

Communities, Economy & Transport – Q3 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. 205 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges at the end of Q3. Nearly 600 young people from 14 schools/colleges took part in 48 Open Doors visits with employers in Q3. The Careers Hub hosted the iCan careers event in November. The event helps young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and their parents/carers, understand the education, employment and training pathways that will be available to them. Nearly 160 parents, carers and young people attended and were able to interact with over 16 local careers, education and training providers and 9 employers.

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 Q3. These interventions include the East Sussex College Group delivering maths interventions for the hospitality sector and a maths through payslips short course.

Apprenticeships

The numbers of apprenticeships being undertaken has remained steady into Q3, largely as a result of the decision for all new frontline staff in Children's Services undertaking apprenticeships to gain mandatory qualifications. Work has been done with the training provider to ensure that the apprenticeship training fits around the demands of the specific roles. Managers in Children's Services are involved at all stages of the implementation of the training to ensure that it remains a good fit for the service. This has also contributed to a significant saving from the Children's training fund as the Apprenticeship Levy covers all costs.

To date there has been no further information on the government's proposal to cease funding Level 7 apprenticeships (equivalent to masters degrees). Nonetheless, in light of the likely direction of travel, the Senior Leader Level 7 apprenticeship will be highlighted in Q4 in case this is the last time senior managers are able to enrol. More bespoke apprenticeships at Level 7, such as Engineering, are expected to be unchanged.

During Q3, the Apprenticeship Levy spend per month regularly reached 95% of the Council's monthly contribution into the Levy. This is the highest the spend has been since the inception of the levy in April 2017. There has been a slight slowdown on the levy transfer spend by Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) during Q3, largely as a result of the impact on SMEs of the increase in National Insurance contributions. However, the spending on the levy transfer is still significant with over £500,000 estimated to be passed over to SMEs in the county in 2023/24.

Cultural investment and recovery

The Local Visitor Economy Partnership Strategy for Growth was completed in Q3 and is scheduled to be launched in Q4.

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

APPENDIX 6

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.

A new Experience Sussex website received a soft launch on 10 December 2024. During its first month nearly 11,000 people visited the site from countries including the USA, Australia and Germany. Experience Sussex promotion has also seen Conde Naste Traveller listing Sussex as one of the top 25 destinations in the world and The Toronto Star newspaper in Canada writing about Sussex wine tourism.

Broadband

The Broadband Project is moving to formal contract closure. The Broadband Team continues 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. Cityfibre have commenced works in the Polegate area. The Broadband team have also continued to work with BDUK and Cityfibre on the social value requirements in the contract. There is still no update on the possible reopening of the Gigabit Voucher scheme run by BDUK and no further detail of how BDUK plans to cover the very hardest to reach properties in the county.

Job creation

15.5 jobs were created through the Newhaven Business Grants programme, with funding from the Newhaven Town Deal, in Q3. During Q1 – Q3, 17 grants totalling almost £200,000 were delivered and 29.5 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) jobs have been created. We are expecting further jobs to be confirmed in Q4. A second round of the programme has been launched and will continue until autumn 2025. There is a forecast that 63.5 jobs will be created through the Rural Business Grants programme, with 11 businesses having received over £200,000 of grants, however, there is some uncertainty as to when these will be confirmed (**ref ii**). The target for 2024/25 is for 45 jobs to be created.

The Council has continued to work with district and borough partners in Eastbourne, Lewes, Rother and Wealden to implement two business support programmes funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF). Ready to Grow supports businesses in their first 3 years of trading; while Big Ambitions supports businesses with 1:1 support from specialists. As part of Big Ambitions 98 businesses were receiving support at the end of Q3, with a target of 120 by the end of March 2025.

Government funding for local areas

The Council has been awarded funding as part of the Rother and Hastings Levelling Up Partnership allocations. The funding awarded to the Council is being used for a Youth Hub in Hastings, providing skills funding and completing the Queensway Gateway Road. The total Levelling Up Funds assigned to Rother and Hastings involve around £40m worth of investment.

Bexhill, Eastbourne and Hastings were assigned funding as part of the Long Term Plan for Towns. The Government agreed in the October 2024 budget to retain and reform the programme with a new prospectus to be released which will allow areas to submit their investment plans by March 2025. Projects are then expected to commence from April 2026.

Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) responsibilities

The Council took on the non-statutory LEP functions in April 2024, following the closure of the LEPs by Government. These responsibilities included:

- ensuring business representation on the local economic board
- delivering strategic economic planning (with a new East Sussex Economic Prosperity Strategy produced and endorsed in September 2024 with work now starting on an investment plan)
- continuing to manage the existing legacy capital funded programmes and any new growth funds that may arise

- becoming the accountable body for the East Sussex Growth Hub

Environment and climate change

We continue to work both across the organisation and with partners to develop and deliver strategic environmental planning, carbon reduction and climate change adaptation work. In Q3 this included:

- carrying out the annual staff climate change survey and holding climate change update sessions for Members and staff.
- investigating the use of a Power Purchase Agreement (a long-term electricity supply agreement with a low-carbon energy generator), however, we concluded that this is not a financially or environmentally sound approach to reducing corporate carbon emissions.
- completing a financial and technical feasibility study for a solar farm on the closed landfill site at Pebsham. An initial assessment of the options will be made during Q4.
- mapping Council plans and strategies that may need to take climate change adaptation into account, and beginning to develop a toolkit to assist services to integrate adaptation into their services. The toolkit will be trialled during Q4.
- continuing to develop the local nature recovery strategy, which is currently planned to be published in summer 2025.

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined within the statutory determination period during Q3. 100% of County Council development applications were determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time during Q3.

Highways, transport and waste

Highways improvements and road condition

We completed 145 patch repairs across 113 sites in Q3. We replaced and/or cleaned 194 road signs, and delivered 224 minor, and 16 major, road drainage schemes. These schemes included replacing gully covers and clearing significant blockages. We have allocated and utilised the additional funding for the refresh of road markings. Progress was slower than expected in Q3, with only 50 jobs completed due to weather impacting resources. However, this continues to be monitored, and we expect an increase of works to be completed in the fairer months later this year.

We repaired 4,214 potholes in Q3, with 3,351 of these being carriageway potholes; the remainder were primarily footway potholes. Amongst the carriageway potholes, 95.4% of these were completed within the required timescales. We completed 7 road improvement schemes in Q3 to improve the condition of the roads. Overall, 88 road improvement schemes have been completed in Q1 – Q3.

Road safety

7 road safety infrastructure schemes were implemented in Q3. A further 6 schemes are due to be completed in Q4. The Council runs courses aimed at giving children and adults the skills they need for riding their bikes on the road. We delivered 127 Bikeability courses to 981 individuals in Q3. 129 'Wheels for All' sessions were also delivered to 1,627 attendees.

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 will be presented to a Lead Member meeting in Q4.

£18.5m of capital funds were also allocated to bus priority measures in East Sussex as part of the original BSIP allocation. 5 bus priority schemes across Eastbourne, Newhaven and

Peacehaven were identified, and a public consultation on all schemes took place in summer 2023. The scheme for Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue in Eastbourne was reviewed, and as such a new public consultation took place in Q2, with the outcomes reported to the Lead Member in Q3. The Lead Member decided to progress with the design and construction of the scheme. All 5 schemes are scheduled to be complete by March 2026.

The Council has received 90% of the £4.441m allocated to East Sussex from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund. The funding will support the delivery of on street electric vehicle charge points in the county. The remaining 10% will be paid once a draft contract has been approved by the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV). Cabinet has approved the plan to proceed with the procurement of a contract to deliver the charge points. This procurement is scheduled to begin following the balance of payment from OZEV and their approval of the procurement documentation. Following our submission, we are advised that this will be reviewed, and procurement will start, in Q4.

A public consultation on the proposed changes to Rother parking charges closed on 29 November 2024. Feedback from the consultation and recommendations will be presented to the Lead Member to consider in Q4.

Waste

The Q2 outturn (reported a quarter in arrears) for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially was 55%. Recycling levels were slightly up in Q3, while composting rates reduced slightly. However, the level of waste not recycled also increased slightly.

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. Feedback from the consultation and recommendations will be presented to the Lead Member in Q4.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

We completed 93% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q3. This included implementation work for a new section of the '[King Charles III England Coast Path](#)' which opened on 6 December 2024. This new section creates a continuous 28-mile (45km) walking route between Eastbourne Pier and Rye Harbour. We also undertook reactive responses to weather related incidents, such as flooding caused by heavy rain and clearing trees which fell during stormy weather.

Communities

Trading Standards

Trading Standards made 63 active interventions in Q3, to protect vulnerable people. 20 interventions were with new victims identified through support sessions. These victims were offered advice and support. 43 interventions were with people who contacted the service to ask for assistance after falling victim to financial fraud or rogue trading. 92 businesses received training or advice from Trading Standards in Q3.

Libraries

249 people enrolled on Family Learning Programmes at East Sussex libraries in Q3. 18 people passed online learning courses, including in IT, English and Maths in our libraries in Q3 (**ref i**).

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget is £73.177m and is forecast to underspend by £868k. There are underspends across the department following the recent introduction of vacancy and other spending controls from August to September and these account for £319k of the current forecast underspend. The main business as usual underspend is in Waste in Transport and Operational Services where higher than budgeted recycling income and lower Private Finance Initiative contract prices due to lower inflation, is partly offset by reduced electricity income. The budgeted Waste Risk Reserve draw requirement of £1.6m is not required mainly due to slippage and reduced requirement for improvements at transfer stations **(ref v)**. The underspend in communities is mostly down to staff vacancies and reduced spend on training **(ref iv)**. The largest overspend is in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted **(ref vi)**. £659k of the planned Parking saving will not be achieved this year due to lower levels of income than was forecast and delays in removing parking machines and therefore the need to continue to pay the costs **(ref iii)**.

Capital Programme Summary

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £61.776m and there is slippage of £7.234m, spend in advance of £268k, overspend of £299k and underspend of £10k. The largest slippage is on the Exceat Bridge scheme where works are on hold while detailed design and alternative options are costed **(ref xi)**. The Eastbourne Town Centre Movement and Access Package Phase 2b is delayed due to the need to readvertise a traffic regulation order **(ref viii)**. The public consultation on the A22 Corridor scheme has resulted in changes to the design, commencement, and procurement timeline **(ref x)**. There are delays across the Bridge Strengthening scheme as designs are being reworked to achieve better value for money **(ref xii)**. There are a number of projects in the Other Integrated Transport scheme that are slipping mainly due to planning and design issues **(ref ix)**. The main spend in advance is on the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Bus Priority scheme where the contractors have reviewed the forecast of likely spend this year **(ref vii)**.

Performance exceptions (Q3: RAG change since Q2; proposed amendments / deletions)**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	Q3 24/25 outturn	Note ref
Deliver a range of Family Learning programmes across East Sussex to provide high quality learning opportunities for parents/carers and their children to develop English, maths and language skills and to support a culture of learning in the family (subject to external funding)	2,051 enrolments	1,300 enrolments across Family Learning programmes	G	AD	G		Q3: 249 enrolments undertaken	i
Job creation from East Sussex Programmes	No jobs created from East Sussex Invest Fund remains closed to new applications	45 jobs created	G	G	A		Q3: 15.5 jobs created Q1 – Q3: 29.5 jobs created	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	86	659	-	
Environmental Services	-	60	60	-	-	
Total Savings	0	805	146	659	-	iii
			-	-	-	
			-	-	-	
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
	-	659	659	
Total	0	659	659	

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	Projected Gross	Projected Income	Projected Net	(Over)/ under spend Gross	(Over)/ under spend Income	(Over)/ under spend Net	Note ref
Management and Support	5,770	(4,081)	1,689	5,668	(4,078)	1,590	102	(3)	99	
Customer and Library Services	9,844	(4,061)	5,783	9,814	(4,197)	5,617	30	136	166	
Communities	3,460	(927)	2,533	3,080	(1,038)	2,042	380	111	491	iv
Transport & Operational Services	114,323	(71,359)	42,964	118,837	(76,691)	42,146	(4,514)	5,332	818	v
Highways	21,606	(4,941)	16,665	21,905	(4,311)	17,594	(299)	(630)	(929)	vi
Economy	4,058	(1,829)	2,229	4,140	(2,182)	1,958	(82)	353	271	
Planning and Environment	5,956	(4,642)	1,314	6,408	(5,046)	1,362	(452)	404	(48)	
Total CET	165,017	(91,840)	73,177	169,852	(97,543)	72,309	(4,835)	5,703	868	

Capital programme 2024/25 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q3 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	-	-	-	-	
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	700	700	70	2	70	-	-	-	-	
Peacehaven Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	725	662	759	(34)	-	-	(34)	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	65	383	65	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	19	246	(246)	(246)	-	-	
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	141	7	141	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	-	7	20	(20)	-	-	(20)	
Stalled Sites Fund	916	916	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
EDS Upgrading Empty Commercial Properties	500	500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	129	95	129	-	-	-	-	
Safer Roads Fund A2100	840	840	30	-	30	-	-	-	-	
Climate Emergency Works	8,859	8,859	2,218	2,176	2,271	(53)	(53)	-	-	
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme	4,891	4,891	1,212	451	1,212	-	-	-	-	
Flood Management SuDS	338	338	338	217	338	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation - Ninfield School	145	161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
SALIX Decarbonisation	369	369	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	135	105	135	-	-	-	-	

APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	4,541	4,541	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	3,181	3,181	250	122	250	-	-	-	-	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	18,500	18,500	1,418	950	1,632	(214)	-	-	(214)	vii
BSIP Passenger Transport	3,815	3,815	1,251	449	1,251	-	-	-	-	
Replacement Lewes Road Bus Station	100	100	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
PAX Software System	37	37	5	0	5	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Gateway Road	3,313	3,313	3,358	1,660	3,358	-	-	-	-	
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	1,053	128	733	320	-	320	-	
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	170	14	40	130	-	130	-	
Hailsham/Polegate/ Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	134	51	65	69	-	69	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	821	280	400	421	-	421	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	2,696	395	1,380	1,316	-	1,316	-	viii
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,646	66,646	3,412	1,928	2,693	719	-	719	-	ix
A22 Corridor Package	3,393	3,393	2,143	155	1,242	901	-	901	-	x
A22 North of Hailsham	118	118	118	9	60	58	-	58	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	123	14	123	-	-	-	-	
Emergency Active Travel - Tranche 2	438	438	130	12	52	78	-	78	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	6	6	6	-	-	-	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	316	56	305	11	-	11	-	
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	9,689	9,689	400	295	400	-	-	-	-	
Exceat Bridge	10,591	10,591	2,980	243	542	2,438	-	2,438	-	xi
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	
Urban Tree Challenge	262	262	22	-	12	10	10	-	-	
Core Programme – Highways Structural Maintenance	499,175	499,175	28,517	24,668	28,517	-	-	-	-	
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	250	42	200	50	-	50	-	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	3,073	1,364	2,350	723	-	723	-	xii

APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget Q3	Actual to date Q3	Projected 2024/25	Variation (Over) / under Q3 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,248	39,248	3,346	1,952	3,346	-	-	-	-	
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	464	588	-	-	-	-	
Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)	976,924	979,040	61,776	39,386	55,099	6,677	(289)	7,234	(268)	