

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 include 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.

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)	