

Communities, Economy & Transport – Q2 2025/26

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

Economy and environment

Employability and Skills

The Visitor Economy Task Group worked with the East Sussex College Group to embed the UK Hospitality Skills Passport in their Hospitality Bootcamp courses in Q2. This led to the college group becoming an approved centre for the passport. Two Bootcamp courses were delivered in Q2, to help people improve their digital and marketing skills, 134 people started these courses.

227 Industry Champions were supporting schools and colleges with activities such as career talks and Open Doors workplace visits, at the end of Q2. The Careers Hub hosted Apprenticeship Roadshows in Hastings and Eastbourne in Q2, with over 900 young people, parents and adult job seekers in attendance, alongside 40 employers, apprenticeship training providers and support organisations. CXK / the Youth Employability Service, who were commissioned by the Careers Hub, have provided workshops to 1,008 Year 11 pupils who are at risk of becoming Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has tasked the Council, alongside our partners West Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council, with creating a Get Sussex Working Plan 2025-2035. The plan will aim to ensure that 80% of working age residents are economically active by 2035. Research and stakeholder consultation has taken place and a Partnership Group, including the Integrated Care Board, the DWP, Sussex Chamber of Commerce and the 3 authorities, is overseeing the development of the plan. The draft plan was submitted to the Minister for Employment at the end of September, and is due to be considered by Members from the 3 authorities and launched in Q3.

The Council is also working alongside the Sussex Chamber of Commerce to create a new Local Skills Improvement Plan for Sussex 2026 – 2029. The plan is scheduled to be approved by the new Mayoral Combined County Authority which will oversee its delivery in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

We have also begun work to gather data to support the development of a Strategic Skills Plan. The Mayoral Combined County Authority will have the responsibility of preparing and delivering the skills plan, which will determine how funds received by the authority will be used to support skills priorities. The first draft of the plan will need to be completed by September 2026, with the final plan signed off by December 2026.

Apprenticeships

We have continued to maintain current numbers and spend during Q2 with 42 new apprentices enrolled and over £100K being spent on apprenticeship training each month. The bulk of apprenticeships continue to be within Children's Services, with all new frontline staff enrolled onto an apprenticeship. The curtailing of level 7 apprenticeships at the end of the year has resulted in an upsurge of applicants now, who will take up the training in Q3. Given the ceasing of the level 7 apprenticeships, we are focussing on new apprenticeships that can benefit as much of the workforce as possible. This includes Community Engagement apprenticeships which are suitable for staff across a wide range of teams within Adult Social Care. Since launching in the summer, we have seen a significant level of interest. Following the transition of the Apprenticeship Levy into the Growth and Skills Levy, a range of changes have been made, including shorter foundation apprenticeships for 18-24 year olds in areas such as Adult Care. This is designed to encourage employers to take on younger members of staff on an apprenticeship which is shorter in length (approximately 8 months) than other apprenticeships. We are currently engaging with local providers of these apprenticeships to be clear about the offer.

Cultural investment and recovery

As part of the [Experience Sussex](#) tourism digital marketing plan, campaigns in Q2 included English Wine Week which generated 2,600 clicks on links to the wineries and 1,736 people signing up to the newsletter. What's On summer, and Coastal Cultural Train campaigns were also held during Q2.

Business Support

128 businesses in East Sussex were supported through business support programmes in Q2. 109 of these were supported through the Growth Hub and 19 through Rural Business Grants.

Environment and climate change

We continue to work both across the organisation and with partners across a range of environment and climate change areas. During Q2 this included:

- finalising the corporate climate emergency progress report for 2024/25
- identifying corporate sites where it would be possible to install electric vehicle charge points
- entering into discussions with UK Power Networks about what scale of solar farm could be accommodated on the closed landfill at Pebsham, in light of constraints on the national grid
- continuing to represent East Sussex interests on the Greater South East Net Zero Hub board
- providing environmental advice to local planning authorities in East Sussex on over 700 planning applications
- continuing to host the Sussex Nature Partnership and the Sussex Air Quality Partnership
- assessing the tenders for the next Sussex Air quality data management contract, covering 2026 - 2028
- completing the mapping, and consultation with local authorities, required as part of developing the local nature recovery strategy for East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

Planning

100% of County Matter applications were determined within the statutory determination period during Q2. 100% of County Council development applications were determined within 8 weeks or within an agreed extension of time during Q2.

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

5,274 potholes were repaired in Q2, with 3,532 of these being carriageway potholes; the remainder were primarily footway potholes. We also completed 33 road improvement schemes to improve the condition of the roads.

Road safety

6 road safety infrastructure schemes were delivered during Q2. The Council runs courses aimed at giving children and adults the skills they need for riding their bikes on the road. We delivered 92 Bikeability courses to 640 individuals in Q2 and 137 'Wheels for All' sessions to 1,932 attendees.

Transport and parking

£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. Construction of the Seaside and St Anthony's Avenue schemes will follow in 2026/27, and the Eastbourne Station Area scheme will be considered

again by Planning Committee in Q3 to allow for further engagement with stakeholders on the proposed options. In Q4 2024/25, a Project Adjustment Request was approved by the Department for Transport (DfT) to transfer funds from the remaining 2 bus priority measures to the Exceat bridge project. Approval to reallocate these funds was given by Cabinet in Q1 2025/26. The Council has allocated the 2025/26 BSIP capital funding to the Newhaven bus priority scheme. To meet DfT programme targets the scheme has been split into 2 phases, the Drove phase and the Denton Corner phase. The Denton Corner phase has progressed into the detailed design phase with construction scheduled to follow in 2026/27. The Drove phase is still to be scheduled. 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 DfT and the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles, the Council has received the full £4.441 million allocation from the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund, which will support the delivery of on-street electric vehicle charge points across the county. The Council now published and evaluated the tenders for a ChargePoint Operator in Q2 and selected a winning bid. The proposal has been submitted to the LEVI Support Body and DfT for final approval. If approval is granted the contract is expected to be awarded in Q3.

Waste

The Q1 outturn (reported a quarter in arrears) for the amount of waste re-used, recycled or composted or used beneficially was 55%. Despite total household waste being higher than forecast, recycling levels are also higher than expected, resulting in performance remaining on target. Food waste collections will be in place across the county by April 2026. East Sussex waste facilities are being adapted to accommodate the change. A wider range of recycling materials will also be accepted from April 2026. East Sussex and third party material sorting facilities are being adapted in order to cater for the new materials.

Rights of Way (RoW) and Countryside Sites

We completed 91% of high priority maintenance work on schedule in Q2. Planned and proactive vegetation clearance has been ongoing during the summer; however recent stormy weather has increased the number of fallen trees which has increased the amount of unplanned reactive work needed.

Communities

Trading Standards

Trading Standards made 37 interventions to protect vulnerable people who had been the target of rogue trading or financial abuse in Q2. The team dealt with a wide range of fraud and scam interventions which involved nearly £330,000 of financial risk to the vulnerable people involved. Alongside this the team continued to provide advice and support to businesses, with 151 businesses benefitting from this service in Q2.

Libraries

6,779 children took part in The Summer Reading Challenge in Q2. The Summer Reading Challenge encourages children to read during the summer holidays and inspires them to tap into a world of imagination through reading. 114 promotional assemblies were held in schools, and 81 volunteers supported the challenge in libraries. Celebratory certificates for children who completed the challenge will be sent to schools to present to the children in Q3.

589 It for You sessions were attended in Q2. The Library service continues to recruit volunteers to support the areas where need is highest. There were 216 enrolments on Family Learning Programmes to help people develop their English, maths and language skills.

Revenue Budget Summary

The CET revenue budget is £76.633m and is forecast to underspend by £227k. The largest overspend is in Highways where the cost of electricity for streetlighting and depots is much higher than budgeted **(ref iv)**. The underspend in Planning and Environment is in Transport Development Planning where there are staff vacancies and additional s278/s38 income contributions **(ref v)**. The underspending in Communities **(ref iii)**, and Customer, Library and Registration **(ref ii)** is mostly due to staff vacancies. It is likely that £1.187m of the planned 2025/26 savings will not be achieved this year mostly due to a shortfall in car parking income **(ref i)**.

Capital Programme Summary

The CET capital programme has a gross budget of £65.582m and there is slippage of £15.180m, overspend of £481k and spend in advance of £270k. The largest slippage is the Bus Service Improvement Plan scheme where staff sickness has resulted in delays in the delivery of critical tasks. Action has been taken to try and accelerate spend on the project **(ref vii)**. The Eastbourne and South Wealden Walking and Cycling scheme has slipped mostly due to legal issues on the Wilmington Square project **(ref x)**. There are significant contractor and planning delays in the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package **(ref ix)**. Forecast spend on a number of Other Integrated Transport projects has been reduced due to Balfour Beatty Living Places and Council resourcing issues **(ref xi)**. The contractor has been unable to appoint a project manager for the Safer Roads A2101 Scheme and so work will not start until the new year **(ref vi)**. The overspend is mostly due to increased cost from the contractor on the BSIP Passenger Transport project **(ref viii)**. The main spend in advance is due to construction cost increases and compensation events on the Hastings Town Centre Public Realm scheme **(xii)**.

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

Priority – Driving sustainable economic growth

Performance measure	Outturn 24/25	Target 25/26	RAG Q1 25/26	RAG Q2 25/26	RAG Q3 25/26	RAG Q4 25/26	Q2 outturn	Note ref
None								

Savings exceptions 2025/26 (£'000)

Service description	Original Target For 2025/26	Target including items c/f from previous year(s)	Achieved in-year	Will be achieved, but in future years	Cannot be achieved	Note ref
Trading Standards	94	94	94	-	-	
Road Safety	18	18	18	-	-	
Registration Service	119	119	119	-	-	
Library – Adult learning	92	92	92	-	-	
Library - Stock	100	100	100	-	-	
Parking – on Street	110	855	106	749	-	
Parking - Other	410	410	-	410	-	
Parking - Rother DC	28	28	-	28	-	
Waste – Booking system	50	50	50	-	-	
Waste	65	65	65	-	-	
Rights of Way and Countryside Sites	48	48	48	-	-	
Highways	50	50	50	-	-	
Economy Division (Service-Wide)	369	369	314	-	-	
Total Savings	1,553	2,298	1,111	1,187		i
Subtotal Permanent Changes ¹						
Total Savings and Permanent Changes						

Memo: treatment of savings not achieved in the year (£'000)	Temporary Funding ²	Part of reported variance ³	Total	Note Ref
Parking – on Street		749	749	
Parking - Other		410	410	
Parking Rother DC	-	28	28	
Total		1,187	1,187	

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).

APPENDIX 6

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 2025/26 (£'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	6,136	(3,186)	2,950	6,106	(3,175)	2,931	30	(11)	19	
Customer and Library Services	9,828	(4,115)	5,713	9,679	(4,119)	5,560	149	4	153	ii
Communities	3,316	(940)	2,376	3,344	(1,113)	2,231	(28)	173	145	iii
Transport & Operational Services	124,814	(79,780)	45,034	124,817	(79,864)	44,953	(3)	84	81	
Highways	22,129	(4,993)	17,136	24,073	(6,366)	17,707	(1,944)	1,373	(571)	iv
Economy	2,517	(550)	1,967	3,327	(1,416)	1,911	(810)	866	56	
Planning and Environment	5,945	(4,488)	1,457	5,850	(4,737)	1,113	95	249	344	v
Total CET	174,685	(98,052)	76,633	177,196	(100,790)	76,406	(2,511)	2,738	227	

Capital programme 2025/26 (£'000)

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget 2025/26	Actual to date Q2	Projected 2025/26	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	212	-	212	-	-	-	-	
Gypsy and Traveller Site Refurbishment	700	700	137	85	137	-	-	-	-	
Peacehaven Library	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Alder Close Heating	188	188	188	24	188	-	-	-	-	
Libraries	5,139	5,139	489	19	442	47	-	47	-	
Broadband	33,800	33,800	338	31	338	-	-	-	-	
Bexhill and Hastings Link Road	126,247	128,347	-	35	137	(137)	(137)	-	-	
BHLR Complementary Measures	1,800	1,800	132	3	132	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund	8,884	8,884	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Economic Intervention Fund - Loans	3,000	3,000	22	-	-	22	-	22	-	
Growing Places Fund	6,913	6,913	650	-	650	-	-	-	-	
Community Focused Road Safety Interventions	750	750	422	53	131	291	-	291	-	
Safer Roads Fund A2101	840	840	864	-	28	836	-	836	-	vi
Climate Emergency Works	6,154	6,195	242	80	283	(41)	(41)	-	-	
Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation	4,891	4,891	840	(28)	910	(70)	-	-	(70)	
Flood Management SuDS	890	890	-	(52)	-	-	-	-	-	
Solar Panels	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	
Newhaven Port Access Road	23,271	23,271	28	6	28	-	-	-	-	
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure	4,541	4,541	500	-	-	500	-	500	-	
Real Time Passenger Information	3,181	3,181	267	(18)	199	68	-	68	-	
Bus Service Improvement Plan	11,372	11,372	9,877	315	1,231	8,646	-	8,646	-	vii
BSIP Passenger Transport	4,370	4,673	804	988	1,107	(303)	(303)	-	-	viii

APPENDIX 6

Approved project	Budget: total project all years	Projected: total project all years	Budget 2025/26	Actual to date Q2	Projected 2025/26	Variation (Over) / under Q2 budget	Variation analysis: (Over) / under spend	Variation analysis: Slippage to future year	Variation analysis: Spend in advance	Note ref
PAX Software System	37	37	5	3	5	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Gateway Road	3,313	3,313	470	1,945	470	-	-	-	-	
Hastings and Bexhill Movement & Access Package	9,583	9,583	2,346	623	735	1,611	-	1,611	-	ix
Eastbourne/South Wealden Walking & Cycling Package	6,936	6,936	1,903	69	183	1,720	-	1,720	-	x
Hailsham/Polegate/Eastbourne Movement & Access Corridor	2,251	2,251	310	30	150	160	-	160	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package A	6,936	6,936	2,290	152	2,290	-	-	-	-	
Eastbourne Town Centre Movement & Access Package B	5,454	5,454	4,328	2,729	4,328	-	-	-	-	
Other Integrated Transport Schemes	66,646	66,646	4,140	1,023	2,998	1,142	-	1,142	-	xi
A22 Corridor Package	4,992	4,992	4,992	2,386	4,992	-	-	-	-	
A22 North of Hailsham	118	118	272	130	272	-	-	-	-	
Community Match Fund	780	780	451	44	451	-	-	-	-	
Emergency Active Travel - Tranche 2	438	438	403	28	403	-	-	-	-	
Area-wide traffic management scheme – Schools Streets	200	200	154	-	154	-	-	-	-	
ATF 5 School Streets	61	61	61	-	61	-	-	-	-	
ATF Eastbourne Liveable Town Centre	274	274	217	59	80	137	-	137	-	
Hastings Town Centre Public Realm and Green Connections	9,689	9,689	824	532	1,024	(200)	-	-	(200)	xii
Exceat Bridge	21,719	21,719	2,587	283	2,587	-	-	-	-	
Queensway Depot Development	1,956	1,956	1	2	1	-	-	-	-	
Urban Tree Challenge	262	262	15	6	15	-	-	-	-	
Core - Highways Structural Maintenance	499,175	499,175	16,667	15,267	16,667	-	-	-	-	
Visibly Better Roads	5,800	5,800	248	151	248	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Bridge Assessment Strengthening	38,785	38,785	3,480	1,519	3,480	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Street Lighting - Life Expired Equipment	39,248	39,248	2,596	1,050	2,596	-	-	-	-	
Core - Street Lighting - SALIX scheme	2,961	2,961	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Core Programme - Rights of Way Surface Repairs and Bridge Replacement	10,417	10,417	810	406	810	-	-	-	-	
Total CET Gross (Planned Programme)	986,058	988,502	65,582	29,981	51,153	14,429	(481)	15,180	(270)	