

## Communities, Economy & Transport – Q2 2023/24

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

#### **Economy and environment**

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

The Creative and Digital Task Group supported Digifest in Eastbourne in September. The Task Group provided panellists to lead on discussions about creative and digital skills and career pathways. Members of the Engineering Task Group promoted Engineering roles in Hastings as part of Careers Week during Q2. Sussex Community Development Association (SCDA) has delivered practical maths courses during Q2 as part of the Council's Multiply programme. The courses help people to manage their finances better through short learning interventions focusing on personal budgeting and money management.

215 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q2.

##### **Apprenticeships**

In collaboration with the Transform Project, the 25% of the Apprenticeship Annual Levy funding that can be passed to small and medium employers has almost entirely been allocated for 2024/25. Over £250k has been committed to employers within the county. As the funding for the Transform project expires at the end of 2023 the Apprenticeship Team is working to explore alternative funding avenues to enable the 25% levy spend to continue to be passed on to local employers.

Q&A sessions have continued to be held for staff interested in apprenticeships, with management-based apprenticeships at all levels proving most popular. 17 members of staff enrolled on the Team Leader and Operations Manager apprenticeships during Q2. The annual intake of apprentices undertaking degree-based apprenticeships, including Social Work and a variety of management and teaching degrees, enrolled at University during Q2.

The Pre-Employment project has continued to engage with the Department for Work and Pensions and other referral projects throughout the county. Candidates are now offered the opportunity of training and guidance on making job applications, as well as the opportunity of a mock interview to ensure they are best placed to be successful at interview. This approach has now seen 10 jobseekers move into employment since engagement with the support offered by the project.

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

Work has continued in Q2 on the three priority work packages identified by the Sussex Tourism Leadership Group. Work on the Sussex Story is nearing completion and is expected to be presented in Q3. Over 100 people were surveyed on what makes Sussex unique. The results of these surveys will help shape the marketing which will promote the Sussex Story. VisitSussex have created a newsletter detailing the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) opportunities across Sussex. Sussex was also featured in MICE magazines as a destination to visit.

The Turner Prize exhibition opened at the Towner in Eastbourne on 27 September. 1,200 people attended the opening, and 100 journalists attended the press launch the following day. There have been over 360 individual articles covering the exhibition. These articles have been viewed an estimated 9.95m times and reached a wider audience estimated at 980m. Coverage includes pieces in the Sunday Times, the New York Times, the BBC, the Times, The Daily Telegraph and the Independent.

##### **Broadband**

The Broadband Project is now entering its final stages and is moving towards contract closure. The Broadband Team is continuing to engage with Broadband Delivery UK (BDUK) on its centrally run

Project Gigabit programme. The contract for East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove is expected to be let in January 2024. The Gigabit Voucher scheme, including the East Sussex top up, is on hold during the procurement process. The Broadband Team is continuing to push BDUK for details of how they plan to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county.

### **Job creation**

East Sussex Invest provides loans and grants to local businesses to help create local jobs and support businesses to become environmentally responsible. As part of a wider corporate approach applications for funding have been temporarily suspended while a full independent review of the fund used for these activities is completed. This review will help us to understand how we can best maximise the use of the fund whilst carefully balancing risk. This review has been commissioned and we expect to receive findings in Q3 (**ref i**). We anticipate the fund will open again in Q4, which means it is unlikely that we will be able to support enough businesses to create jobs in 2023/24 to meet the target for this measure.

### **Environment and climate change**

Teams in Communities, Economy and Transport (CET) and the Business Services Department (BSD) have continued to work together with partners to develop and deliver carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. In Q2 this has included:

- submitting a bid of £500k to the next round of the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. This will pay for part of the cost of decarbonising two schools
- producing the annual progress report on becoming a carbon neutral council which was agreed by the Council
- securing funding from the South East Net Zero Hub for a detailed feasibility study of ground-mounted solar PV at Pebsham landfill site

Teams in CET and Public Health (PH) have also worked together to recruit a climate change Health Impact Assessment Officer. This officer will develop a climate change health impact assessment, to help understand the impacts of climate change on health in East Sussex, evaluate what policies and plans are in place and identify any key gaps in provision. Recruitment has also started for a Retrofit Partnership and Programme Manager and Retrofit Data Lead. These roles will help inform the development of a county-wide Housing Retrofit Strategy.

The department are working to procure a consultant to carry out a county-wide climate change vulnerability and risk assessment. This assessment will help inform a wider adaptation plan. Work is ongoing with district and borough councils to develop a bespoke Local Area Energy Plan, which will help to map out what carbon reduction measures could be delivered across the county to accelerate carbon reduction. We are also supporting a Council project that will look at options to develop a county-wide climate change partnership. This is in response to one of the recommendations from the Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge.

### **Planning**

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

### **Highways, transport and waste**

#### **Highways improvements and road condition**

The annual surface dressing programme was completed in Q2. 17 sites were completed, extending the life of almost 30km of roads by up to 10 years. This included repairs along the A22 East Hoathly Bypass and A267 Mayfield Road in Marks Cross. Information about locations included in the programme is available at [www.eastsussexhighways.com](http://www.eastsussexhighways.com).

Work continued in Q2 using the additional funding for highways approved by the Council in recognition of the deterioration of the network following the last prolonged, wet and cold winter. 471 patches at over 269 sites have been identified to be completed in 2023/24, with 36 patches completed so far. Around 100 signs are scheduled for replacement in 2023/24, with around 600 further signs which require replacement identified, these will be scheduled into the work programme in the coming quarters. The focus for the additional drainage spend has been on delivering those schemes which are quick and simple to design and will address the most urgent drainage issues. So far around 100 minor schemes have been completed. This includes replacing jammed gully covers and clearing significant blockages. In addition, a programme of investigation works is underway to identify problems and design solutions on more complex drainage problems. These will be delivered through 2023/24 and 2024/25. To date over 50 schemes have been identified for design and delivery. The remaining budget for the refresh of road markings has now been fully allocated and will include renewing the lining along the A22 Hailsham bypass and around 600 further sites around the county.

32 road improvement schemes were completed in Q2 to improve the condition of the roads. 7,217 potholes were repaired with 5,054 of these being carriageway potholes, the remainder were primarily footway potholes.

### **Road safety**

In Q1 and Q2 three road safety infrastructure schemes have been completed and Balfour Beatty Living Places have provided assurances that 24 high risk schemes will be completed by the end of 2023/24.

We delivered 95 Bikeability Courses to 712 individuals at participating schools and the Cycle Centre at Eastbourne Sports Park during Q2. We also delivered 74 'Wheels for All' sessions to 1,097 attendees at the sports park.

### **Transport and parking**

A number of projects have commenced as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) in Q2:

- £10.5m of conventional bus service improvements began in July. These will result in improvements to the frequency of some services, others running later in the day and improvements to some weekend services. These service enhancements will run to the end of March 2026. Details of the new services can be found [on our website](#).
- Work has continued on improving bus stops around the county. Around 75% of all bus stops now have QR plates, which enable people to scan the plate and receive the next bus information for that stop.

The Home to School Transport Team successfully arranged transport for over 5,000 children at the start of the new school year.

Eastbourne Household Waste Recycling Site began a trial to open 30 minutes earlier Monday to Friday in August. The trial will continue in the autumn and winter. The new opening times allow residents to access the site earlier and reduce queuing.

The Council's parking enforcement contractor, NSL, are working with bus companies to improve parking enforcement on bus routes. Civil Enforcement Officers have been travelling on buses to see where the problem areas are. Locations with no parking restrictions that are causing problems to services have been identified and will be assessed in future reviews.

The review of parking in Rother was considered by the planning committee in July. A works order is being prepared for the approved changes and works are due to start in Q3. Hastings' parking review has been completed and the recommendations are due to be considered at the planning committee in Q3.

The Council has been allocated £4.4m of funding through the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund. The funding will support the delivery of on street electric vehicle chargepoints in the county. The funding is due to be released upon approval of a business plan and approval of a draft contract. The plan is currently being developed and is due to be submitted in Q3. Procurement of the contract is then expected to take place in Q4. Initial work to deliver the new chargepoints is expected to take place in Q1 and Q2 2024/25.

## **Waste**

The projected 2023/24 outturn for waste re-used, recycled or composted, or used beneficially is 55.8% based on the Q1 outturn (reported a quarter in arrears). Green waste and kerbside recycling tonnage was higher than expected in Q1. The volume of materials recovered from the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility was also higher than anticipated. These include bottom ash, which is used in highway construction, and metals which are sent for recycling.

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

We completed 94% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q2. Rangers concentrated on planned and proactive vegetation clearance.

## **Communities**

### **Trading Standards**

218 businesses and individuals received training and advice from Trading Standards in Q2. Many of these related to recent changes in the law around food and safety labelling.

Trading Standards made 895 positive interventions to protect vulnerable people in Q2. 877 of these were as part of support sessions and training delivered to vulnerable groups. 18 were direct interventions to protect vulnerable people which included installing call blockers to protect vulnerable people from scammers. July was National Scams Awareness Month which enabled the team to connect with many more potentially vulnerable residents.

### **Libraries**

7,198 participants took part in the Summer Reading Challenge in 2023, which is the highest number since 2018. 110 promotional assemblies were delivered before the end of the summer term. Advertisements ran throughout the summer on social media, alongside over 90 events and activities within libraries to promote the challenge. 4,258 participants completed the challenge, a 23% increase compared with 2022.

337 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q2. 167 of these were in Family Learning, English, Maths and Language programmes. 170 were in Wider Family Learning programmes.

22 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q2.

## **Revenue Budget Summary**

The CET revenue budget is £72.401m and is currently forecast to underspend by £212k. The largest underspend is in Transport and Operations where current market prices mean that electricity and recycling income in the Waste Service is exceeding budget and the budgeted draw down of £2.335m is not required (**ref v**).

The underspend in Communities is mostly due to staff vacancies in Trading Standards and Road Safety with additional income from Emergency Planning training (**ref iv**). The largest overspend is in Highways and is due to the estimated increased cost of electricity for streetlighting (**ref vi**).

The overspend in Planning and Environment is mostly within the Transport Development Control budget. This can be attributed to the lack of up-to-date Local Plans in the county, which

has led to an increase in speculative planning applications for residential developments. These often have challenging transport issues that need to be addressed. We have seen a rise in the number of applications that have required specialist input (e.g., transport modelling) and/or have become subject to planning appeals. These are particularly resource intensive and have often required short-term consultancy support **(ref vii)**.

The Parking saving will not be achieved this year and is covered by a one-year budget increase **(ref ii)**. The Environmental Services saving will not be achieved and will be addressed next year **(ref iii)**.

### **Capital Programme Summary**

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £76.119m and there was slippage of £18.949m, overspend of £781k, and spend in advance of £147k. The slippage is mostly in the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package and is due to the requirement to undertake a prioritisation process that requires funder and Lead Member approval. As a result, progress on the selected schemes will be delayed **(ref x)**. Supply chain issues have caused a backlog in the street lighting replacement scheme **(ref xvii)**. Delays in handing over the design work on the Eastbourne Town Centre 2b scheme have postponed work to the next year **(ref xiii)**. A bat survey is needed to progress work on Shinewater Bridge, and can now only be done in April 2024 **(ref xvi)**. Inflation pressures in the Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking and Cycling package means that the schemes need to be prioritised and will go for lead member approval in February **(ref xi)**. Inflation has also impacted on the Eastbourne Town Centre 2a scheme where increased material costs means that the contract is going out to retender **(ref xii)**. Now that the planning conditions have been discharged and the S106 agreement has been signed, planning permission for the Exceat Bridge has been granted. Negotiations with the numerous landowners are also progressing. However, due to a number of small delays, construction is expected to start in spring 2024. **(ref xv)**. There are delays in project brief approvals on Integrated Transport schemes which has delayed construction **(ref xiv)**. The Bexhill to Hastings Link Road overspend is due to the outstanding archaeology, ecology, and Part 1 compensation claims **(ref viii)**. Consultation on the Bus Service Improvement Plan is reaching its conclusion and scheme will need to be rescoped and therefore some schemes will not be complete this year **(ref ix)**. There are additional schemes with smaller variations to budget.

### **Performance exceptions (Q2 – See How to read this report for definition)**

#### **Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth**

Performance measure	Outturn 22/23	Target 23/24	RAG Q1 23/24	RAG Q2 23/24	RAG Q3 23/24	RAG Q4 23/24	Q2 23/24 outturn	Note ref
Job creation from East Sussex Invest	N/A	27 jobs created	G	R			No jobs created through East Sussex Invest	i

**Savings exceptions 2023/24 (£'000)**

Service description	Original Target For 2023/24	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	-	ii
Libraries	105	105	105	-	-	
Environmental Services	-	60	-	-	60	iii
	-	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total Savings</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>60</b>	
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
<b>Subtotal Permanent Changes <sup>1</sup></b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Savings and Permanent Changes</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>910</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>60</b>	

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding <sup>2</sup>	Part of reported variance <sup>3</sup>	Total	Note Ref
Parking	745	-	745	
Environmental Services	-	60	60	
<b>Total</b>	<b>745</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>805</b>	

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

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

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

**Revenue Budget 2023/24 (£'000)**

Divisions	Planned Gross	Planned Income	Planned Net	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	7,583	(4,714)	2,869	7,621	(4,776)	2,845	(38)	62	24	
Customer, Library and Registration	10,085	(4,992)	5,093	9,417	(4,266)	5,151	668	(726)	(58)	
Communities	3,132	(869)	2,263	3,418	(1,432)	1,986	(286)	563	277	iv
Transport & Operational Services	111,507	(69,498)	42,009	111,362	(69,902)	41,460	145	404	549	v
Highways	21,050	(3,578)	17,472	21,649	(3,874)	17,775	(599)	296	(303)	vi
Economy	3,174	(1,512)	1,662	3,484	(1,822)	1,662	(310)	310	0	
Planning and Environment	4,273	(3,240)	1,033	5,329	(4,019)	1,310	(1,056)	779	(277)	vii
<b>Total CET</b>	<b>160,804</b>	<b>(88,403)</b>	<b>72,401</b>	<b>162,280</b>	<b>(90,091)</b>	<b>72,189</b>	<b>(1,476)</b>	<b>1,688</b>	<b>212</b>	

**Capital programme 2023/24 (£'000)**

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q2	Actual to date Q2	Projected 2023/24	Variation (Over) / under Q2 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
The Keep	1,096	1,096	228	-	228	-	-	-	-	
Peacehaven Refurbishment and Conversion	70	70	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	508	638	580	(72)	-	-	(72)	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	160	(1,119)	160	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	170	780	(780)	(780)	-	-	viii
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	189	2	100	89	-	89	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	175	35	75	100	-	100	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	300	53	80	220	-	220	-	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	50	13	13	37	-	37	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	485	129	206	279	-	279	-	
Climate Emergency Works	9,859	9,859	3,095	1,790	3,095	-	-	-	-	
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	445	445	943	91	885	58	-	58	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	146	-	1	1	(1)	(1)	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	86	(52)	28	58	-	58	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	2,963	2,963	70	28	70	-	-	-	-	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	22,315	22,315	3,245	364	2,545	700	-	700	-	ix
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	4	(2)	4	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	26	14	26	-	-	-	-	

**APPENDIX 6**

<b>Approved project</b>	<b>Budget: total project all years</b>	<b>Projected: total project all years</b>	<b>Budget Q2</b>	<b>Actual to date Q2</b>	<b>Projected 2023/24</b>	<b>Variation (Over) / under Q2 budget</b>	<b>Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend</b>	<b>Variation analysis: Slippage to future year</b>	<b>Variation analysis: Spend in advance</b>	<b>Note ref</b>
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	4,203	(209)	(79)	4,282	-	4,282	-	<b>x</b>
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	2,064	72	79	1,985	-	1,985	-	<b>xi</b>
Hailsham /Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	275	230	350	(75)	-	-	(75)	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	3,296	292	2,000	1,296	-	1,296	-	<b>xii</b>
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	2,433	(62)	100	2,333	-	2,333	-	<b>xiii</b>
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,753	66,753	3,740	590	2,802	938	-	938	-	<b>xiv</b>
A22 Corridor Package	1,143	1,143	100	202	100	-	-	-	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	149	15	95	54	-	54	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	200	-	64	136	-	136	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	274	-	37	237	-	237	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	2,320	254	1,259	1,061	-	1,061	-	<b>xv</b>
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	504	(17)	104	400	-	400	-	
Core Programme - Highways Structural Maintenance	498,675	498,675	35,893	7,065	35,893	-	-	-	-	
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	1,293	(332)	1,293	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	4,740	234	2,740	2,000	-	2,000	-	<b>xvi</b>
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,561	39,561	4,686	230	2,000	2,686	-	2,686	-	<b>xvii</b>
Core Programme - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme	2,961	2,961	219	(82)	219	-	-	-	-	
Core- Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement Programme	10,417	10,417	552	272	552	-	-	-	-	
<b>Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)</b>	<b>950,762</b>	<b>952,863</b>	<b>76,505</b>	<b>10,915</b>	<b>58,484</b>	<b>18,021</b>	<b>(781)</b>	<b>18,949</b>	<b>(147)</b>	