

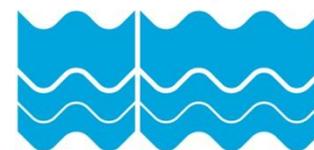
## Summary of County Council achievements 2020/21

This summary sets out some of the key achievements of East Sussex County Council in 2020/21 (up to February 2021) under the four strategic priorities of the Council.

The Council Plan provides further detail of these priorities at:

[www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/councilplan/default.htm](http://www.eastsussex.gov.uk/yourcouncil/about/keydocuments/councilplan/default.htm)

The Council Plan for 2021/22 will be on our website from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021.



### Driving sustainable economic growth

In September 2020, Team East Sussex – a partnership of business, local authority, social enterprise and education representatives published the **East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan** to set out how investment will be used to support businesses hardest hit by the Coronavirus pandemic. £45 million of investment was identified in the plan, including £11.8 million awarded to East Sussex through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership for eight projects across the county including in Newhaven, Eastbourne and Hastings. These projects alone will deliver 445 new jobs and safeguard a further 177 jobs. In addition, the plan sets out how local skills and further education providers have allocated money towards retraining, skills and employability programmes to support those out of work alongside details of Council funding available through the East Sussex Invest programmes to support business growth.

**Transport for the South East (TfSE)**, our partnership of the area's 16 transport authorities approved the 30-year Transport Strategy, which sets out an ambitious 2050 vision for the region with net-zero carbon, sustainable economic growth alongside integrated transport, digital and energy networks.

Over 10,000 young people, parents and carers tuned in to a virtual **Careers Hub** event, 'What's Next Sussex', in November 2020, to hear from employers, post-16 colleges and apprenticeship providers. At the end of 2020 the Department for Education performance tables showed that the Council was sixth nationally amongst all county councils, with 1.8% of staff, 200 individuals, currently undertaking an **apprenticeship**. The Council has also supported National Apprenticeship Week (February 2021). As well as highlighting the national campaign, the Council launched a £600,000 Transform programme to support small and medium sized businesses to access apprenticeships.

An 18-month scheme to improve **street lighting** began in October 2020, with additional funding to upgrade 16,000 streetlight units to modern high efficiency LED lights and replace 3,000 ageing concrete street lighting columns. The work will reduce Council energy bills and lower carbon emissions. This project takes the Council closer to achieving its intention to be carbon neutral by 2050 at the latest, as set out in the **Climate Emergency Plan** (February 2020).

Over 140 **carriageway asset improvement schemes** were delivered in the first three-quarters of 2020/21, to maintain and improve the county's roads. This included major road improvement schemes in Crowborough.

Between October and December 2020, the Council consulted on the **East Sussex Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan**. The plan (which relies on securing external funding) sets out an ambitious network of proposed cycling and walking routes, initially focused on where there is greatest opportunity to increase levels of cycling and walking, including the coastal strip and in larger market towns.

In March 2020, the third **superfast broadband** contract was finalised with BT enabling delivery of a further 5,586 superfast premises by December 2021. In September 2020 it was also announced that the Council was investing £500,000 to support the Government's Rural Gigabit Voucher scheme to help businesses and residents in rural areas to access fast and reliable broadband.

Powers to enforce **parking restrictions** across Rother district transferred to the Council in September 2020, following a significant consultation and legal process. This will enable the Council to ease congestion caused by inconsiderate parking, improve road safety, air quality and increase parking turnover making it easier for people to park.

### Keeping vulnerable people safe

The year 2020/21 has been dominated by the Council's work to keep the most vulnerable residents of the county safe during the **Coronavirus pandemic**. Over 21,000 people have been identified as extremely vulnerable to Covid-19. Staff from across the Council have made calls at different times during the pandemic to these people to ensure support is in place for them. A new food distribution service was set up in April 2020, delivering 8,000 food parcels during the first three months. The Council organised the distribution of PPE across the county to organisations including care providers, GPs and pharmacies. The Council also played a key role in establishing Community Hubs, alongside the district and borough councils and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Public Health worked with the NHS and West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) to support COVID-19 **testing**, launching a local COVID-19 tracing partnership agreement in November 2020, to support the national test and trace systems. The Council also helped to set up three local testing sites, in Bexhill, Eastbourne and Hastings; numerous locations for Mobile Testing Units; and a Regional Testing Site at Plumpton racecourse.

## Keeping vulnerable people safe continued...

The Council has been supporting **vulnerable households** with the cost of food, energy and other bills with £1.5 million from the COVID-19 Winter Grant scheme. The funding provided food vouchers, to pupils eligible for free school meals, during the Christmas and February half term holidays. Vouchers were also provided to eligible pupils aged 16 – 19, and 2, 3 and 4-year olds attending early years provision who were eligible for pupil premium. By the end of the scheme we will have provided food vouchers to approximately 16,500 pupils. In addition, the Council is awarding grants ranging from £3,000 to £100,000 to several voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations to help them continue their vital work.

The Council was the first local authority to place an order for laptops under the Department for Education scheme, to try to ensure that all pupils could continue to learn from home during school closures in the pandemic. During the first lockdown a strong focus on securing school attendance for the most vulnerable pupils meant that East Sussex had one of the highest rates of attendance for pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan. **Schools** were then supported to fully open for all pupils in September with 91% of primary schools, 100% of special schools and 58% of secondary schools accessing the Council's support to encourage pupils back to school.

A new **Regional Adoption Agency**, Adoption South East, went live on 1 April 2020, with the Council leading on behalf of Brighton and Hove City Council, West Sussex and Surrey County Councils. The agency hopes to broaden the range and increase the number of people considering adoption.

In October 2020, Council leaders signed the **Modern Slavery Pledge**, underlining the Council's commitment to becoming a Slavery Free Community by 2030. Work has also continued to deliver interventions to **safeguard children against serious and organised crime** through, for example, workshops and distribution of guidance around knives and exploitation to students. When schools reopened in September, 50 workshops were also delivered to primary school pupils on online safety.

In November 2020, Hastings was announced as a pilot area for Project Adder, a £5 million Government initiative the Council is supporting, to help organisations work together to reduce **drug-related deaths and offending**.

## Helping people help themselves

**Reablement services** are provided to help people to regain mobility and daily living skills, especially after a hospital stay. Between April and September 2020 88.8% of older people discharged from hospital to reablement/rehabilitation services were at home 91 days after discharge. Frail adults across East Sussex can also receive Technology Enabled Care Services (TECS), to help manage risks and maintain **independence at home**. TECS includes Telecare, which offers a range of sensors and detectors to meet different needs, such as wearable alert buttons, fall detectors or medication dispensers. At the end of 2020, 8,851 people were receiving TECS.

Work continued on further **integration of health and social care** services to support people during the pandemic, including our out of hospital support and discharge hubs to ensure timely discharge to appropriate care. We have also been developing a **single mental health plan** and programme for East Sussex with agreement that work will be taken forward in emotional wellbeing services, enhancements to community services for adults with personality disorders, eating disorders and rehabilitation and housing and supported accommodation needs.

Over 700 Covid-related calls were made to the Council's **trading standards** team from March to December 2020. The team have issued advice and guidance to a large number of businesses and residents as well as carrying out 158 visits to barbers and hairdressers, homeware stores and garden centres. This is in addition to the team's regular work including for example interventions to protect vulnerable people and delivering EU Exit training.

## Making best use of resources in the short and long term

As a result of ongoing lobbying, the Government's November 2020 Spending Review included several provisions that assist our financial position for 2021/22. The Council's **budget** and Council Plan for 2021/22 were approved at the meeting of Full Council on 9 February 2021. The budget includes spending of £417 million on services for East Sussex with no new cuts beyond those already considered by the Council last year.

The **Social Value Marketplace** is an innovative platform to help councils leverage their expenditure with suppliers to maximise community benefit. The marketplace enables local charities to request non-financial support from suppliers that are looking to support the community. During the first three quarters of the year, over 30 contracts which qualified for the Social Value Measurement Charter were awarded with a total value of over £35 million. Over £2.5 million of social value commitments were secured as part of these contracts.

The Council's **Hailsham Primary Academy project** won 'Building Project of the Year under £10m' at the South East Centre for the Built Environment (SECBE) 2020 Construction Excellences awards in July 2020. The award recognised the completion of the project 11 weeks ahead of schedule, meaning pupils could start the new term in a brand-new school rather than in temporary accommodation. The project also saved 145 tonnes of CO2 and reduced waste by around 39%.

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