurement Policy Statement.
- Drafting and embedding the Council's Supplier Code of Conduct in our procurements and contracts, which is a key practical lever of Council policies.
- Increasing the number of suppliers reporting carbon emissions and reduction plans to more than 50% of overall spend and a reduction of overall Scope 3 supplier emissions of more than 30% for 2023/24 (the latest annual data available) compared to the baseline year of 2022/23.
- Successfully implementing a trial of the SVM in Adult Social Care and Health procurements and reporting positive feedback from voluntary and charity sector organisations and commissioners on this qualitative approach to social value. This will lead to a wider development and roll-out of the SVM in due course.

Work is continuing to engage the care sector in East Sussex to deliver Modern Slavery training which has previously been rolled out successfully in Surrey and Brighton.

Contract and Commercial Advisory (CCA)

Much of the CCA's focus in Q4 was on ensuring the Council is compliant with the Contract Management obligations as prescribed in the Procurement Act 2023. As well as launching a new suite of guidance material and training, proactive engagements with the early affected projects are now underway. For 2025/26, the team's focus will remain on the regulations as we approach key new stages in the Procurement Act that will require careful consideration and action. This includes the publication of Contract Details Notices, which for some projects (£5m+) will require the publication of the contract Key Performance Indicators and a redacted copy of the contract itself. On top of this, the team will focus on Contract Assurance activities to begin providing the authority with the assurance that contracts are performing as required and that contract managers are appropriately trained, in line with the National Procurement Policy Statement.

Internal Audit

Through the delivery of sufficient audit coverage in Q4, the Chief Internal Auditor continues to be able to provide assurance over the adequacy and effectiveness of governance, risk management and internal control for the Council.

Internal Audit have continued to focus on delivery of the Annual Internal Audit Plan and were able to complete 95% of the plan to draft report stage by the end of Q4, against an annual target of 90%.

All high priority actions agreed with management as part of individual audit reviews are subject to action tracking, whereby we seek written confirmation from services that these have been implemented. As at the end of Q4, 14/15 (93.3%) of the agreed high-risk actions due to be implemented on a 12-month rolling basis have been actioned by management. The one outstanding action, relating to the need to introduce a declaration to the staff loan application process that requires staff to confirm that they have considered the affordability of the loan, has not yet been implemented. A revised implementation date has therefore been agreed.

Property

Following approval by the Lead Member for Resources and Climate Change (LMRCC) in Q4 the Council acquired Eastbourne Borough Council's share of Pacific House, Eastbourne, and with Eastbourne Borough Council commenced marketing of the commercial development site, known as Site 6, adjacent to Pacific House. In March 2025, the LMRCC approved the grant of a lease of Sidley Depot to Rother District Council for their waste services, and approved the disposal of land linked to the development of the North Street Quarter in Lewes which enables the regeneration of a strategic brownfield site.

The Council continues to ensure its office hubs are used efficiently and during 2024/25 the space used for staff based at County Hall was rationalised and reduced. In Q4, the Council vacated both South and East blocks, which involved over 163 teams moving to remaining blocks (Central, North, and West). The vacant blocks are being advertised for office use, with marketing commencing in March 2025. The total work on office rationalisation across the corporate estate, including at Eastbourne and Hastings, has provided significant benefits to the Council including £1.050m of financial benefit, reductions in resource required to support ongoing facilities management and maintenance, and reductions in carbon emissions.

Two youth centre projects, funded by external capital funding from central government (Youth Investment Fund) are nearing completion. Works to the main structures of The Joff, Peacehaven, and Heathfield youth hubs were completed in Q4 and final fitout will take place in Q1 2025/26. In addition, planning permission was granted in Q4 for Hollington Youth Hub, which was funded by central government as part of Hastings Level Up Funding. Two Supported Living Adult Social Care capital projects were completed and became operational with clients moving in.

IT & Digital

Microsoft Copilot M365 discovery work was a focus for Q4. 33 pilots identified by a cross-Council working group are now underway to investigate how AI can be used safely and responsibly to enhance productivity and enable efficiencies. Webinars, workshops and 'prompt-a-thons' have been taking place throughout Q4 to support pilot participants in their contextual application of the technology. Usage is being monitored to enable evaluation of the relative benefits and these results will inform any business case that would be fed into the RPPR process.

Work to replace the Council's office and contact centre telephony platforms continued through Q4 and the Council's contact centres migrated onto the new platform during April. Remaining users of office telephones will move over to Microsoft Teams Telephony in Q1 2025/26. The proposed changes will modernise a key aspect of the Council's digital infrastructure – moving from desk-based landline phones to a digital service which is aligned to hybrid working. Mobile phone and other IT equipment use continued to be targeted as part of cost saving measures, supported by a communication campaign asking for unused smartphones and kit to be returned to IT & Digital. Work continues on the eligibility criteria for a corporate smartphone, with the aim being to reduce the number of smartphones used and in turn lower costs.

The Windows 11 device refresh project continued during Q4. With the end of support for Windows 10 approaching in October 2025, the project has passed its midpoint milestone, with over 3,000 devices now refreshed and staff experiencing the benefits of a faster device and upgraded operating system. Devices will now be refreshed every 5 years to extend the value of the assets. The scale at which this is done (across 3 councils through the Orbis Partnership) has many benefits and, in this case, a saving of 18% per device has been achieved through this joint procurement.

IT & Digital resources continued to support moves in conjunction with the office rationalisation work ongoing throughout Q4.

The migration of services to the new South East Grid (SEG) network on behalf of the Link Consortium is now complete. Hosted by the Council, the network allows the Council and other public sector organisations in the South East to access higher speed digital infrastructure connections and contributes to the provision of ultra-fast data network connectivity throughout East Sussex.

Our Strategic Digital Framework sets out how we will use technology to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our business processes. During 2024/25 we:

- reviewed our IT systems and upgraded these where possible to take advantage of advances in technology. However, there is a significant cost involved in replacing older systems, requiring cost/benefit judgements on a case-by-case basis.
- took part in benchmarking exercises to understand how well we are performing.
- adopted a data management framework to set best practice guidelines around data standards, data principles and data policy.
- maintained a set of clear and robust information governance processes to make sure data is kept safe and is shared and used appropriately.

Revenue Budget Summary

The 2024/25 Business Services net revenue budget is £30.753m. There were £1.003m planned savings in BSD for 2024/25 including £0.310m of unachieved savings brought forward from 2023/24 (**ref ii**). The impact of any unachieved savings is included within the current outturn forecast which is a £0.405m underspend (**ref viii**). In Business Administration and Finance – there was an underspend of £0.389m (**ref iii**) as the result of new grant income, higher than budgeted income for services and a reduction in expenditure. IT&D has an underspend of £0.145m (**ref iv**) because of reduced costs including staff vacancies and a £60k contract expense expected in 2024/25 that has slipped to 2025/26. In Procurement the balance of the unrealised £0.100m income target (**ref v**), will be offset from part of the underspend arising from a forecast reduction in

the required contribution to Orbis of £0.307m (**ref vii**). In Property there is a net overspend of £0.333m (**ref vi**) which is a reduction of over £0.300m since Q3. The main factors include; £0.240m overspend relating to St Mark's House as the Eastbourne estate had been planned to reduce in 2023/24, however the Council remained in the premises until October 2024; at Q3 there was a net £0.205m overspend on Reactive Maintenance due to Health & Safety Executive requests and essential equipment that had to be replaced. However, in Q4 spend was comparatively lower which has helped to improve the overall position. Overspends that Property were unable to mitigate during Q4 include a £0.140m net overspend on the PFI and Joint Use budgets. Finally, there have been areas of underspending; Surplus Properties had additional income of £0.129m due to the Mckinley Way Easement. Facilities Management had a favourable movement of £0.090m where a milder winter reduced gritting and utilities costs. £0.152m reduction in consultants being engaged, and some additional income relating to backdated lease renewals. £0.052m underspend on Cleaning and Waste Budgets. £0.072m underspend on the Property Staffing budget from vacancies that were kept on hold for the remainder of the financial year.

Capital Programme Summary

The 2024/25 capital budget is £39.059m. At Q4 there is a net £9.943m underspend (**ref xviii**) comprising the following variances: SALIX Contract - £0.256m underspend (**ref ix**) Salix Recycling ended in March 2025. Youth Investment Fund - £1.745m slippage (**ref x**) due to design changes and subsequent planning approvals needed to bring the project back within budget. Hollington Youth Centre - £0.327m slippage (**ref xi**) a main contractor has now been appointed, and the works were started but the majority has slipped into 2025/26. Special Educational Needs - Grove Park £0.232m slippage (**ref xii**) due to issues with site conditions and badger setts, works are now slipped into the next financial year. Core Programme - Schools Basic Need £0.368m underspend (**ref xiii**) £0.146m of the EY Childcare Wraparound grant will slip into 2025/26 and there is an underspend due to no further mobile classrooms being required after Q3. Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Corporate - £0.875m net slippage (**ref xiv**) relates to slippage for St Marks dilapidations. Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools - £1.033m slippage (**ref xv**) supply chain delays, lack of contractor capacity and adverse weather affected several projects, pushing them into 2025/26. Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation - slippage of £2.191m (**ref xvi**) which relates to a change in approach to the Nutanix refresh (previously reported) and reprofiled spend on the device refresh project. Core Programme – Oracle – £2.622m slippage (**ref xvii**) as programme work continues into 2025/26 a portion of the expenditure will now be incurred in 2025/26.

Performance exceptions (Q4: RAG change since Q3)

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

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	2024/25 outturn	Note ref
Reduce the amount of CO2 arising from County Council operations	36% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions	50% reduction on baseline year (2019/20) emissions (emissions not to exceed 6,211 tonnes CO2e)	R	R	R	CO	Emissions are reported a quarter in arrears Q3: projected reduction by year end: 36% reduction on baseline year	i

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
Planned savings – BSD Property	593	803	803	-	-	
Planned savings – BSD IT&D	100	100	100	-	-	
Planned savings – Orbis Procurement		100	100	-	-	
Total Savings	693	1,003	1,003	-	-	ii
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	693	1,003	1,003	-	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
Property	-	-	-	
Procurement	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	-	-	-	

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

² 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).

³ 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	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Finance and Bus Admin	13,156	(6,517)	6,639	13,979	(7,729)	6,250	(823)	1,212	389	iii
HR & OD	3,407	(1,107)	2,300	3,597	(1,286)	2,311	(190)	179	(11)	
IT & Digital	13,212	(4,132)	9,080	15,083	(6,148)	8,935	(1,871)	2,016	145	iv
Procurement	62	(100)	(38)	70	(16)	54	(8)	(84)	(92)	v
Property	26,882	(17,895)	8,987	30,290	(20,970)	9,320	(3,408)	3,075	(333)	vi
Contribution to Orbis	3,785	-	3,785	3,478	-	3,478	307	-	307	vii
TOTAL BSD	60,504	(29,751)	30,753	66,497	(36,149)	30,348	(5,993)	6,398	405	viii

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under 2024/25 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
SALIX Contract	350	350	350	94	256	256	-	-	ix
Lansdowne Unit (CSD)	39	39	39	1	38	38	-	-	
Youth Investment Fund	7,003	7,003	7,203	5,458	1,745	-	1,745	-	x
Hollington Youth Centre	-	-	663	336	327	-	327	-	xi
Hastings & Rother Skills LUP	-	-	1,000	907	93	-	93	-	
Hastings and Rother LUP Minibus	70	70	70	-	70	-	70	-	
Sidley Family Hub	90	90	90	90	-	-	-	-	
Sorrell Drive Refurbishment	165	165	165	165	-	-	-	-	
Special Educational Needs	2,510	2,510	560	522	38	46	9	(17)	
Special Educational Needs - Grove Park	17,120	17,120	1,300	1,068	232	-	232	-	xii
Special Provision in Secondary School (Priory and Robertsbridge)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Disabled Children's Homes	189	189	24	10	14	-	14	-	
14 Westfield Lane	17	17	17	-	17	-	17	-	
Core Programme - Schools Basic Need	61,874	61,874	600	232	368	222	146	-	xiii
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Corporate	45,482	45,482	4,401	3,526	875	-	875	-	xiv
Pacific House	713	713	713	713	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Capital Building Improvements Schools	40,401	40,401	5,097	4,064	1,033	-	1,033	-	xv
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation	71,234	71,234	7,399	5,208	2,191	-	2,191	-	xvi
Core Programme - IT & Digital Strategy Implementation Oracle	26,513	26,513	9,344	6,722	2,622	-	2,622	-	xvii
IT & Digital - Utilising Automation	24	24	24	-	24	-	24	-	
Total BSD Gross	273,794	273,794	39,059	29,116	9,943	562	9,398	(17)	xviii

Communities, Economy & Transport – end of year 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. This support is provided through a range of initiatives. 211 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q4, including during the National Apprenticeship week in February 2025 and National Careers Week in March 2025. Young people were also supported through work experience placements, sessions to help them develop their networking and interview skills, and Open Doors workplace visits. During 2024/25, over 1,500 students have had the opportunity to go on an Open Doors workplace visit, and over 50 employers have committed to offer visits. An iCan careers event in March 2025 was attended by more than 400 young people from 34 schools. They had the opportunity to explore career pathways, engage in 6 interactive workshops on employability skills, and connect with representatives from 32 different organisations (employers, training providers and support organisations) offering guidance on employment, training, and further education.

Building on the success of the previous Effective Transitions 'Steps to Success' pilot in East Sussex, which ran between 2021 – 2023, the Council was selected to take part in Phase 2 from 2024 – 2026. Phase 2 started in September 2024 with 315 Year 10 students who are on Free School Meals and are either persistently absent from school or have Special Education Needs or Disabilities. The project will help to determine what interventions are effective in helping vulnerable young people to successfully transition into post-16 environments.

The Council continued to help adults improve their numeracy skills through 14 Multiply interventions in 2024/25. 1,300 people were supported as part of the interventions, which included the East Sussex College Group delivering maths interventions for the hospitality sector and a maths through payslips short course.

Apprenticeships

In 2024/25, 147 new and existing staff enrolled onto apprenticeships. This is a 21% increase on the number of new starters for 2023/24. A large proportion of these have come from Children's Services, where all new staff working within a residential or community-based setting now undertake an apprenticeship to meet the mandatory training requirements of the role. By transferring staff onto apprenticeships, rather than paying for external training, Children's Services saved £39,150 in training costs in 2024/25. In addition, this has also meant a significant uptake in spend from the Council's levy.

The Government announced plans in September 2024 to transform the apprenticeship levy into the 'Growth and Skills' Levy. We are still awaiting the detail of the changes which are now expected to be included in the autumn statement. The delay in this information being published means that the new, shorter 'foundation' apprenticeships, targeted at young people working within positions of need, such as care, are also delayed. However, one change that has been implemented is the removal of the requirement for apprentices who do not have a GCSE in Maths and/or English to undertake functional skills training. This requirement has always been a significant barrier to a more expansive uptake of apprenticeships, and we are anticipating a wider range of candidates wishing to undertake an apprenticeship as a result.

Cultural investment and recovery

Recruitment of the formal Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) board began in Q4. The LVEP Strategy for Growth was circulated in Q4, to support recruitment to the board.

APPENDIX 6

With support from the Council and other partners, Towner Eastbourne hosted the Turner Prize in 2023/24. An economic impact report has found that the Turner Prize exhibition, the prize giving ceremony, and the accompanying Eastbourne Alive programme produced £16.1m of benefits to the East Sussex economy. 130,000 people visited the exhibition, and the estimated value of the media coverage was £14.3m.

Broadband

The Broadband Project has formally closed. We continue to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its Project Gigabit programme and Cityfibre, who have been appointed as the BDUK's supplier for East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. We are currently in discussion with Cityfibre to explore the possibilities of pushing their rollout even further since there is no detail of how BDUK plans to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county. There is still no update on the possible reopening of the Gigabit Voucher scheme run by BDUK although some areas of the country now have a revised scheme, mainly in urban areas.

Job creation

21 full time equivalent (FTE) jobs were created by Economic Development managed programmes in Q4, meaning the total for 2024/25 is 60 (FTE) against a target of 45 (FTE) **(ref i)**. 29.5 (FTE) jobs were created through the first round of the Newhaven Business Grants Programme, 18.5 (FTE) through the first round of the Rural Business Grants Programme, and 12 (FTE) through the delivery of specialist business support through the 'Big Ambitions' programme.

Environment and climate change

We continue to work both across the organisation and with partners across a range of environment and climate change areas. This included:

- Deciding, after an assessment of the potential for a solar farm at the closed landfill site at Pebsham, that the preferred approach is to seek to lease the site to a third party commercial solar farm developer when the site reverts to the Council in 2028. This is subject to completing further assessments of viability, which will also require an external grant to be secured.
- Beginning to test the climate change adaptation toolkit, which is designed to assist services to integrate adaptation into their services.
- Starting discussions with GB Energy about options for securing third party funding for rooftop solar panels on grant-maintained schools.
- Providing environmental advice to client local planning authorities on nearly 2,000 planning applications during 2024/25.
- Working with all Sussex local authorities to prepare for the fourth round of Sussex Solar Together in summer 2025.
- The Council helped to deliver the 40% of the actions set out in the East Sussex Climate Emergency Road Map 2022 – 2025 which were assigned to the Council. The remaining 60% of actions are assigned to other partners in the Road Map.
- Delivering the Cold Alert service to over 3,000 residents.
- The Council continued to host the [Sussex Nature Partnership](#) and the [Sussex Air quality partnership](#).
- We have continued to develop the local nature recovery strategy, which is currently planned to be published by early 2026.

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined within the statutory determination period during 2024/25, against a target of 70%. 100% of County Council development applications were determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time during 2024/25, against a target of 70%.

Highways, transport and waste**Highways improvements and road condition**

The road condition outturns (where a lower figure indicates better road condition), were published in Q4. These figures are only available at one point each year and are based on specialist laser surveys undertaken in summer 2024 for Principal and Non-Principal roads, and manual surveys for Unclassified roads in 2025. The outturns refer to the percentage of road length across the entire county, and all roads are likely to have a mixture of green, amber and red road condition sections. The surveys measure road condition in 10m sections. The road condition outturns reported here are the percentage of 10m sections that should be considered for maintenance. So, for example, a proportion of 5% indicates that 5% of all 10m sections surveyed of that road type should be considered for maintenance. The percentage of Principal roads requiring maintenance was 5%, against a target of 7%. The percentage of Non-Principal roads requiring maintenance was 6% against a target of 8%. The percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance was 31%, against a target of 25%, so the target has been missed (ref ii). The intense strain on resources means that we are not able to invest in road maintenance to the level we would want to and have been forced to scale back our plans to match the grant funding we receive.

We repaired 8,009 potholes in Q4, with 6,734 of these being carriageway potholes; the remainder were primarily footway potholes. Amongst the carriageway potholes, 90.8% of these were completed within the required timescales. Overall, during 2024/25 over 23,000 potholes have been repaired, with almost 19,000 of these being carriageway potholes. We completed 29 road improvement schemes in Q4 to improve the condition of the roads. Overall, 117 road improvement schemes have been completed in 2024/25.

We replaced, repaired or cleaned 92 road signs in Q4. The patching and drainage projects were completed at the end of Q3. During 2024/25 we completed 510 patches across 381 sites. We replaced, repaired or cleaned 350 road signs and refreshed 683 road markings. We also completed 565 minor road drainage schemes, and 75 larger schemes.

Road safety

5 road safety infrastructure schemes were implemented in Q4. During 2024/25 a total of 24 schemes have been implemented, meeting the target for the year of 24. The Council runs courses aimed at giving children and adults the skills they need for riding their bikes on the road. We delivered 76 Bikeability courses to 691 individuals in Q4. During 2024/25, 476 courses were delivered to 4,085 individuals, meeting the target for the year. 50 'Wheels for All' sessions were delivered to 607 attendees in Q4. During 2024/25 474 sessions were delivered to 5,823 attendees, meeting the target for the year.

Transport and parking

East Sussex was assigned an additional £9.9m by the Government for 2025/26, as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). Options for this extra funding were considered at a Lead Member meeting in Q4. On 22 April 2025, Cabinet agreed to allocate some of this money to the Exceat Bridge project, to enable the preferred option of a 2-lane, offline replacement bridge to continue.

£18.5m of capital funds were allocated to bus priority measures in East Sussex as part of the Government's Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP). 5 bus priority schemes across Eastbourne, Newhaven and Peacehaven were identified, and a public consultation on all schemes took place in summer 2023. 3 of the 5 schemes are progressing through the design stages with construction to follow from Q3 2025/26. In Q4, a Project Adjustment Request was approved by the Department for Transport to transfer funds from 2 of the bus priority measures to the Exceat bridge project. Approval to reallocate these funds to the Exceat bridge replacement project was given by Cabinet in Q1 2025/26. The Council has agreed to allocate the 2025/26 BSIP capital funding to the Newhaven (The Drove and Denton Roundabout) bus priority scheme. We aim to deliver the Telscombe Cliffs to Peacehaven bus priority scheme at the earliest opportunity if future BSIP funding is available.

Following approval by the Department for Transport, and the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, the Council has received the full allocation of £4.441m from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund, which will help to support the delivery of on street electric vehicle charge points in the county. The tender for the contract to install the charge points is due to be published in Q1 2025/26.

The Lead Member reviewed and approved proposed increases to parking charges in Rother in Q4, after having considered the feedback and recommendations to a consultation on the proposed changes.

Local Transport Plan

The new Local Transport Plan was approved by the Cabinet and County Council in Q2. Following this, work has continued to agree the future governance and monitoring arrangements for the plan and undertake a carbon assessment. Alongside the Local Transport Plan, the Rail Strategy has been refreshed, and a new Freight Strategy has been developed. However, due to the need to engage in further consultation on the Rail Strategy and Freight Strategy, including a public consultation, these strategies were not adopted by the end of 2024/25. Adoption is expected to take place in 2025/26.

Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling project

Following a review of the Eastbourne and South Walking & Cycling Package, a revised package of schemes was approved by the Lead Member in September 2024. These comprise the Eastbourne cycle parking phase 2 – which was completed in March 2025 – as well as the Horsey Cycle Route Phase 1b (between Ringwood Road and Ashford Road) and Eastbourne rail station to seafront cycle routes. Both the cycle routes are currently at the design phase with construction scheduled for 2025/26.

Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access package

The package of improvements to Eastbourne town centre is progressing on schedule. Final preparation work for Phase 2a, which will see changes to Langney Road, Bolton Road and the pedestrianisation of Terminus Road between Bankers Corner and M&S/Millets is ongoing. Our Highways contractor, Balfour Beatty Living Places has begun the tender process for construction, and this is scheduled to commence in summer 2025. Despite some delays in the planning process, the construction of Phase 2b (Victoria Place) has begun, with the drainage works package complete and the main works commencing. This project is on track to be fully completed by December 2025.

Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package

The pedestrian crossing improvements in Albert Road Hastings were substantially complete by the end of 2024/25, with final footway works and road safety audit to be completed in Q1 2025/26. Detailed designs have been finalised for the Station Approach junction improvements in Hastings and construction is expected to take place in Q3 2025/26. The design also

progressed for the Bexhill Cycle Route, with land ownership discussions ongoing. Traffic regulations orders were advertised in early 2025; and the design is being reviewed to take the objections received into consideration.

Waste

The Q3 outturn (reported a quarter in arrears) for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially was 55%. There was a small increase in total waste in Q3, combined with a decrease in the recycle, reuse, beneficial use and composting tonnage.

A public consultation on the proposal to introduce a booking system for the Household Waste Recycling Sites closed on 22 December 2024. A booking system has the potential to provide financial savings to the Council by stopping trade waste illegally entering the sites. Around half of local authorities already have booking systems in place, including several neighbouring authorities, and they have reported they are working well. The Lead Member agreed to the implementation of the booking system in Q4, and this is expected to be in place by autumn 2025.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

We completed 96% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q4, the total for 2024/25 was 91% against a target of 80%. A new section of the '[King Charles III England Coast Path](#)' opened on the 6 December 2024. This new stretch of National Trail creates a continuous 28-mile (45km) walking route between Eastbourne Pier and Rye Harbour. It also forms part of the roughly 350-mile 'South East England Coast Path' National Trail, running from the London Borough of Bexley to Shoreham-by-Sea.

Communities

Trading Standards

Trading Standards made 44 active interventions in Q4, to protect vulnerable people. During 2024/25 we made 290 interventions, meeting the target of 200. 98 interventions were with new victims identified through support sessions. These victims were offered advice and support. 192 interventions were with people who contacted the service to ask for assistance after falling victim to financial fraud or rogue trading. 57 businesses received training or advice from Trading Standards in Q4. During 2024/25 360 businesses received training or advice, against a target of 350.

This year has seen a number of significant seizures of illegal tobacco and vape products. During 2024/25 Trading Standards seized illegal cigarettes with a total retail value, if genuine, of £418,506, and illegal hand rolling tobacco with a retail value of £28,451. Illegal vapes with a retail value of £60,000 were seized over the course of the year.

Libraries

826,973 visitors came into our libraries in 2024/25, an increase from 759,005 in 2023/24. In 2024/25 44,314 participants attended library events, this compared to 34,210 in 2023/24 and 25,802 in 2022/23. 150 new volunteers have been recruited to support our volunteer offers including home library service, IT For You, Rhymetimes and conversation groups. In addition, refurbishment of Seaford and Bexhill libraries were completed in 2024/25 which have ensured our libraries are maintained in a safe and appropriate condition from which to support delivery of our Libraries Strategy.

6,602 children took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in summer 2024, exceeding the target of 5,200. 3,880 children completed the challenge, and they were provided with certificates to celebrate their success.

350 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q4. During 2024/25, 1,347 people enrolled on programmes, against a target of 1,300. 30 people passed online learning courses in libraries in Q4, including in IT, English and Maths. During 2024/25, 99 people passed online learning courses, against a target of 75, achieving qualifications to help towards finding work, gaining a new role, or entering into further education to improve their careers.

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget is £72.873m and has underspent by £1.289m. There were underspends across the department following the in-year introduction of vacancy and other spending controls and these account for £319k of the underspend. The largest 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, was partly offset by reduced electricity income (**ref vi**). The underspend in Communities was mostly due to staff vacancies, training, and slippage on completing Road Safety schemes (**ref v**). In Customer, Libraries and Registration there has been a large increase in marriage income and income from the registration academy (**ref iv**). The Economy underspend was mostly due to the receipt of Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government grant for Local Enterprise Partnership transition work and slippage in pipeline projects that were not able to be completed (**ref viii**). The largest overspend was in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots was much higher than budgeted and there was an increase in the number of winter service jobs (**ref vii**). The planned Parking saving was not 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 iii**).

Capital Programme Summary

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £52.186m and there was slippage of £9.879, spend in advance of £193k, and overspend of £34k. The largest slippage was on the Exceat Bridge scheme where works are on hold while detailed design and alternative options are costed (**ref xiv**). The Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b was delayed due to the need to readvertise a traffic regulation order (**ref xi**). Phase 2a of that package will go to planning in June, with existing objections carried forward from a previous traffic order (**ref x**). The public consultation on the A22 Corridor scheme has resulted in changes to the design, commencement, and procurement timeline (**ref xiii**). There were delays across the Bridge Strengthening scheme as designs are being reworked to achieve better value for money (**ref xv**). The Queensway Gateway Road has been delayed following a scheme redesign and underground utility issues that are awaiting approvals from the relevant statutory bodies (**ref ix**). There are a number of projects in the Other Integrated Transport scheme that slipped mainly due to planning and design issues (**ref xii**). There are additional schemes with smaller variations to their budgets.

Performance exceptions (Q4 – RAG status changed to Red, Green, and Carry Overs)**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	2024/25 outturn	Note ref
Job creation from East Sussex Programmes	27 jobs created	45 jobs created	G	G	A	G	60 FTE jobs created	i
Percentage of Unclassified roads requiring maintenance	17%	25%	G	G	G	R	31%	ii

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	-	745		iii
Environmental Services	-	60	60	-		
Total Savings	0	805	60	745		
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	0	0	0	0	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
	-	745	745	
	-			
Total	0	745	745	

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

² 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).

³ 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).

APPENDIX 6

Revenue Budget 2024/25 (£'000)

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	2024/25 Gross	2024/25 Income	2024/25 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	5,620	(4,081)	1,539	1,664	(225)	1,439	3,956	(3,856)	100	
Customer and Library Services	9,842	(4,059)	5,783	9,874	(4,514)	5,360	(32)	455	423	iv
Communities	3,457	(926)	2,531	3,055	(1,086)	1,969	402	160	562	v
Transport & Operational Services	114,237	(71,272)	42,965	117,761	(75,840)	41,921	(3,524)	4,568	1,044	vi
Highways	21,607	(4,941)	16,666	22,679	(4,750)	17,929	(1,072)	(191)	(1,263)	vii
Economy	4,008	(1,886)	2,122	4,108	(2,332)	1,776	(100)	446	346	viii
Planning and Environment	5,909	(4,642)	1,267	5,634	(4,444)	1,190	275	(198)	77	
Total CET	164,680	(91,807)	72,873	164,775	(93,191)	71,584	(95)	1,384	1,289	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under 2024/25 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	130	-	130	-	130	-	
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	700	700	70	3	67	-	67	-	
Peacehaven Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	725	727	(2)	-	-	(2)	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	65	172	(107)	-	-	(107)	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	34	(34)	(34)	-	-	
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	141	9	132	-	132	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	-	20	(20)	-	-	(20)	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	129	125	4	-	4	-	
Safer Roads Fund A2100	840	840	30	11	19	-	19	-	
Climate Emergency Works	8,859	8,859	2,220	2,036	184	-	184	-	
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	4,891	4,891	1,212	1,119	93	-	93	-	
Flood Management SuDS	600	600	398	398	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	135	107	28	-	28	-	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	4,541	4,541	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	3,181	3,181	250	264	(14)	-	-	(14)	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	18,500	18,500	1,418	1,308	110	-	110	-	
BSIP Passenger Transport	3,815	3,815	1,251	1,068	183	-	183	-	
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	5	-	5	-	5	-	

APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget 2024/25	Actual 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under 2024/25 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Queensway Gateway Road	3,313	3,313	3,358	2,888	470	-	470	-	ix
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	1,053	709	344	-	344	-	
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	170	83	87	-	87	-	
Hailsham/Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	134	64	70	-	70	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package 2A	6,936	6,936	821	374	447	-	447	-	x
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package 2B	5,454	5,454	2,696	744	1,952	-	1,952	-	xi
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,646	66,646	3,412	2,379	1,033	-	1,033	-	xii
A22 Corridor Package	3,393	3,393	2,143	1,031	1,112	-	1,112	-	xiii
A22 North of Hailsham	118	118	118	66	52	-	52	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	123	48	75	-	75	-	
Emergency Active Travel - Tranche 2	438	438	130	35	95	-	95	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	6	6	-	-	-	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	316	274	42	-	42	-	
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	9,689	9,689	400	384	16	-	16	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	2,980	427	2,553	-	2,553	-	xiv
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	3	2	1	-	1	-	
Urban Tree Challenge	262	262	22	11	11	-	11	-	
Core Programme – Highways Structural Maintenance	499,175	499,175	28,517	28,537	(20)	-	-	(20)	
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	250	256	(6)	-	-	(6)	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	3,073	2,509	564	-	564	-	xv
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,248	39,248	3,346	3,369	(23)	-	-	(23)	
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	589	(1)	-	-	(1)	
Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)	977,187	979,303	61,838	52,186	9,652	(34)	9,879	(193)	

Governance Services – end of year 2024/25

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

Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR)

Planning for 2025/26 and beyond culminated with the agreement of the budget and the Council Plan by the County Council in February 2025. The plan and budget were informed by engagement events with strategic partners, young people, business and culture representatives and Trade Unions as well as input from scrutiny committees. The Council Plan and Portfolio Plans 2025/26, which set out our priority and delivery outcomes for the coming year and our plans for delivering them, have been published online.

The plans and the budget reflect the immediate financial position facing the Council, with the authority facing very tough choices in order to continue making the necessary investments to sustain essential services in light of growing demand and complexity of need. The agreed budget is reliant on the delivery of substantial further savings, on top of the £140m identified since 2010, all of which represent hard choices which will impact on local people, our staff and partners.

However, the savings identified do not fully bridge the funding gap, and a draw from service specific reserves of £11.4m was required to present a balanced budget for 2025/26. The size of the gap in the medium term far outstrips our remaining reserves. It is essential that planned national reforms to local government funding accurately recognise the real need for services in East Sussex, and the true cost of delivering them, if we are to find a sustainable way forward beyond the coming year.

Our integrated planning process, RPPR, has allowed us to continue to focus and protect our spending where it will deliver our priority objectives most effectively. Through the process we have ensured that we have the demographic trends and performance information to monitor progress through the year, as well as the evidence we need to support proactive lobbying at a local, regional and national level. We began the planning process for 2026/27 in Q4 in preparation for State of the County and are continuing to review our processes to ensure that we are maximising the value for money that we deliver.

In December 2024 the Government published its English Devolution White Paper outlining plans to devolve greater powers to newly established Strategic Authorities, alongside a programme for Local Government Reorganisation (LGR). The Government invited expressions of interests from upper-tier and neighbouring unitary authorities in joining the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) which would see progress happen at an accelerated pace. In January 2025, following a discussion at Full Council, Cabinet approved a response to Government's invitation which confirmed a commitment to work with partners in West Sussex County Council, and Brighton & Hove City Council to develop a proposal for a Mayoral County Combined Authority (MCCA). Confirmation was received in February that Sussex was one of six successful areas accepted on to the DPP and expected to undergo reorganisation and devolution at an accelerated speed. In March, following debates at Full Council, Cabinet agreed a response to Government consultation on the establishment of an MCCA in Sussex and agreed an interim proposal for unitary local government in East Sussex developed jointly with district and borough council partners.

Corporate Lobbying

Throughout 2024/25 corporate lobbying work focussed on using our partnerships and networks at the local, regional and national level to influence policy development in a range of areas, with a focus on the reforms needed in response to growing demand and financial challenges. Significant lobbying in 2024/25 has emphasised the acute need for sustainable resources to meet increasing demand and local government funding reform to ensure the unique needs of the population of East Sussex are recognised and can continue to be met now and in the future. In Q4, this included the Council responding to consultations on local authority funding reform and the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, which highlighted that allocations of the new Recovery Grant did not account for population need in East Sussex.

The Leader and Chief Executive have continued to actively raise issues and priorities for the county with our local MPs during 2024/25, including, in Q4, through specific updates on our Council Plan and budget for 2025/26. This included the Leader meeting, along with group leaders, with a number of East Sussex MPs in Q4 to brief them on proposals included in the budget for 2025/26 and ask for their continued support in lobbying Government. Chief Officers also continue to influence service specific national policy developments through national professional associations and networks.

Supporting democracy

During 2024/25 we supported 160 meetings (46 in Q4) including: 6 County Council meetings (3 in Q4); 11 Cabinet meetings (5 in Q4); 46 Lead Member meetings (13 in Q4); 51 Scrutiny Committees and Review Boards (11 in Q4); and 46 other committees and panels (14 in Q4). We also despatched agendas for a further 21 meetings (5 in Q4). We supported 6 Whole Council Forums (3 in Q4). The webcasts of Council meetings were viewed 12,914 times (7,028 times in Q4). The most viewed meetings were the Full Council meeting in February 2025, which was watched 1,203 times and the Cabinet meeting in February 2025, which was watched 1,045 times, either by live view or as a recording.

The Member Training and Development Programme delivered a wide range of training and briefing sessions to Members throughout 2024/25, with a total of 18 sessions being delivered. Courses included sessions on Economic Development, Cost of Living and Financial Inclusion, Climate Change, Migration Schemes and the Council's Property Assets. To help ensure courses continue to meet the needs of Members, a survey of training needs was undertaken in Q1. Feedback from that survey was used to inform the development of the training offer for Members for the year.

To help make participation as easy as possible, most training sessions will continue to be delivered remotely with resources, such as slides from training sessions, being saved to the Councillors' area of the intranet for future reference. The Member Reference Group met on three occasions in 2024/25 and discussed a range of issues including the content of the Member training and development programme, proposed arrangements relating to the induction process for returning and newly elected Members following council elections, and developments relating to information technology that might be of interest/assistance to Members.

The Council's scrutiny committees have continued to use a variety of approaches to ensure timely scrutiny input on a range of issues throughout the year, including completing two scrutiny reviews which were reported to the County Council in Q4. During Q4, scrutiny comments were reported to Cabinet and Council as part of budget and Council Plan setting for 2025/26, following the Place and People Scrutiny RPPR Boards held in December which are the culmination of scrutiny's input throughout the annual RPPR cycle. In addition, People Scrutiny Committee held a Pre-decision Board to consider Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) savings proposals prior to decisions by Cabinet in February.

Three call-ins were considered by People and Place Scrutiny Committees in Q4, two relating to decisions on ASCH savings and one relating to a decision on introducing a booking system for Household Waste Recycling Sites. During the year scrutiny committees have undertaken work to influence key service developments including the updated Local Transport Plan, preventative approaches in Children's Services and the Care Quality Commission assessment of Adult Social Care. During Q4, this work included an initial meeting of the Place Scrutiny Asset Management Strategy Working Group and a meeting of the People Scrutiny School Attendance Reference Group.

The Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee has continued to scrutinise the commissioning and delivery of local health services; in Q4 this included considering reports on access to NHS dentistry services, the ophthalmology transformation programme at East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, and improvements at South East Coast Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust. The

Committee also agreed the report of its review of audiology services in East Sussex and made recommendations to the local NHS for consideration.

The Health and Wellbeing Board met in Q4 and considered the Draft East Sussex Housing Partnership Strategy, a report on the Wellbeing Approach to Prevention in Adult Social Care and an update on the East Sussex Health and Social Care Shared Delivery Plan (SDP) Integration Programme. During 2024/25, the Board also considered annual reports from the Director of Public Health, Healthwatch, Sussex learning from lives and deaths report, the East Sussex Safeguarding Children Partnership and Safeguarding Adults Board and well as regular updates on the SDP. The Board has also held informal 'deep dive' strategy sessions ahead of each formal Board meeting to inform the future Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the outcomes of which are reported as part of SDP update reports.

The East Sussex School Appeal Service received 54 in-year appeals from families during Q4, with a total of 68 appeals being heard in Q4 (as 14 appeals submitted in Q3 were also heard during the period). This resulted in 10 virtual appeal hearing sessions taking place. Of the 68 appeals, 13 were successful, 18 were dismissed by an Independent Appeal Panel and a further 22 were either withdrawn by the families or were not needed because a place became available at their preferred school before the hearing. The remaining 15 are set to be heard in Q1 2025/26. A total of 291 appeals have been received for the September 2025 secondary school intake. Of this, 240 will be heard in Q1 2025/26, the remaining 51 do not need to be heard as they have now been either withdrawn by the families or are not needed as place has now become available at their preferred school.

Across the whole of 2024/25, a total of 665 school admission appeals were received. Of this total, 217 were not heard due to either the appeal not needing to be heard as a result of a place becoming available at the preferred school or the appeals being withdrawn by the families. A total of 50 Independent Appeal Panels were convened across the year to hear the remaining 448 appeals. A total of 4 school exclusion review hearings were also conducted.

Following earlier development work and testing, enhancements to the in-house secure online digital appeal management system also went live during Q4. These enhancements have made the system more useable for both parents and the service, have improved General Data Protection Regulation compliance and improved use of the system when remote working.

Legal Services

During Q4, Legal Services assisted Trading Standards to obtain a successful conviction against a fraudulent trader for counterfeit goods offences, resulting in a fine of £200, a victim surcharge of £80 and an order to pay prosecution costs of £200.

The Service provided advice in relation to 2 judicial review applications issued against the Council in 2024/25, compared to 2 in 2023/24. The first application issued in 2024/25 related to a failure by the Council to issue an Education, Health and Care Plan, which had been amended by the First Tier Tribunal (FTT). The Council had not issued the Plan because it had submitted an appeal to the FTT regarding two parts of the Plan. Following grant of permission to judicially review, the FTT resolved the appeal and the Council issued a plan to include the disputed parts. The Council paid the Claimant's costs of £15,000 and the claim was settled by way of a consent order on 31 January 2025. The second application disputed the Council's assessment of an asylum seeker as an adult and not a child and has been transferred to be dealt with by the Immigration Tribunal, so is no longer a judicial review claim.

During 2024/25 the Service advised in relation to 241 Court of Protection cases and 89 matters involving safeguarding vulnerable adults (compared to 268 and 84 in 2023/24). The Service also advised in relation to 206 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards applications in the Court of Protection (compared to 232 in 2023/24).

The Service continues to work closely with Children's Services, providing advice and representation, including in pre-proceedings and court applications for care proceedings. Our

priority is to keep children within their family when it is safe to do so, and for public law applications to be a necessary and proportionate response to achieve the best outcome for the child. The Service continues to work with Children's Services on pre-proceedings engagement with families being undertaken with increased focus and in shorter timescales, with the aim of decreasing the number of care proceedings issued, completing all necessary assessments prior to issue of care proceedings and reducing the length of time children are subject to care proceedings. This has resulted in less pre-proceedings and care proceedings being open to the Service at any one time. At the end of 2024/25, there were 36 families open in pre-proceedings compared to 52 at the end of 2023/24. In 2024/25, the Service applied for care proceedings in respect of 71 families, compared to 72 in 2023/24. At the end of Q4, there were a total of 49 ongoing care proceedings compared to 59 proceedings at the end of Q4 2023/24. In 2024/25, we concluded 81 sets of care proceedings which is the same as in 2023/24. Of the concluded proceedings, 37% of children were placed in the care of family under special guardianship or child arrangements orders, 39% were made subject to care orders and 24% were subject to orders giving permission to place for adoption. Concluded proceedings in East Sussex in 2024/25 took an average 43 weeks per child, this is 5 weeks less than in 2023/24 and in keeping with national averages.

During 2024/25, the Service completed agreements to secure financial contributions to the Council of over £2m, together with the delivery of additions and improvements to the highway network across the county. The Service also advised on 203 new property matters compared to 187 in 2023/24. During 2024/25, the Service advised on 225 new contract and procurement matters compared to 241 in 2023/24. In addition, the Service has completed two academy conversions.

During Q4, the Service assisted Income Recovery in securing the recovery and repayment of debts totalling £19,765, compared to £74,671 in Q4 2023/24. The Service secured recovery and repayment of debts totalling £140,575 in 2024/25 compared to £216,907 in 2023/24.

Coroner Services

The Council provides staff and accommodation to the East Sussex Coroner in undertaking the judicial role of investigating violent, un-natural or sudden deaths of unknown cause and deaths in custody. Accommodation includes the provision of mortuary, pathology, histology, toxicology and body removal services, as well as court and office accommodation and relevant hardware, software and information technology support. As an independent judicial officer holding office under the Crown, the Coroner operates entirely independently to the Council in making decisions about post mortems and inquests.

During Q4 2024/25, 396 deaths were reported to the Coroner compared with 585 in Q4 2023/24. Of those deaths 217 (55%) went on to have a post mortem compared to 269 (46%) in Q4 2023/24. 64 Inquests were opened during Q4 2024/25 compared to 86 during Q4 2023/24.

During Q4 2024/25, 67 inquests were closed compared to 65 in 2023/24. There were 253 open inquests at the end of Q4, compared to 297 at end of Q4 2023/24. 50 Inquests are over 12 months old compared to 63 at the end of Q4 2023/24.

In total during 2024/25, 1,832 deaths were reported to the Coroner compared to 2,201 in 2023/24. 52% (959) of deaths reported to the Coroner required a post mortem compared to 46% (1,009) in 2023/24. In 2024/25, 334 Inquests were opened (compared to 339 in 2023/24) and 339 Inquests were concluded in 2024/25 (compared to 265 in 2023/24). The introduction of the Medical Examiner (ME) system in September 2024 has seen a decrease in the number of referrals to the Coroner. Deaths that do not fall under the Notification of Death Regulations are now reportable to MEs. In most cases, deaths can now be certified without referral to the Coroner to allow the death to be registered. MEs alert the Coroner where certain deaths may require further investigation which previously would have been registered as natural, and this has led to a higher percentage of post mortems in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24.

Since 1 April 2025, the East Sussex Coroner's Office has moved to Westfield House, County Hall, Lewes from the Innovation Centre in Hastings. In addition, courtrooms previously based at Muriel Matters House, Hastings and Eastbourne Town Hall have also moved to Westfield House, bringing the service together and helping to make savings through the more efficient use of space. The change will also improve and streamline the service, with access to courtrooms five days a week reducing the waiting time for inquests to be heard. The change will provide a single point of contact for the public and will improve the quality of service to bereaved families and friends.

Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)

There were no active RIPA Authorisations during Q4. On 31 March 2025, the Lead Member approved the Policy for the year ahead with only minor amendments to the existing Policy.

Local Government Ombudsman complaints

The Ombudsman issued 28 decisions in Q4. 17 of these cases related to Adult Social Care (ASC), 9 related to Children's Services (CS) and 2 to Corporate Services (CORP). 19 cases were closed before a full investigation for a variety of reasons. This included insufficient evidence of fault, complaints being out of the Ombudsman's jurisdiction, because the complaint had not been through our internal complaint process or because the Ombudsman had sufficient information to uphold the complaint.

Of the 9 cases that were fully investigated 7 related to ASC and 2 related to CS, of which, 4 were closed with the complaint partly or fully upheld as follows:

ASC – The client's husband was dissatisfied with the financial remedy of £300 offered by the Council, in acknowledgement of his complaint about the care provided to his wife. The Ombudsman found that the Council had acknowledged its failure to properly deal with the complaint before it was escalated to them. It had apologised and offered a satisfactory remedy. The Ombudsman found no outstanding injustice that required their intervention.

ASC – The client complained that the Council did not provide her with the care and support to meet her needs, which she said impacted her wellbeing. The Ombudsman found the Council at fault for a delay in completing and issuing the client's reviewed care and support plan, which caused the client limited injustice. The Ombudsman also found fault with the Council's handling of the complaints. The Council has agreed to apologise and make a payment of £100 to the client in acknowledgement of its unsatisfactory complaint handling.

CS – The client's mother complained that the Council failed to provide suitable alternative education for her daughter, since it was agreed that she was unable to attend her allocated school. As a result, her daughter missed out on appropriate education and her mental health deteriorated. Furthermore, the client's mother had to give up work to look after her daughter which caused avoidable financial hardship and distress. The Ombudsman found fault because the Council did not review its original alternative education decision in the light of new evidence available. The Council has agreed to review its decision.

CS – The client's father complained that the Council failed to act in his child's best interests when choosing a suitable secondary school, arranging alternative education, and arranging school transport. The Ombudsman found no fault in the Council's decision-making on these issues and did not investigate the Council's earlier decision to name a mainstream school in the client's Education Health and Care Plan, as this came with appeal rights. The Ombudsman did find the Council at fault for refusing to reimburse fees the client's father paid to an independent school to secure his child's place. The Council has now agreed to reimburse the fees.

Web activity

There were 6.6m unique page views of the Council website in 2024/25. During Q4, there were 1.9 million unique page views. The satisfaction of residents using the East Sussex highways website has improved, with the number of website visitors saying their experience of the site was satisfactory, good or excellent increasing from 12% in May 2023 to 45% in February 2025. This

follows research, testing and development of the site to remove obstacles for users and make it easier to report highways issues, track progress and find information.

Media and information work

In Q4, the press office dealt with 179 media enquiries and issued 24 press releases which generated 112 stories. Coverage in Q4 was dominated by devolution and budgets, but other press releases achieving good coverage include the introduction of smokefree spaces on beaches in Bexhill beach and Camber Sands, the library amnesty which saw the return of a book missing for more than 27 years, and discussions around future plans for Exceat Bridge.

In 2024/25 the press office dealt with 510 media enquiries and issued 107 press releases generating 344 stories, 37 of which were from TV and radio. Press releases achieving the most coverage included the additional investment in road patching, budget press releases issued July, September, October, November and February, devolution and local government reorganisation and a review of speed limits.

Effective publicity and campaigns

Requests for our on-demand bus service (Flexibus) have risen from 4,232 in March 2024 to 6,523 in March 2025, an increase of 54%. Passenger requests have risen sharply during periods of marketing activity, which have included social media advertising, radio advertising, leafletting, and public display boards.

Local advertising campaigns to recruit staff for supported living homes for people with learning disabilities drew high numbers of applicants. The campaigns, which began in Q4, on Facebook and Nextdoor targeted people in a 5–10-mile radius of the homes in Crowborough and Battle, and saw 102 applications in the first two weeks of the campaign.

South East 7 (SE7)

Throughout 2024/25, the SE7 partnership continued to provide a valuable forum for sharing intelligence on the rapidly evolving national policy context following the General Election, as well as developing joint lobbying messages in response. The SE7 partnership has also helped provide understanding on how neighbouring councils are responding to shared challenges. This year they have particularly focused on demand and cost pressures in Adult Social Care and Children's Services, including Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Home to School Transport; devolution and local government reorganisation; and the asylum system.

SE7 Leaders and Chief Executives met jointly in Q4 to discuss latest issues and priorities for all councils, including plans for devolution and local government reorganisation, issues emerging from budget setting for 2025/26, and significant national reforms in children's services. SE7 Leaders also met in March and discussed developments on these issues as well as shared lobbying priorities, including funding reform, SEND, and utilities company street works. Chief Executives continue to meet regularly to discuss the latest policy developments.

Revenue Budget Summary

The Governance Service's net budget is £9.847m and at the end of the financial year there is an underspend of £86k. The underspend in Corporate Governance is mainly due to staff vacancies and the early implementation of savings targets for the forthcoming year. The overspend in Corporate Support is mostly due to the additional cost of locums to cover maternity leave and other vacancies in the Legal Services team.

Performance exceptions (See How to read this report for definition)

Performance measure	Outturn 23/24	Target 24/25	RAG Q1 24/25	RAG Q2 24/25	RAG Q3 24/25	RAG Q4 24/25	Q4 24/25 outturn	Note ref
None								

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
There are no savings for 2024/25	-	-	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	-	-	
Total Savings	0	0	0	0	0	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹			0	0	0	
Total Savings and Permanent Changes	0	0	0	0	0	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
	-	-	-	
Total	0	0	0	

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

² 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).

³ 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	2023/24 Gross	2023/24 Income	2023/24 Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Corporate Governance	5,844	(196)	5,648	5,583	(173)	5,410	261	(23)	238	
Corporate Support	4,003	(413)	3,590	4,192	(450)	3,742	(189)	37	(152)	
Total Governance	9,847	(609)	9,238	9,775	(623)	9,152	72	14	86	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)[illegible]

Strategic Risk Register – Q4 2024/25

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
5	<p>RECONCILING POLICY, PERFORMANCE & RESOURCE</p> <p>There is ongoing uncertainty in relation to future funding levels, the longer-term local government funding regime and the impact of national reforms, particularly across Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care. The impact of a period of high inflation/cost of living are leading to higher demand for Council services and have increased the direct cost of providing services. Together these create a risk of insufficient resources being available to sustain service delivery at the agreed Core Offer level to meet the changing needs of the local community.</p> <p>Our revenue budget for 2024/25 includes a draw from the Financial Management Reserve to provide a balanced budget. In year pressures in 2024/25 are likely to require an additional draw on reserves. Our proposed budget for 2025/26 includes additional savings and further use of our limited reserves. We are reliant on the multi-year settlement in 2026/27, fair funding review and business rates review delivering sufficient funding to meet the needs of our residents.</p> <p>Additionally, there are risks and uncertainties regarding the capital programme over the current Medium Term Financial Plan period and beyond, which could impact on the ability to deliver the Council's priorities and set a balanced budget. Funding uncertainty (including capital grants, receipts and developer contributions), inflation, supply chain issues and high interest rates could all constrain our ability to implement our Capital</p>	<p>We employ a robust Reconciling Policy, Performance and Resources (RPPR) process for business planning, which ensures a strategic corporate response to resource reductions, demographic change, and regional and national economic challenges; and directs resources to priority areas. We take a commissioning approach to evaluating need and we consider all methods of service delivery. We work with partner organisations to deliver services and manage demand, making best use of our collective resources. We take a 'One Council' approach to delivering our priorities and set out our targets and objectives in the Council Plan. We monitor our progress and report it quarterly.</p> <p>The Council reviews and updates its 20-year Capital Strategy annually as part of the RPPR process, which sets the framework in which the capital programme is planned and allows the Council to prioritise investment to support its objectives. The development and delivery of the capital programme is overseen by a Capital Strategic Asset Board (CSAB), which is a cross departmental group, who also hear from Departmental Capital Board/Sub Boards who oversee priority areas.</p> <p>Our plans take account of known risks and pressures, including social, economic, policy and demographic changes and financial risks. However, we continue to operate in changing and uncertain contexts. Current and forecast economic conditions continue to shape a very challenging financial outlook both for the Council itself and many of the county's residents and businesses. Alongside this we continue to face ongoing challenges as a result of the persistent legacy of Covid, the increased cost of living and other national and international factors. We will continue to use the latest information available on these challenges to inform our business planning. We will also continually review our performance targets, priorities, service offers and financial plans, and will update these as required. As part of this we will continue to take action wherever we can to mitigate financial and service delivery pressures – making best use of new technology, investing in our workforce, seeking efficiencies, and checking that our services are effective and provide value for money.</p> <p>We lobby, individually and in conjunction with our networks and partners, for a sustainable funding regime for local government in general and for children's social care and adult social care specifically, to meet the needs of the residents of East Sussex. If the funding reforms do not lead to an increase in funding for our services, we will need to consider further options, including seeking Exceptional Financial Support.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
	Strategy and increase the pressure on the revenue budget via increased borrowing costs.		
12	<p>CYBER ATTACK</p> <p>The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has highlighted the enduring and significant threat to UK infrastructure. From ransomware attacks to AI-enabled intrusion, malicious actors are looking to maximise their disruptive and destructive efforts in an increasingly connected world.</p> <p>Cyber attacks are growing more frequent, sophisticated, and damaging when they succeed.</p> <p>Amid a rise of state aligned groups, an increase in aggressive cyber activity and ongoing geopolitical challenges, there is an accelerated need to keep pace with the dynamic threat landscape.</p> <p>Furthermore, while AI presents huge opportunities, it is also transforming the threat landscape. Cyber criminals are adapting their business models to embrace this rapidly developing technology - using AI to increase the volume and impact of cyber attacks against citizens and organisations. Meanwhile the proliferation of advanced cyber intrusion tools is lowering the barrier for entry to criminals and states alike.</p>	<p>Most attacks leverage software flaws, gaps in boundary defences or social engineering-based insertion methods (such as legitimate looking emails which trigger viral payloads). These are becoming harder to identify and filter.</p> <p>IT&D use modern security tools to assure our security posture: Monitoring network activity and identifying security threats; Keeping software up to date with regular patching regimes; Continually monitoring evolving threats and re-evaluating the ability of our toolset to provide adequate defence against them; Ongoing communication with the security industry to find the most suitable tools and systems to secure our infrastructure. IT&D continues to invest in new tools, which use pre-emptive technology to identify threats and patterns of abnormal behaviour.</p> <p>Services hosted in ISO 27001 accredited Orbis Data Centres.</p> <p>As well as mitigations against attack, the following measures are currently in place to minimise the impact should there be a successful attack:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behavioural analysis systems defend against hostile activity • Resilient systems enhanced with immutable backups enable quick recovery • Robust protocols for response escalation and communication 	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
22	<p>DELIVERY OF ORACLE IMPLEMENTATION</p> <p>There is a risk that the implementation of Oracle may not achieve the outcomes planned which results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •higher delivery costs •longer timescales •a reduced quality of back office services from a substandard technical implementation •risk of not meeting statutory or contractual requirements such as payments of Pay as You Earn (PAYE) / National Insurance (NI), pensions, suppliers and employees •an inadequate control environment •lack of user buy-in and adoption due to a lack of organisational readiness impacting on core business processes •additional pressure on business as usual capacity from high resource demands during delivery •risk to employee wellbeing from high workloads and delivery timescale <p>Failure to implement would result in the use of an unsupported and unlicensed system (or subject to ransom charges on some level of support) as the SAP system passes its expiry date and would miss out on efficiencies that can be gained through the new system.</p>	<p>Mitigations are in response to the four main elements of programme delivery:</p> <p>1. Effective governance and internal controls</p> <p>The Oracle Programme Board, Sponsors, Workstream Boards and the Audit Committee Sub Group meet regularly and CMT receive regular reports. Internal audit continues to undertake reviews across the programme.</p> <p>2. Technical delivery</p> <p>A phased 'Adopt not Adapt' approach is being taken as the most cost-effective and straightforward route to implementation. The Oracle solution, both functional and data, is tested to a pre-defined and approved set of quality standards. The solution is not released for organisational use unless it meets these standards and is approved by the Oracle Board and CMT.</p> <p>3. Organisational readiness</p> <p>To go-live successfully, it is necessary for the organisation to adopt the new system with the 'adopt not adapt' approach being the most cost-effective.</p> <p>There is therefore a substantial communication, engagement, change and training workstream in place to support the organisation to understand and adopt the necessary changes in working practices in areas such as hiring processes, budget processes, raising purchase orders or in using self-service for expenses, payslips, timesheet and absence.</p> <p>4. Support model</p> <p>To ensure confidence in the system and ongoing effective use post go-live it is essential to have a support model in place to respond to inevitable issues and queries, and for users to understand what the user experience will be in advance of that.</p> <p>To increase resilience and the ability to flex depending on the level of support required, a blend of internal and external resource is being used.</p> <p>A variety of other support tools are also in place such as a Helpdesk, Oracle Guided Learning, floor walkers, bitesize briefings, and Advocates.</p> <p>For Phase 2 of the implementation (covering Finance, Procurement and Recruitment) all of the above elements were successfully delivered and rated green. This Phase therefore went live on 17 April 2025. Inevitable post go-live issues are being effectively dealt with.</p> <p>Work continues on Phase 3 (payroll, and employee and manager self-service) and an earliest realistically achievable go-live date for this phase is currently being considered.</p> <p>To deliver the implementation, it is necessary to ensure that sufficient programme resource is in place, and this is therefore kept under constant review. In addition, a positive ongoing working relationship with our implementation partner, Infosys, needs to be in place. The project lead</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		<p>therefore has regular conversations with Infosys senior staff and escalates issues where necessary.</p> <p>It is also necessary for the organisation to prioritise programme activity at key points in time and this is also therefore kept under constant review.</p>	
15	<p>CLIMATE</p> <p>Failure to limit global warming to below 1.5°C above pre-industrialisation levels, which requires global net human-caused emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) to be reduced by about 45 percent from 2010 levels by 2030, reaching 'net zero' by 2050 at the latest. The predicted impacts of climate change in East Sussex include more frequent and intense flooding, drought, and episodes of extreme heat, as well as impacts from the effects of climate change overseas, such as on food supply. This will lead to an increase in heat-related deaths, particularly amongst the elderly, damage to essential infrastructure, increased cost of food, disruption to supply chains and service provision, and greater coastal erosion.</p>	<p>Climate change mitigation: the science-based target is to reduce scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 50% every 5 years (equating to 13% per year). The focus is on buildings, as they made up 79% of carbon emissions in 2020/21. Internal oversight of progress is by the corporate Climate Emergency Board.</p> <p>Climate change adaptation: we work with partners on some aspects of adaptation, such as flood risk management and health impacts.</p> <p>A) Mitigation:</p> <p>1) Carbon Reduction Target: the target is a 13% carbon reduction in 2024/25 compared with 2023/24, which would achieve a cumulative reduction of 50% against the baseline year of 2019-20. Carbon data for Qs 1-3 show a 2% reduction compared with Qs 1-3 in 2023/24. If energy usage is similar in Q4 this year to Q4 last year then the annual carbon reduction in 2024/25 will be 1%, against the target of 13%. This will deliver a cumulative reduction of 36% against the baseline, against the 50% target.</p> <p>2) Carbon Reduction Schemes: the target for 2024/25 is for the delivery of a further 23 capital schemes. A total of 20 schemes were delivered to date (5 solar PV, 4 LED lighting, 7 heat decarbonisation, 1 Building Closure, 3 Insulation schemes). This reflects cuts to both the Salix Recycling Fund and CET CC budget for directly funded carbon saving projects</p> <p>B) Adaptation:</p> <p>1) Corporate Adaptation Plan: During Q1 a climate change vulnerability and risk assessment report was completed and published. In Q2 council plans and strategies were reviewed to identify where adaptation may need to be embedded, and progress was reported to Place Scrutiny Committee. In Q3 work began on developing adaptation tools and guidance for Council services. These tools and guidance will be completed in Q4 and begin to be applied in 2025/26.</p> <p>Ultimately there is not sufficient funding available for the Council to be able to keep pace with the science-based target to halve emissions every five years. Although grant funding will be sought to mitigate against this, it is unlikely to be sufficient. The council will continue to work on what it can to reduce emissions with the funding it has available including working with its supply chain on Scope 3 emissions.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
20	<p>PLACEMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN OUR CARE</p> <p>Inability to secure sufficient high quality placements for children in our care, suitable accommodation for care experienced young people and respite provision, leading to significant financial pressure and poorer outcomes for children/young people.</p> <p>The risk of the failure of one or more key providers in the independent sector is an increasing concern, set against necessary regulatory tightening of profit which might further impact the market.</p>	<p>Effective demand management, robust management of front door</p> <p>Delivery of early help services, implementation of Family Hub programme throughout 2023-24, and Level 2 Family Keyworkers</p> <p>Implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Edge of Care 'Connected Families', The Family Hubs programme has been implemented across E.Sussex delivering early intervention and support within communities, Connected Families (Connected Coaches and Intensive Practitioners), Foundations, SWIFT are delivering intensive evidence based interventions alongside Social Workers to maximise the opportunity for children to be cared for within their own family. There has been a 14% reduction in the number of children subject to child protection plans since February 2024, this is as a direct result of the launch of the Connected Families Intensive Practitioners (CFIP service).</p> <p>Further delivery of kinship/Special Guardianship Order placements.</p> <p>Capital bid for Sorrel Drive.</p> <p>In 2023/24 Children's Services worked with IMPOWER to enhance our approach to using data to shape placement sufficiency. We have developed trajectory planning, implemented the 'Valuing Care' approach to ensure children receiving the right care for their needs and value for money achieved, and improved support for in house foster carers, including an investment in allowances. An analysis of the children becoming Looked After during Q1 2024-2025, indicates that a high proportion (81%) are entering into foster care or kinship care provision rather than residential care. Fostering Recruitment & Retention Strategy completed. East Sussex County Council is part of the South East Sector Led Improvement Programme, Regional Fostering Strategy and piloting Mockingbird hub.</p> <p>Uplift to fostering allowance (for in house carers, Special Guardianship Orders, Kinship carers) approved by the Chief Management Team to help secure sufficient supply of in house foster carers as an alternative to more expensive care packages.</p> <p>The valuing care tools have been embedded into the business as usual with a strong focus on reunification. In Q4 A strategic group was set up to drive forward the valuing care agenda which will report into the Transformation Board chaired by the Director of Children's Services.</p> <p>Fostering allowance uplift has been made part of the recruitment drive. Both elements are attempting to mitigate the increased costs due to the lack of placements for Looked After Children.</p> <p>Q1 has seen a significant rise in foster carer applications in this period. The new Duty and Commissioning team have added capacity to the service and we are already seeing impact with placements and prices.</p> <p>Q2 has continued the trajectory above with tighter discussions and process, however the market continues to present a challenge.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
19	<p>SCHOOLS AND INCLUSION, SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (ISEND)</p> <p>For Children with Special Educational Needs. Inability to secure statutory provision due to lack of availability of specialist placement within the county and increasing demand for placements in this sector. This would put the Council at risk of judicial review and/or negative Local Government Ombudsman judgements for failing to meet our duties within the Children and Families Act 2014, with associated financial penalties and reputational damage.</p>	<p>Effective use of forecasting data to pre-empt issues.</p> <p>Work with statutory partners to develop contingency plans.</p> <p>Work with the market to increase provision where needed.</p> <p>Expanding internal interim offer for children.</p>	Red
1	<p>ROADS</p> <p>Extreme weather events over recent years, including the last winter, have caused significant damage to many of the county's roads, adding to the backlog of maintenance in the County Council's Asset Plan: and increasing the risk to the Council's ability to stem the rate of deterioration and maintain road condition.</p>	<p>The changing climate is now influencing the rate of road deterioration, with more extreme events such as warmer wetter winters; and drier summers punctuated by unseasonal heavy downpours (drying and shrinking the substructure of roads). Additional funding over the last few years has helped maintain road condition, however, the latest condition and funding modelling showed the potential for deterioration over the next 10 years.</p> <p>Works from additional investment made in 2023 on patching, footway, signing and lining have provided greater network reliance. However, deterioration in road surfaces in 2025 has continued. Recognising this, Cabinet have approved a further £1m in July 2024 for a programme of targeted patching works to address the worst areas of road damage.</p> <p>Mitigations include encouraging road users to report potholes so we can intervene as soon as possible in accordance with our policies; closely managing the operational performance of the highway contractor; and lobbying Government for additional investment as, without it, it will be increasingly difficult to manage the risks of further decline.</p> <p>In conjunction with this, new technologies and materials are being trialled to introduce improvements to practices and ensure works are as efficient as possible. This includes introducing a new Asset Management system with enhanced capabilities for data management and funding modelling, and introducing smart street lighting systems that allow greater control over levels of lighting, reducing energy consumption.</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
4	<p>HEALTH</p> <p>Failure to secure maximum value from partnership working with the National Health Service (NHS). If not achieved, there will be impact on social care, public health and health outcomes and increased social care operational and cost pressures, as well as shared Integrated Care System objectives for jointly managing patient flow through our System.</p> <p>An increase in activity and complexity in the presentation of patients through our acute hospital sites, has resulted in an increase in the NCTR (No Criteria to Reside) numbers and presents a system risk in respect of adequate patient flow.</p> <p>Integrated Care Board (ICB) operating costs and programme funding will need to reduce by 50% by Q3 2025/26 as per a national mandate. For NHS Sussex this means a reduction of 53% which presents a risk to the way ESCC works with the NHS to jointly commission services locally and get the best value out of the collective resources available for our population, and could have implications for the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) which would impact on alignment with the Sussex Combined Mayoral Authority Devolution plans.</p>	<p>East Sussex was allocated £5,088m, as part of the national Government Discharge Fund Grant for 2024/25, to support local authorities to build additional adult social care and community-based reablement capacity to reduce hospital discharge delays by delivering sustainable improvements to services for individuals - focussed on improving discharge to home, alongside increased therapy and assessment provision and associated plans to reduce the use of bedded discharge pathways. Collaborative work continues with ICB and NHS colleagues on our Hospital Discharge Transformation work and how as a system we can support and expedite discharges from both local and out of county hospitals, to address the increase in the number of patients who no longer meet the Criteria to Reside (NCTR) in an acute hospital bed. National data provided by NHSE places East Sussex the third highest in the country in regard to high numbers of NCTRs compared to local population. In light of this, two Hospital Social Work Teams currently support discharge either through established routes via SPOT purchase or Discharge To Assess beds in the community. Additional support has been provided over Winter via £1million additional joint ESCC and ICB investment. This was utilised through a temporary increase of D2RA ('discharge to recover and assess') and spot-purchased beds in the community to the end of March 25. An additional scheme to expedite discharges of self-funding patients from acute sites was commissioned with Xyla. This supports 15 placements a month and oversight of this is through place-based Operational Executive (OPEX). System funding allocations have been agreed for Q1 2025/26 for Hospital Discharge Schemes, the use of which is being monitored at Place.</p> <p>Building on our ICT development work in 2024/25, we have now established the shadow leadership infrastructure for our 5 Integrated Community Teams (ICTs) in East Sussex across primary, community and social care, linking with mental health, VCSE and housing. This will enable the development of joint local action plans based on population needs and challenges and aligned to the strategic objectives of our health and care system, building on relevant tests of change and other pilot activity to support integrated care through closer working at the neighbourhood level. Over time this is expected to reduce the need for urgent and unplanned attendance and admission to hospital, through moving to a model of better coordinated and proactive multi-disciplinary care for people with complex health and care needs, for example due to multiple long term conditions and frailty.</p> <p>In March 2025 it was nationally mandated that Integrated Care Board (ICB) operating and programme funding costs will need to reduce by 50% by Q3 2025/26, with running costs of £18.76 per head of weighted population set as a national target for ICBs, excluding certain services. This target means each ICB, or the regions they are a part of, must reduce their overall spend per head of weighted population to this level. For NHS Sussex this equates to a reduction of 53%, and comes on top of already having recently restructured significantly to deliver a 30% running costs reduction in 24/25. This presents a risk to the way ESCC works with the NHS to jointly commission services locally and get the best value out of the collective resources available for our population. This could also have implications for the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) more broadly, for example if the ICS footprint changes to a larger scale to accommodate the reduction, which would</p>	Red

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		<p>impact on alignment with the Sussex Combined Mayoral Authority Devolution plans. A national ICB model blueprint has recently been produced which describes the future strategic role of ICBs, and signals potential transfers of current Continuing Healthcare, SEND and safeguarding functions, all of which would need primary legislation to enact (and would therefore be post cost reductions). More detail is expected. Feedback about the lack of engagement with Local Government (LG) as a key partner, and the importance of coterminous footprints with the NHS for a future Sussex CMA and Devolution has been given to the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution, and via the LGA. Locally all three Local Authority partner members on the Sussex ICB are in collective agreement about the need for a continuing Sussex ICB footprint and this is being fed into the local planning discussions both formally and informally. The ICB's decision will be made public in June 25.</p>	
23	<p>LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION AND DEVOLUTION</p> <p>Both the proposed creation of a new Mayoral County Combined Authority for Sussex and the proposed transition from a two tier local authority arrangement to a unitary government model for East Sussex will have a significant effect on our workforce. These are likely to lead to additional workloads for staff over the next few years. The timescales for implementation are challenging and will place considerable additional pressures on teams. This could have result in resources being diverted from the ongoing delivery of services and a consequential deterioration in service delivery.</p>	<p>Through our RPPR process we will continue to review the resources required to support Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation and will lobby Government for additional funding to help support the significant additional workload this will place on the Council. We will also continue our work on supporting staff through change and will ensure all staff are aware of the full range of support available to them.</p> <p>Additional mitigations will be implemented as the potential impact on both the Council and our local area becomes clearer.</p>	Amber
9	<p>WORKFORCE</p> <p>An inability to attract and retain the high calibre staff needed could lead to a reduction in the expertise and capacity required to deliver statutory services to our residents, including to prevent harm to children, young people and vulnerable adults at the required level and standards, impacting on the achievement of the Council's strategic objectives.</p>	<p>A number of strategies responding to the current significant recruitment and retention challenges have been put in place. Highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - On-going attendance at events such as careers fairs to maximise our presence with job seekers. - Continued use of apprenticeships, traineeships, intern arrangements and more flexible work arrangements etc as a way of bringing in new talent to the Council. - Continued delivery of our two leadership development programmes to support our talent management strategies: the 'Ladder to Leadership' programme and 'Head of Service Masterclasses'. - Provision of 1-1 advice and guidance sessions to prospective candidates who require support around making an application, undertaking interviews etc - Engagement with employees at ESCC, who are under 25, to get feedback on what attracted them to the Council as an employer; and to begin establishing a forum for young people in the new year to highlight any issues, and to attract candidates from a younger demographic to the Council. 	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		<p>Additional work undertaken in Q4 includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continued delivery of inclusive recruitment training to managers - guidance on making reasonable adjustments for disabled candidates has now been published and promoted to recruiting managers - the Council's suite of recruitment policies is currently being reviewed to embed inclusive practice - guidance on the use of volunteers as a route into the workplace is currently being developed. The intention is for such opportunities to support people who are out of work to come back into the workplace through gaining confidence and experience of work - the 'study smarter' (recruitment platform) monthly views increased from 2,534 in January 24 to 6,251 in December 24 - the Council's Apprenticeship team has been invited by the DWP to be part of a mentorship programme for jobseekers aged 18-24, which aims to work in tandem with the Government 'Youth Job Guarantee' 	
18	<p>DATA BREACH</p> <p>A breach of security/confidentiality leading to destruction, loss, alteration, unauthorised disclosure of, or access to, personal data. This includes breaches that are the result of both accidental and deliberate causes. A personal data breach is a security incident that has affected the confidentiality, integrity or availability of personal data regardless of whether information has been accessed, altered or disclosed via electronic or manual means.</p> <p>Risks to individuals, reputational damage, fines from the Information Commissioner's Officer (ICO), compensation claims</p>	<p>Policy and guidance procedures in place to support practice.</p> <p>Data Protection Officer (DPO), Caldicott Guardians and Information Governance Officers monitor breach reporting and put in place mechanisms to minimise recurrence.</p> <p>Staff training to develop awareness. E-learning and policy delivery mechanism expanded to enhance skills and increase awareness of responsibilities under General Data Protection Regulation legislation.</p> <p>Technical security measures operated by Information Technology and Digital (IT&D), including access control and segregation of duties.</p>	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
6	<p>LOCAL ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> <p>The transfer of South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) responsibilities and functions to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) does not successfully integrate the development of economic strategic planning, business support, and management of capital funded programmes, into Council operations as required by Government policy.</p> <p>Possible consequences if the transfer is not managed successfully include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Management, monitoring, and evaluation of the current capital programmes do not meet Government requirements, leading to potential clawback of £m funds; or an inability for ESCC to demonstrate it can manage funds successfully, affecting future allocations of growth funds. •Third parties with existing contracts may raise concerns if new / variation funding agreements are not put in place early from April 2024. •Loss of an effective 'business voice' through the current local economic growth board (Team East Sussex) and its various subgroups. •An inability to produce an agreed local economic strategy, which sets the ambitions, objectives, and key outcomes for East Sussex. 	<p>East Sussex County Council, working with partners, has successfully secured significant amounts of local growth funding totalling £127m since 2012 via the South East and Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), to deliver a wide range of infrastructure projects in East Sussex. In August 2023, Government formally announced that direct funding for LEPs will be removed from April 2024. Upper tier local authorities (UTLA's) will then be required to take on the current non-statutory LEP powers, responsibilities, and functions. These include strategy development, business support and oversight/management of capital programmes. We submitted our proposal to Government in November 2023 to become an UTLA as per the guidance issued. East Sussex has now been confirmed by Government as a 'functional economic area' to take on LEP responsibilities. A recent Government consultation was run in Feb 2025 as Government were minded 'to withdraw' financial support to authorities carrying out the transferred LEP functions. Government has since confirmed in March 2025 that it will remove the funding but expects the authorities to continue to perform the above stated functions.</p> <p>The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and East Sussex County Council have produced integration plans to mitigate the transfer risks on current and future capital programmes; and the financial, legal, and reputational risks. SELEP and our own Corporate Management Team endorsed the integration plans in quarter 3 2023/24, and the plans were taken to Lead Member in January 2024 and approved by Cabinet in March 2024. Further Government guidance and a Local Economic Development Fund - Assurance Framework were finally issued in October 2024 setting out the transition arrangement requirements.</p> <p>Essex County Council (ECC) as the Accountable body for SELEP, have issued on 30 August 2024 a Transition Agreement between all six of the upper tier local authorities (incl. ESCC) to hand over local accountable body responsibilities for the legacy capital programmes to UTLA's. A response has been provided by ESCC and whilst there have been delays from Essex CC in finalising the agreement it is now expected to be signed in early Q1 2025. In the absence of this agreement, East Sussex has established clear governance, reporting and transparency arrangements to address the Government's responsibilities since April 2024 in overseeing the management of current LEP funded programmes/projects.</p> <p>Looking ahead, the lack of large-scale funding programmes to support economic growth across the county presents a significant risk to achieving growth ambitions. Recent funds have been awarded directly to local Borough and District authorities (e.g., UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Levelling Up Funds and Plan for Neighbourhoods) or funding has come from time-limited specific sources.</p> <p>We now have a new growth strategy – East Sussex Prosperity - and will be developing in the accompanying investment plan in 2025 with strategic partners to articulate our investment propositions and asks to Government and also respond to the Governments emerging Industrial Strategy and Sector Plans.</p>	Amber

Ref	Strategic Risks	Risk Control / Response and Post Mitigation RAG score	RAG
		<p>The Council is already in a good position to mitigate the risks on business support and ensuring business has a voice. We directly run the Business East Sussex Growth Hub services and Government have confirmed funding 2025/26 and we await to receive the grant terms and conditions for signing in Qtr 1. We will also ensure the business voice continues to be heard through Team East Sussex, our local strategic advisory economic growth board for the county, which continues to meet on a quarterly basis.</p>	
21	<p>Care Act reviews and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments</p> <p>Demand exceeding capacity for annual Care Act reviews and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These are known issues for virtually all local authorities with social care responsibilities as this activity falls within our duties under the Care Act 2014 and Mental Capacity Act 2005. • We have measures for Care Act reviews and DoLS assessments included in the Council Plan for scrutiny from Members and the public. As of Q4 2024/25, we are meeting our target for adult Care Act reviews (outturn is 6 days against a target of 6 days) and carer Care Act reviews (outturn is -1 day against a target of 6 days, meaning reviews started on average 1 day before their proposed start date). We are also meeting our target for the number of people with a DoLS episode awaiting allocation of a Best Interest Assessor (429 people against a target of 650). • We use regular benchmarking. For example, we have the 3rd lowest number of reviews overdue by more than 12 months out of 18 local authorities in the South East (comparing March 2025 data to August 2023 South East data, which is the latest available). <p>Mitigations and actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are continuing to increase the number of reviews completed year-on-year to help meet increasing demand, and to prioritise reviews according to people's needs. The number of adult Care Act reviews completed increased by 10% in 2024/25 compared to 2023/24, and the number of carer reviews increased by almost 9%. • A project to reduce Care Act waiting times began in April 2024. Since then, the median wait time for adult and carer reviews (combined) has reduced from 7 days to 3 days. As of March 2025, there were no carer reviews overdue by more than 12 months. • We have oversight of performance at all levels of the Council to ensure visibility, accountability and grip. Weekly and monthly reporting is sent to Operational Managers at all levels, and then scrutinised by the Waiting Times Steering Group and the Improvement and Assurance Board on a regular basis. • Since October, we have piloted the delegation portal with our strategic partner Care for the Carers, making it easier and quicker for them to process carer reviews. • Young carers reviews are undertaken by Imago Community, ensuring a timely assessment and review for this cohort. 	Amber