

Cabinet

18 September 2024



Time and venue:

6.00 pm in the Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG

Membership:

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair); Councillors Margaret Bannister (Deputy-Chair) Daniel Butcher, Peter Diplock, Jim Murray, Colin Swansborough and Jenny Williams

Quorum: 3

Published: Tuesday, 10 September 2024

Agenda

1 Minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2024 (Pages 5 - 14)

2 Apologies for absence

3 Declaration of members' interests (Please see note at end of agenda)

4 Questions by members of the public

On matters not already included on the agenda and for which prior notice has been given (total time allowed 15 minutes).

5 Urgent items of business

The Chairman to notify the Cabinet of any items of urgent business to be added to the agenda.

6 Right to address the meeting/order of business

The Chairman to report any requests received to address the Cabinet from a member of the public or from a Councillor in respect of an item listed below and to invite the Cabinet to consider taking such items at the commencement of the meeting.

7 Supporting Authority Approval for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) currently being prepared by the Responsible Authority, East Sussex County Council (Pages 15 - 20)

Report of Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning
Lead Cabinet member: Councillor Jim Murray

8 Corporate performance - quarter 1 - 2024/25 (Pages 21 - 30)

Report of Director of Finance and Performance
Lead Cabinet member: Councillor Stephen Holt

9 Provisional Revenue & Capital Outturn 2024/25 - Quarter 1 (Pages 31 - 50)

Report of Director of Finance and Performance
Lead Cabinet member: Councillor Daniel Butcher

10 Stability and Growth Programme (Pages 51 - 76)

Report of Chief Executive
Lead Cabinet member: Councillor Stephen Holt

Information for the public

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Information for Councillors

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If a member has a DPI or other prejudicial interest he/she must leave the room when the matter is being considered (unless he/she has obtained a dispensation).

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Cabinet

Minutes of meeting held in Court Room at Eastbourne Town Hall, Grove Road, BN21 4UG on 17 July 2024 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair).

Councillors Margaret Bannister (Deputy-Chair), Peter Diplock, Colin Swansborough and Jenny Williams.

Officers in attendance:

Ian Fitzpatrick (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning), Homira Javadi (Director of Finance and Performance (Section 151 Officer)), Becky Cooke (Director of Tourism, Culture and Organisational Development), Simon Russell (Head of Democratic Services and Monitoring Officer), Kate Slattery (Head of Legal Services), Luke Dreeling (Performance Lead), Linda Farley (Assistant Director, Customer Service and Delivery), Nathan Haffenden (Assistant Director, Property and Development), Matt Hitchen (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Jo Harper (Head of Business Planning and Performance), Emily Horne (Committee Officer), Steven Houchin (Deputy Chief Finance Officer), Lynn Ingram (Interim Head of Financial Planning), Lisa Rawlinson (Head of Regeneration), Sean Towey (Head of Environment First) and Rebecca Wynn (Regulatory Services Lead (Operational Lead - Emergency Planning)).

Also in attendance:

Councillor Penny di Cara (Opposition Deputy Leader), Councillor Kshama Shore OBE (Shadow Cabinet member and Chair of Scrutiny Committee), Councillor David Small (Shadow Cabinet member) and Councillor Robert Smart (Opposition Leader).

7 Minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 June 2024 were submitted and approved and the Chair was authorised to sign them as a correct record.

8 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were reported from Councillors Butcher and Murray.

9 Declaration of members' interests

Councillors Bannister and Williams declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Levelling Up Fund Projects and Long-Term Plan for Towns) as trustees of Towner Eastbourne. They remained in the room and voted on the item.

Councillor Holt declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (Levelling Up Fund Projects and Long-Term Plan for Towns) as his employer, Your Eastbourne Bid was referenced in the report. He remained in the room and

voted on the item.

Councillor Holt and Swansborough declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Preparations for the introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collections in Eastbourne – managing capital transitional funding) as directors of South East Environmental Services Ltd (SEESL). They remained in the room and voted on the item.

10 Questions by members of the public

The Cabinet received a written question from Steve Hansen, in relation to the continued promotion of tourism in light of the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and carbon neutral plans.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules, a supplementary question was asked to the Cabinet. The written question was verbally responded to at the meeting by Councillor Bannister. A further written response to the supplementary question would be sent following the meeting.

11 Stability and Growth Update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, providing an update on the delivery of the Stability and Growth programme and to seek its agreement to submission of a Productivity Plan to Government.

The Stability and Growth Programme (S&G) was designed to support the council's work to deliver significant savings for the council, helping to address the financial challenges currently being faced.

Following central government's agreement to Exceptional Financial Support being offered to the council for 2023/24 and 2024/25, one of the conditions of the loan was that the council was required to establish an Independent Panel to oversee and drive progress towards implementation of the Assurance Review recommendations from Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in the summer of 2023. Three members had now been appointed and they would augment with the already established Stability and Growth Member Board. A further condition of the loan was that an additional Assurance Review would be undertaken with CIPFA and that was due to start shortly.

Cabinet members gave due regard to the Equality and Fairness Analysis in relation to this report and it had been circulated to them in advance of the meeting.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note progress made with delivery of the Stability and Growth programme.

(2) To agree a Productivity Plan for submission to Government by 19 July 2024.

Reason for decision:

The Stability and Growth programme works to drive improvement and efficiency, in line with the needs of the organisation, and also the recommendations made by the Assurance Reviews and the Local Government Association Peer Challenge.

12 Levelling Up Fund Projects and Long-Term Plan for Towns

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, providing an update on the Levelling Up Fund Projects and the Long-Term plan for Towns and to secure the necessary delegations to enable the various projects to be delivered.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note the updates on the Levelling Up Fund Projects and the Long-Term Plan for Towns.

(2) To authorise the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer and Leader of the Council to carry out all necessary actions to facilitate the delivery of the Levelling Up Fund Projects and the Long-Term Plan for Towns programme of works including feasibility, financing, appointment of professional services, development, contract award(s), lettings, grant agreements, and determining the terms of and authorising the execution of all necessary documentation in accordance with the funding parameters, including authority to submit the three year Investment Plan and authorise all Grant Funding Agreements. The Council is anticipating that DLUHC will require either a Memorandum of Understanding or a Grant Funding Agreement to be signed between the Council and DLUHC in respect of the Long-Term Plan for Towns.

Reason for decisions:

To enable Officers to deliver in an effective and timely manner, the necessary delegations to Lead Members and Executive Officers are required to ensure that the Council can deliver the projects and programmes in accordance with the funding parameters.

13 Preparations for the introduction of Weekly Food Waste Collections in Eastbourne - managing capital transitional funding.

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, covering preparations for the introduction of weekly food waste collections and setting out how capital funding for food waste collections would be deployed.

The Head of Environment First addressed Cabinet, updating it on the implementation of food waste collections at Lewes District Council and experience gained.

Resolved (Key decision):

That Cabinet acknowledges the receipt of new government capital transitional funding to meet the requirements of the Environment Act relating to weekly food waste collections, approves the plans presented and authorises the Chief Executive:

(1) To undertake an assessment of the most effective and efficient way to structure the use of the funding and to implement the chosen route or routes, working with SEESL.

(2) To work with SEESL Board to commission the delivery of weekly food waste collections from April 2026.

(3) To work with the SEESL Board to begin procurement of vehicles and receptacles as required.

(4) To carry out all acts and to enter into or authorise the signature or sealing of all documents, necessary for the delivery of items (1) to (3) above.

Reason for decisions:

The Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (Defra) has provided Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) with capital transitional costs for vehicles and receptacles to assist preparations for the introduction of weekly food waste collections in 2026. EBC will work with SEESL to make arrangements for the appropriate use of the funds to support the acquisition of vehicles and receptacles, as the procurement timeline requires.

14 Eastbourne Houses in Multiple Occupation - Options for Interventions

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, updating it on the findings of the Eastbourne Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Study and asking it to consider options to address impacts relating to HMOs.

Visiting members, Councillors Smart and Di Cara, addressed the Cabinet on this item. Councillor Smart applauded officers for progressing the matter since the Full Council motion in February 2024. He further referenced the Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights relating to HMOs and potential exploration for other permitted development rights and a wider remit in the Borough. Councillor Di Cara echoed comments made by Councillor Smart and added concerns around implementation and enforcement and the need for clearer interaction between planning and licensing departments as part of any enforcement action.

The Senior Planning Policy Officer addressed comments that had been made. The Aecom study confirmed that HMOs played an important part in the local housing market but acknowledged the impact that some were having on local communities.

The Cabinet commended the report, with the aim of improving the experience of HMOs for all concerned.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) That an HMO Development Plan Document be prepared to provide new planning policy relating to HMOs.

(2) That Article 4 Direction be introduced through Planning Committee to remove permitted development rights relating to HMOs

(3) That proactive investigation into quantity and location of small HMOs be undertaken, including a pilot scheme to target private rented properties within a geographical area, particularly those HMOs that fall below the threshold for mandatory licensing

(4) That the Regulatory Services Enforcement Policy and the 'Prescribed Standards for Houses in Multiple Occupation' documents are reviewed and updated where necessary

(5) That all complaints regarding HMOs are captured and reporting procedures in relation to HMOs be updated

Reason for decisions:

To enable appropriate intervention to take place to mitigate the negative impacts of HMOs on residents and local communities.

15 Complaints Management Policy

The Cabinet considered the report of the Chief Executive, asking it to agree a corporate complaints policy.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To agree the draft Complaints Management Policy as set out at appendix 1 to the report.

(2) To agree to a period of consultation being undertaken on the draft policy with residents, tenants and other stakeholders.

(3) To give delegated authority to the Assistant Director for Customer Service and Delivery, in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member, to undertake

any final minor amendments to the Policy in light of the consultation.

Reason for decisions:

To enable the public to have a clear understanding of the way complaints are dealt with by the council.

16 Corporate performance - quarter 4 - 2023/24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, considering the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the fourth quarter of the year (January-March 2024), as shown at Appendix 1 to the report.

Visiting member, Councillors Shore, addressed the Cabinet on this item. She raised concerns that only 13 of the 23 key performance indicators achieved its target during the quarter and its impact on the council's overall financial position. Further comments were made on call response time and customer complaints and the resourcing of staff. It was agreed that the Head of Customer First would respond to Councillor Shore's detailed comments following the meeting.

The Director of Finance and Performance updated Cabinet on the work of the council's income maximisation team. Following discussions, a capacity plan had been developed to respond to the immediate and urgent requirements.

Resolved (Non-key decision):

To note progress and performance for Quarter 4 2023/24.

Reason for decision:

To enable Cabinet members to consider specific aspects of the Council's progress and performance.

17 Provisional Revenue and Capital Outturn 2023/24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, updating members on the provisional outturn for 2023/24.

The provisional outturn position for 2023/24 was a net shortfall of £4.688m as shown in Table 1 of the report. As previously detailed, the overspend related to the additional costs of emergency and temporary accommodation, reduced income from tourism and culture, and additional cost of capital financing due to high interest rates. Further details were contained in the report.

The Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning updated Cabinet on the homelessness pressures and measures taken by the Council to address. The issue was affecting a number of local authorities and lobbying of central government would continue. The Council was doing

substantial work in prevention, to assist those at risk of homelessness. There was a need for a supply of new housing, and work was ongoing, including discussions with the private sector.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To note and approve the revenue and capital provisional outturn for 2023/24 subject to final accounting adjustments.

(2) To approve the funding of the General Fund provisional outturn 2023/24 of £1.688m from general fund balances.

(3) To note and approve the housing revenue account provisional outturn for 2023/24 subject to final accounting adjustments; and

(4) To give delegated authority to Cabinet member for finance, in consultation with the S151 Officer to make final accounting adjustments.

Reason for decisions:

To enable Cabinet members to consider the Council's financial performance for 2023/24.

18 Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24

The Cabinet considered the report of the Director of Finance and Performance, covering the activities and performance of the Treasury Management service during 2023/24.

Visiting member, Councillor Smart, addressed the Cabinet on this item. Councillor Smart reiterated comments made previously, in relation to last year's treasury management report and the CIPFA Assurance Review. Commenting on this year's report, he referenced the short-term debt position of the Council, which was now reported at £80 million (£191 million overall debt). He raised concerns about the cost of the debt annually to the council, when compared to the current financial pressures and the council's overall financial sustainability.

In response, the Director of Finance and Performance advised on the significant impact of rising interest rates on the Council's borrowing and debt structure strategy over the past few years. Action taken by the council were in line with advice received from its treasury advisors. To respond to the financial challenges, the council would continue with its significant savings programme of work, as set out in the Stability and Growth programme, that also included significant controls and restrictions on further capital investments.

Recommended to Full Council (Budget and policy framework):

(1) To consider and approve the Annual Treasury Management report 2023/24 for publication.

(2) To approve the 2023/24 Prudential and Treasury Indicators included in the report.

Reason for decisions:

It is the requirement of CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Sector Code of Practice (the Code).

19 Bedfordwell Road Project Update

The Cabinet considered the report of the Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning, updating it on the Bedfordwell Road Project and to seek its approval to progress delivery.

The Assistant Director for Property and Development presented the open report. Cabinet commended the work of officers in bringing the proposals together.

Following presentation and initial discussions, Cabinet resolved to exclude the public whilst discussing the exempt appendix, as otherwise there was a likelihood of disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Visiting member, Councillor Smart addressed the Cabinet whilst the meeting was in exempt session, as his comments referenced the exempt appendix.

Following the exempt discussion, the public meeting resumed and Cabinet resolved to unanimously approve the officer recommendations, as set out in the report.

Resolved (Key decision):

(1) To approve the updated Bedfordwell Road business case in accordance at Appendix 1 (Exempt) to the report, subject to securing the necessary funding to meet the remaining financial viability gap and the capacity of the 30-Year HRA Business Plan.

(2) To approve a pre-contract capital budget allocation within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of up to £100k to allow limited enabling works and surveys to be undertaken, mitigating the risk of delays to programme as/when full funding has been secured.

(3) To delegate authority to the Assistant Director – Property and Development, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Performance (S151 Officer) and the Lead Member for Housing and Homelessness, to make the necessary allocations within the HRA Capital Programme, and to take all necessary actions to deliver the project, including development, lettings, and sales, as

well as determining and executing all leases, contracts, funding agreements and other related documentation.

Reason for decisions:

To provide the required approvals toward the delivery of the Bedfordwell Road housing development project in readiness for future government grant funding announcements.

Notes: (1) The appendix remained exempt. (2) Exempt information reason 3 – information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting ended at 7.41 pm

Councillor Stephen Holt (Chair)

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Agenda Item 7

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	18 September 2024
Title:	Supporting Authority Approval for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy currently being prepared by the Responsible Authority, East Sussex County Council
Report of:	Ian Fitzpatrick, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Regeneration and Planning
Cabinet member:	Councillor Jim Murray, Cabinet member for Carbon Neutral 2030 and Water Champion
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	The report addresses requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to the Council's Supporting Authority role in reviewing both the pre-consultation draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and the final pre-publication LNRS. East Sussex County Council is the Responsible Authority and will provide the draft and final pre-publication documentation.
Decision type:	Key
Officer recommendation(s):	(1) To note and welcome the Council's role as a Supporting Authority in relation to Local Nature Recovery Strategies, under The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023; (2) To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the relevant Lead member, to: a) Approve and submit a response to the Responsible Authority, ESCC, on any pre-consultation draft of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy within 28 days as required by the Council's role as a Supporting Authority under The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023; b) Consider the pre-publication draft of any Local Nature Recovery Strategy and, if the Chief Executive considers that the draft strategy cannot be justified based on the results of the consultation or that it is materially deficient, to submit a publication advisory notice to the Responsible Authority within 28 days, as set out in regulation 15 of The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023.

Reasons for recommendations: The report addresses requirements of the Environment Act 2021 relating to the council’s LNRS Supporting Authority role (to ESCC as Responsible Authority) and seeks delegated authority to approve and respond on any pre-consultation draft of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy within 28 days, as required, and consider the pre-publication draft strategy, also within 28 days. Delegated authority is sought as these timelines would not allow for the matter to be considered at Cabinet.

Contact Officer(s): Name: Jane Goodall
Post title: Environment Lead
E-mail: Jane.Goodall@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
Telephone number: Tel: 07788515359

Name: Nadeem Din
Post title: Head of Planning Policy
E-Mail: nadeem.din@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk
Telephone number: 07800689269

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The national legislative framework for nature recovery is set through the 25 Year Environment Plan 2018, The Environment Act 2021, and the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.
- 1.2 The Environment Act in England is part of the legal framework for environmental protection. It sets clear statutory targets for the recovery of the natural world in four priority areas: air quality, biodiversity, water and waste, and includes important new targets to reverse the decline in species abundance by the end of 2030. It also sets in law new tools that we can use to help meet those targets. In terms of restoring nature, the new provisions and tools include Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs).
- 1.3 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) are a new system of spatial strategies for nature covering the whole of England. They are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical, and focused action to help nature. They will support the delivery of biodiversity net gain and provide a focus for the strengthened duty on all public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. Preparation of each LNRS is led by a “Responsible Authority” appointed by the Defra Secretary of State. These are all Tier 1 Authorities (County Councils or Unitaries). Eastbourne borough falls under the joint East Sussex and Brighton & Hove strategy

2 Proposal

- 2.1 That Cabinet grants delegated authority for arrangements to approve the pre-consultation draft of the LNRS within 28 days of receipt, in line with recommendation (2) a) above.

2.2 That Cabinet grants delegated authority for arrangements to consider the final pre-publication version of the LNRS within 28 days of receipt, in line with recommendation (2) b) above.

3 Supporting Authority role for the Local Nature Recovery Strategy

3.1 East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council have been appointed as the Responsible Authorities to prepare the Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) covering East Sussex (including Brighton & Hove) and West Sussex respectively under section 105 of the Environment Act 2021. Both Responsible Authorities are now responsible for preparing, publishing, reviewing and republishing a Local Nature Recovery Strategy following the process set out in The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023. Given the synergies between the counties and the number of pan-Sussex stakeholders, the two Responsible Authorities have committed to developing the two LNRSs together under the banner of Sussex Nature Recovery. As a result, there is a pan-Sussex LNRS Working Group and Supporting Authorities Group.

3.2 LNRSs are designed to be collaboratively developed and therefore it is expected that each Responsible Authority will work with others while retaining overall responsibility for LNRS preparation, publication and adherence to the Regulations and statutory guidance.

3.3 The Regulations set out a particular role for Supporting Authorities in the LNRS process. All local planning authorities are Supporting Authorities, as are Natural England.

3.4 A Responsible Authority must take reasonable steps to involve all supporting authorities for its local nature recovery strategy in the preparation of the local nature recovery strategy. A Sussex LNRS Supporting Authorities Group (SAG) was established at the earliest opportunity, following formal appointment of the Responsible Authorities and publication of the Regulations and statutory guidance. The Sussex SAG was set up in June 2023. The group has been meeting monthly since inception. Both Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council are members of that group.

4 Consultation

4.1 The Responsible Authority has consulted extensively through surveys, webinars and stakeholder workshops, promoted via the channels and networks of organisations within the Sussex LNRS Working Group and Supporting Authority Group, and its own monthly e-newsletters to 425+ subscribers and updates to the Sussex Nature Recovery website.

4.2 Different engagement methods have been tailored to audiences and parts of the LNRS process, the following are a few key examples:

- The public survey (live Feb-Jun 2024) canvassed 1,834 residents' views to inform LNRS priorities for nature, while a webinar in June played back

interim results of this survey (East Sussex attendees 109/137 recording views).

- Webinars have also been used to brief key audiences on the LNRS process and what is required specifically from them: landowners/managers (Nov 2023, 127 attendees/188 recording views), parish councils (Feb 2024, 60 attendees/80 recording views), community groups (Mar 2024, 127 attendees/152 recording views), while follow up surveys and tools are being used to capture their existing and planned actions for nature to inform LNRS measures.
- Bespoke workshops have also taken place including with key delivery organisations/partnerships for nature in Sussex (Apr 2024, 30 orgs), the health & wellbeing sector (Feb 2024, 28 reps), Sussex biodiversity experts convened as the species sub-group, and farmer clusters (various onsite meetings in Feb, June and July 2024).

4.3 Further engagement with landowners, farmers, organisations and groups is planned for the Autumn, while a public consultation of the draft documents will be promoted in early 2025.

4.4 The council has been active in promoting the engagement opportunities in 4.2 to our residents and partners through social media and other channels.

4.5 In addition, Dr Kate Cole, County Ecologist, hosted a bespoke online briefing to EBC Cllrs, 21 November 2023.

5 Corporate plan and council policies

5.1 The new Local Plan will have a key role in helping to deliver nature recovery in support of the Corporate Plan's key priority area of sustainability and environment. In setting out planning policies to cover the natural environment, the local plan will require development to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the natural environment. Other policies may set out where locations will support habitat banking, improving connectivity across the borough and more widely within the county, and the opportunities arising from Natural England's Seaford to Eastbourne Nature Recovery Project.

6 Business case and alternative option(s) considered

6.1 Given the short timescales set out in the regulations, of only 28 days to respond, it is unlikely this would fit in with the planned schedule of Cabinet meetings. Furthermore, there is some urgency to publish the LNRS given a) the current biodiversity crisis, b) the link between LNRS and the delivery of biodiversity net gain, c) the fact that LNRSs are a material consideration in the plan making process and d) to maximise potential funding opportunities from Defra (it is understood that the LNRS will be used as a primary means of targeting funding through e.g. Environmental Land Management Schemes). Including Lewes District and Eastbourne Borough, the East Sussex and Brighton & Hove LNRS has eight Supporting Authorities, all of which need to be involved in the process as set out in the Regulations and Statutory Guidance. Delegated Authority to approve the LNRS at pre-consultation and pre-publication stage would help

streamline the process and increase the chances for the LNRS to be published in a timely manner.

- 6.2 As all Supporting Authorities are being actively involved throughout the LNRS development process, we do not anticipate being unable to approve the LNRS at pre-consultation and pre-publication stage.

7 Financial appraisal

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the contents of this report.
SH 01/08/24

8 Legal implications

- 8.1 The Environment Act 2021 requires responsible authorities in England (ESCC, in the context of this report) to prepare and publish local nature recovery strategies. It also requires them to review and republish their local nature recovery strategies from time to time.
- 8.2 The Environment (Local Nature Recovery Strategies) (Procedure) Regulations 2023 set out the procedure to be followed for preparation and publication, and review and republication, of these strategies.

Under regulation 3, EBC is deemed a “supporting authority”.

Regulation 4 requires responsible authorities to take reasonable steps to involve all supporting authorities for the local nature recovery strategy in its preparation and make provision as to the form this must take.

Regulation 7 requires responsible authorities to provide all supporting authorities for the local nature recovery strategy with the draft strategy it considers ready to consult on, and to request their comments.

Date of legal input: 17.07.24
013038-JOINT-OD

Legal ref:

9 Risk management implications

- 9.1 The risks of not delegating authority as proposed in this report include delaying the consultation process for and publication of the LNRS.

10 Equality analysis

- 10.1 These proposals seek delegated authority for approval of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. They do not affect policy or operational service delivery.
NW 02/08/24

11 Environmental sustainability implications

- 11.1 These proposals to streamline our response to the LNRS process align with our commitments to environmental sustainability.

12 Appendices

- None

13 Background papers

The background papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

- [Environment Act 2021 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/1)
- [The Environment \(Local Nature Recovery Strategies\) \(Procedure\) Regulations 2023 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2023/1111/contents/made)
- [Sussex Nature Recovery | Sussex Nature Recovery](https://www.sussexnature.com/our-work/nature-recovery)
- [Interactive map shows where survey respondents favourite places for nature are | Sussex Nature Recovery](https://www.sussexnature.com/our-work/nature-recovery/interactive-map)
- <https://sussexinp.org.uk/>

Agenda Item 8

Body:	Cabinet
Date:	18 September 2024
Subject:	Corporate Performance Quarter 1 2024-25
Report of:	Homira Javadi, Director of Finance and Performance
Cabinet member:	Councillor Stephen Holt, Leader of the Council (Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership, the Corporate Plan, Performance and Staff)
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of the report:	To consider the council's progress and performance in respect of service areas for the First Quarter of the year (April-June 2024) as shown in Appendix 1
Decision type:	Non Key
Recommendation:	To note progress and performance for Quarter 1 2024/25
Reasons for recommendations:	To enable Cabinet members to consider specific aspects of the Council's progress and performance.
Contact:	Luke Dreeling: Performance Lead Tel: 07525 351757 or email: luke.dreeling@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The council has an annual cycle for the preparation, implementation and monitoring of its business plans and budgets. This cycle enables us regularly to review the council's work, and the targets it sets for performance, to ensure these continue to reflect customer needs and council aspirations.
- 1.2 It is important to monitor and assess progress and performance on a regular basis, to ensure the council continues to deliver priority outcomes and excellent services to its customers and communities.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 of this report sets out details of the key performance indicators for 2023/24 which were agreed by Cabinet in July 2024.

2.0 Solution Sprints

- 2.1 Solution sprint activity this quarter remains focused under three workstreams - contracts, assets and finance/data.

- Contracts – work continues to develop successor arrangements for the grounds maintenance contract (expires March 2026). Solution sprint and project review methods are being employed to arrive at a specification for future requirements and to carefully consider associated options.
- Assets – a review of fees and charges is underway. This involves two strands of work. The first is focusing on establishing a refreshed fees and charges policy and associated process to ensure that fees and charges setting is increasingly clear, consistent, better evidence informed and covers costs. The second involves deep dives into fees and charges in particular service areas and identifying opportunities for improvement. This quarter work has commenced on reviewing parking services and garden waste fees and charges, with potential deep dives into bereavement services and land charges pending.
- Finance/Data – work this quarter has primarily focussed on reviewing and improving our collation and insight of our contracts data, crosscutting the contracts and assets themes. This has involved producing a training video to help staff use the corporate system to manage contracts and, an initial review of data on the system and steps taken to improve the associated data quality, including a focus on those contracts concerned with energy use and billing. A corporate services review is also anticipated to take place under the finance/data theme into the next reporting period and details will follow next quarter.

3.0 Appendix 1 Review

3.1 Within Appendix 1 we have 32 PIs, this quarter we have had: 15 PIs achieve target, 2 slightly below target, 6 below target, 9 Data only points. We have 10 positive trends and 14 negative trends from Q4 to Q1.

4.0 Financial appraisal

4.1 Project and performance monitoring and reporting arrangements are contained within existing estimates. Corporate performance information should also be considered alongside the Council's financial update as there is a clear link between performance and budgets/resources.

4.2 All the financial implications are contained within the body of the report.

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 Comment from the Legal Services Team is not necessary for this routine monitoring report.

6.0 Equality analysis

6.1 The equality implications of individual decisions relating to the projects/services covered in this report are addressed within other relevant Council reports or as part of programmed equality analysis.

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 This report provides an overview of performance against the authority's priority actions and indicators for 2024-25.









Appendices

- Appendix 1- Portfolio Progress and Performance Report (Quarter 1 2024/25)















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Portfolio Progress and Performance - Appendix 1

Eastbourne Borough Council Corporate Performance Report Q1 2024-25















Key			
	Performance that is at or above target Project is on track		Performance that is below target Projects that are not expected to be completed in time or within requirements
	Project has been completed, been discontinued or is on hold		Performance that is slightly below target but is within an acceptable tolerance Projects : where there are issues causing significant delay, changes to planned activities, scale, cost pressures or risks
	Direction of travel on performance indicator : improving performance		Direction of travel on performance indicator : declining performance
	Direction of travel on performance indicator : no change		Data with no performance target

KPIs

KPI Description	Annual Target 2024/25	Q4 2023/24	Q1 2024/25			Latest Note	
		Value	Value	Target	Status		Short Trend
1. Finance: Percentage of Council Tax collected during the year - Eastbourne	97.50%	95.82%	27.63%	28.65%			We continue to prioritise the backlog of work created as a result of system migration. Recovery continues for those customers who are in arrears. 1742 Liability Orders with a value of £2,080,449.02 were granted in June.
2. Finance: Percentage of Business Rates collected during the year - Eastbourne	97%	97.06%	31.76%	31.50%			Collection is 0.26% above target this quarter and remains on track.
3. Benefits: Average days to process new claims for housing/council tax benefit	22	77	62	22			What happened: As mentioned in the previous quarter, we have seen a significant improvement in performance, whilst working through backlog. What was learned/changed: The team continue to investigate trends into claims that have taken longer than anticipated to process. New claims are a priority activity and continue to be prioritised to bring the number of days to process down. Dedicated officers continue to work through backlog and system issues.
4. Benefits: Average days to process change of circs (housing/council tax benefit)	6	24	21	6			Please see KPI3 commentary.
5. Customers: Average time taken to answer calls	Data Only	03:37	12:23	Data Only			What happened: On average we experienced a 2000 call increase on a monthly basis over the Quarter. Contributing factors: July General Election (over 1000 residents made contact), roll-over from the 150K Annual Bills and other financial end of year correspondence, Garden Waste Renewals, the continued wheeled-bin rollout scheme across the district (39,000 properties impacted) and the Police and Crime Commissioner Election in May. Additional staffing resources were acquired for the phones and contact; however the volume was in excess of the additional resource. What was learned/changed: During Q1 we completed our most recent round of recruitment with 3FTE joining us, as we enter quarter 2, they are now handling contact on their own with support from colleagues within the office. This now sees Customer Contact fully recruited, where our focus going forward will remain on those who have joined us most recently and ensuring robust training is implemented where knowledge or confidence may still be lacking.
6. Customers: Telephone calls graded as high quality under the call monitoring scheme	85%	87%	85%	85%			What happened: We have seen a slight decrease of 2% this quarter What was learned/changed: Team Leaders and officers continue to improve their knowledge on the new Revenue and Benefits system, which we have seen a high volume of enquiries this quarter. Individual training, cross-team meetings and 1-2-1s continue to constantly improve
7. Customers: Customer complaints logged at stage 1 resolved within 10 working days	80%	50%	61%	80%			What happened: The most common areas of complaint are both; Council Tax and Housing Repairs

KPI Description	Annual Target 2024/25	Q4 2023/24	Q1 2024/25				Latest Note
		Value	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	
							<p>What was learned/changed:</p> <p>Council Tax- We continue to work through the backlog, post system migration. Individuals have been allocated to analyse complaint trends and create action plans to mitigate.</p> <p>Housing Repairs- We are piloting a new style customer scrutiny review based on triangulating complaints and feedback data alongside the Housing Ombudsman's Spotlight reports for damp and mould. We hope this will form the template for service improvement reviews going forward and will demonstrate to customers how we identify complaint trends and learn from these.</p> <p>We have had an amendment in our processes in regards to housing disrepair claims, which may have an impact on our PIs. Housing disrepair claims will be treated as complaints in the first instance, rather than a legal matter.</p>
8. Customers: Customer complaints logged at stage 2 resolved within 20 working days	80%	37%	42%	80%			Please see the commentary for KPI7
9. Customers: The number of corporate complaints upheld at stage 1 and stage 2	Data only	35	56	Data only			<p>Stage 1 Upheld complaints: Total Complaints 155 Upheld 22, Partially Upheld 26</p> <p>Stage 2 Upheld Complaints: Total Complaints 26 Upheld 2, Partially Upheld 6</p>
10. Customers: The number of corporate complaints received at stage 1 and stage 2	Data only	154	181	Data only			Please see the commentary for KPI9
11. Housing: Number of households living in emergency (nightly paid) accommodation	Data only	308	265	Data only			Move-on to housing allocations and Temporary Accommodation voids has positively impacted this PI. New build in Clifton Road has also had a positive impact. This is the lowest number since Q3 2022/23.
12. Customers: Number of people registering for our email service (GovDelivery)	2000	1,447	912	500			PI remains significantly ahead of target
13. Customers: Percentage of local searches that are returned within 10 working days of receipt	100%	100%	100%	100%			109 out of 109 local searches returned within 10 working days.
14. Growth: Town centre vacant retail business space	11.02%	7.35%	7.5%	11.02%			The vacancy rate has increased from 7.35% for Q4 2023/24 to 7.50% for Q1 2024/25. The town centre continues to have new openings in popular areas.
15. Housing: Average void relet time key to key (month & YTD)	20.0	45.8	76.9	20.0			<p>What happened: This PI has been negatively impacted by budgetary constraints as well as staffing absences/departures.</p> <p>What was learned/changed: Staffing capacity has now been addressed to enable this performance to be improved and budgets re-aligned. We anticipate improvement by the end of Q2.</p> <p>We continue to action recommendations from the Tenant Security Review and Internal Audits are being completed to help drive performance improvement in 24/25.</p>
16. Housing: DFGs - Time taken from council receiving a fully	14 days	5 days	2 days	14 days			Performance remains above target.

KPI Description	Annual Target 2024/25	Q4 2023/24	Q1 2024/25				Latest Note
		Value	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	
complete application to the council approving the grant							
17. Housing: Number of Licensed HMO's Inspected per Quarter	48 (12 Quarterly)	20	17	12			PI continues to perform above target
18. Housing: Rent arrears of current tenants (expressed as a percentage of rent debit)	4%	4.21%	3.82%	4%			Rent arrears has reduced from £752,293 (3.96%) in April to £729,062 (3.82%) at Q1 which is a reduction of £21,890. The Digital & Data team is implementing a digital communications platform that will be used to carry out digital recovery communications to tenants in arrears and data is being used effectively through LIFT (Low Income Family Tracker) to identify tenants who are in arrears who may be entitled to claim welfare benefits. The aim of both initiatives is to help to reduce Rent Arrears using digital recovery techniques and by supporting tenants in increasing their income.
19. Housing: Total properties increased to an EPC C against the total falling below that level	70%	N/A	82.22%	70%		New PI	We are in the process of improving more properties with the help of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.2 grant funding. The information is based on lodged EPC's (Energy Performance Certificate) and where no lodged EPC exists, profiled data based on Parity Projects data commissioned in 2022.
20. Housing: Overall Satisfaction	Data Only	N/A	68%	Data Only		New PI	After a thorough review of the data that produces this measure, we have determined the key factors are: the backlog of complaints (leading to duplication) and contribution to neighbourhood. A service plan has been put in place to drive improvement, along with several focus groups (with cabinet involvement). We are in a process of reviewing our communications to residents, via our resident's newsletter, now being produced on a quarterly basis. These changes will aim to improve overall satisfaction ratings.
21. Housing: Percentage of tenants satisfied with repairs	Data Only	N/A	76%	Data Only		New PI	Budgetary constraints are limiting the range of repairs that can currently be tackled, with an emphasis on addressing critical Health and Safety matters. Repairs being carried out do still carry high satisfaction , once work is completed.
22. Housing: Satisfaction with the landlord's approach to handling complaints	Data Only	N/A	14.81%	Data Only		New PI	Caseload and staff resource continue to have an impact on performance. Work continues with cabinet and service leads to review complaints, with a scrutiny panel being formed and a deeper dive into what is driving this, with a plan to turn performance around in the new Housing governance structure, including the scrutiny of tenants, in this process. Much of this dissatisfaction is driven by budgetary constraints which have limited repairs to Health and Safety imperatives, but all officers are working to address this.
23. Housing: Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods	Data Only	N/A	66.67%	Data Only		New PI	Please see the commentary for KPI20
24. Planning: Increase the percentage of Major Planning Applications processed within 13 weeks	60%	100%	100%	60%			This PI continues to performance above target.
25. Increase the percentage of minor planning applications processed within 8 weeks	70%	83.3%	78%	70%			This PI continues to performance above target.

KPI Description	Annual Target 2024/25	Q4 2023/24	Q1 2024/25				Latest Note
		Value	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	
26. Increase the percentage of other planning applications processed within 8 weeks	70%	73.6%	76%	70%			This PI continues to performance above target.
27. Recycling & Waste: % Container Deliveries on Time (SLA)	99%	99.16%	97.98%	99%			We have seen a slight drop in performance, marginally dropping below target. We continue to track any trends and factors contributing to this PI.
28. Recycling & Waste: Missed Assisted Collections	1%	0.18%	0.33%	1%			85 Missed assisted collections, 26,120 assisted collections.
29. Recycling & Waste: Number of missed bins (per 100,000)	100	32	63	100			Q1 (63) sees an increase in missed bins compared to the previous quarter (44). April = 55 May = 68 June = 65 Q average = 63
30. Recycling & Waste: Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	45.00%	33.25%	33.25%	45.00%			Holding figure until data from ESCC is available
31. Recycling & Waste: Total number of reported fly-tipping incidents	Data Only	185	170	Data Only			Reported incidents breakdown: April 58, May 49 and June 63. Hotspot ward: Devonshire Primary waste types: Other household waste
32. Staff: Average days lost per FTE employee due to sickness (J)	8.0 days	2.28 days	1.73 days	2.0 days			Sickness levels are stable and are below target in Q1 where we recorded an average of 1.73 days absence which is a reduction from Q4 (2.28 days). HR Business Partners continue to support managers in managing any attendance issues that arise.

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Agenda Item 9

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	18 September 2024
Title:	Provisional Revenue & Capital Outturn 2024/25 – Quarter 1
Report of:	Homira Javadi, Director of Finance and Performance
Cabinet member:	Councillor Daniel Butcher, Cabinet member for finance
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	The report provides an assessment of the Council’s financial performance against its approved 2024/25 budget, incorporating key financial risks, issues and opportunities for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
Decision type:	Key
Officer recommendation(s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Note the forecast outturn position for 2024/25 and associated risks.(2) Delegate authority to the Director of Finance and Performance and the portfolio holder for finance to apply the required budget virements to support effective management of the overall budget.(3) Approve the carry forward of 23/24 Capital Programme slippage to 2024/25 ahead of a review of the overall programme by the Capital Programme Oversight Board(4) Note Appendix 1 and 2.
Reasons for recommendations:	To enable Cabinet members to consider the Council’s financial performance for 2024/25
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Homira Javadi Post title: Director of Finance and Performance E-mail: homira.javadi@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 01323 485512

1. Introduction & Background

- 1.1. Eastbourne Borough Council provides a range of services to residents and businesses across the area including the collection and disposal of waste, housing, support for the homeless, leisure and community wellbeing, planning, culture and tourism activities.
- 1.2. However, the Council, alongside many other local authorities and organisations across the nation, has seen a significant impact on its finances originating from external factors beyond its control. The main drivers of these cost pressures are highlighted below:
 - Significant demand and inflationary pressures within housing and the provision of temporary accommodation for homelessness.
 - Increasing interest rates as part of a national monetary policy impacting the cost of capital and financing.
 - Inflationary and cost of living pressures affecting pay, prices, supply chain and net cost of services.
- 1.3 As is the case nationally, challenges facing residents, businesses and communities as a result of the cost-of-living crisis are very real. This report highlights key movements and variations to the budget set in February 2024 against a backdrop where local authorities across the country are responding to ongoing national financial pressures while facing increasing demand and cost pressures.
- 1.4 Coupled with a background of uncertain and reducing (in real terms) financial settlements, the Council was overwhelmed by these pressures during 2023/24.
- 1.5 The financial challenges will continue into 2024/25 and beyond but there are some signs that pressures may soon ease.
 - Inflation rates have consistently reduced in recent months, and it is likely that this will mean interest rates will also reduce at some point. The uncertainty created by the announcement of a General Election and New Parliament may mean this does not happen soon. If interest rates did reduce, this would have a positive impact on the cost of financing the council capital investment programme for those loans that are not locked in over the long-term when they mature.
 - The prevention and analytical work undertaken by the Housing Services team to reduce costs and the demand for emergency and temporary accommodation placement is delivering positive outcomes. A peak of 317 families during 2023/24 fell to 264 at the end of June 2024 (and 249 by mid-July).
 - Achievement of the Stability and Growth savings targets for Eastbourne are already significant although not yet at target. Continued focus here and in other cost reduction exercises throughout this year will be crucial to emerging from this challenging period with the ability to achieve our goals, objectives and commitments in future years.
- 1.6 The challenging situation faced by the Council has led to the development of an extended programme of savings included in the next agenda item (item 10) and introduction of additional financial controls outlined below. These strategic

decisions will bring Eastbourne Borough Council back within budget in this financial year, produce a lawful and balanced 2025/26 budget and begin to build back enough reserves to cushion against future financial pressures.

- A further set of savings ideas will be considered by Cabinet elsewhere on this agenda and work has begun on actioning these and undertaking consultation where necessary.
- The Quarter 2 (undertaken at the end of September) Financial Monitoring exercise will be replaced with a 3-week period of reviewing all budgets on a line-by-line basis. The meetings will be attended by Budgets Holders and Service Heads and will be run by the Section 151 Officer, The Deputy Section 151 Officer and the interim Head of Financial Planning.
- The results of this exercise will be fed into a new revised and balanced budget that Cabinet will be asked to approve.
- Financial controls will continue to be increased, as necessary, with the objective of reducing the Council's base running level of committed expenditure.
- It is anticipated that difficult decisions will need to be made, but the Council has very clear objectives of both preserving its statutory and essential services and future proofing its financial position.

2 General Fund

- 2.1 The forecast outturn position for 2024/25 before the actions outlined above is an overspend of **£2.476m**. This includes use of £3m of additional borrowing as part of the Exceptional Financial Support (EFS) arrangements. Agenda item 10 outlines key savings proposals which have been developed to significantly reduce the projected outturn position in order to avoid the risk of a S114 notice being issued.
- 2.2 The extended S&G plan is intended to deliver a full year reduction of up to £7m, with a part year effect of approximately £1.5m to £2.0m, leading to a reduced requirement for use of reserves. This will allow the council to set a balance budget for 2025/26 and start to rebuild its reserve levels.

Table 1: Provisional Outturn 2024/25 by Directorate

Eastbourne - Directorate Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Corporate Services	5,318	4,605	4,724	119
Service Delivery	11,877	8,021	11,988	3,967
Regeneration & Planning	(56)	(334)	(395)	(60)
Tourism & Culture	2,595	(722)	1,424	2,146
Recharges to the HRA	0	(1,196)	(1,196)	0
EFS	0	3,000	0	(3,000)
Cost of Services	19,734	13,373	16,545	3,172
Capital Financing & Central	3,196	6,946	6,042	(904)
Total Forecast Position	22,930	20,319	22,587	2,268
Funding	(22,930)	(20,319)	(20,111)	208
Net Position	0	0	2,476	2,476

2.3 The detailed forecast variations against budget are set out from Section 5.

3 Stability and Growth

3.1 The Stability and Growth savings plans were agreed as part of the 2024/25 budget setting process as a plan to balance the budget. Whilst significant savings have been made, the Council now needs to go further and faster in delivering its savings programme to be able to set a lawful budget for 2025/26. As set out in para 1.6, a comprehensive budget review will be carried out in September and October 2024 to identify, plan and deliver the remaining savings. Please see agenda item 10 for more detail.

4 Emergency and Temporary Accommodation

4.1 The largest and most disproportionate pressure faced by the Council is the increased demand and cost of provision of emergency and temporary accommodation.

4.2 Based Q1 projections, the Council expects to spend **£6.3m** more than budget in 2024/25. This is partly offset by **£3.9m** of grants leaving a projected shortfall of **£2.4m** to be funded through additional borrowing (Exceptional Financial Support). The service has been commended by MHCLG for their excellent work on intervention and preventative measures.

Table 3 – Detailed breakdown of Forecast

EA/TA Forecast	23/24 (£K)	2024/25 (£K)		
	Provisional Outturn	Budget	Forecast	overspend
Bed and Breakfast Accommodation	6,130	2,422	5,432	3,010
Prevention Initiatives	351	69	172	103
Private Tenants/ HRA Rent Rebates Housing Benefit, Subsidy & Housing Benefits Overpayments	504	(311)	481	792
Homeless Prevention Grant	(939)	(708)	(937)	(229)
HB Payments to Homeless Account	6,219	2,885	5,221	2,335
Homeless Account Housing Benefit Income	(5,485)	(1,833)	(4,901)	(3,067)
Emergency/ Temporary Accommodation Subsidy	(2,323)	(1,320)	(1,939)	(619)
Client Income and Service Charges	(474)	(156)	(90)	66
	3,984	1,048	3,439	2,392

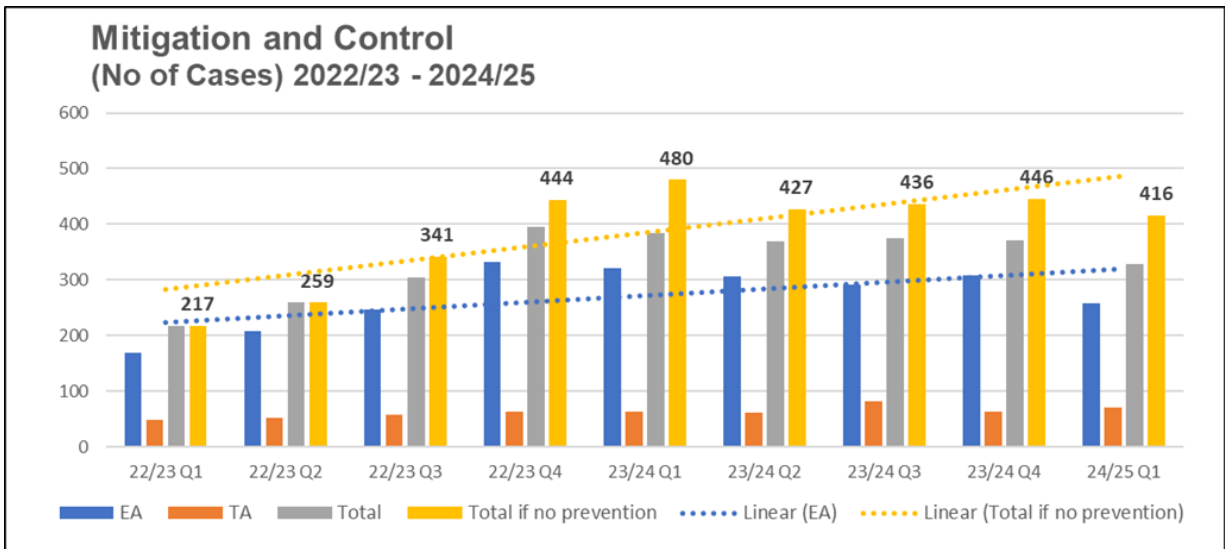
- 4.3 In July 2024, the council managed two hundred and sixty-four placements, but this demand continues to fluctuate meaning that this pressure will continue during 2024/25 and beyond amidst increasing cost of accommodation. There continues to be improvement on the prevention work, however, numbers and increasing costs continue to drive a significant overspend.

The current demand of 264 households (excluding EHICL placements) in emergency accommodation is an improvement from the 23/24 outturn position of 308. This reflects the considerable resources and effort that have been allocated to manage and mitigate the demand. Whilst this work continues, the Council recognises the level of uncertainty and long-term concerns associated with the provision and cost of this service and will continue with its strategy to campaign nationally for fairer outcomes and sustainable solutions for housing need.

- 4.4 The costs of this disproportionate pressure, although beginning to reduce, are spread over many council service areas as shown below.

EBC Costs	2021/22	2022/23	Provisional 2023/24	2024/25 Forecast
Costs of placements	£3.3m	£5.8m	£6.8m	£5.4m
Housing Benefit Receipts	(£2.7m)	(£4.3m)	(£5.8m)	(£4.9m)
Subsidy & Subsidy loss	£1.5m	£2.6m	£3.6m	£3.5m
Total	£2.1m	£4.1m	£4.6m	£4.0m

- 4.5 The graph below demonstrates the rise in numbers and the effects of the considerable efforts and resources used to control the situation to current levels.



5 Corporate Services

Corporate Services deliver services including human resources, finance, performance, corporate management team, business transformation, information technology, legal and democracy support.

Table 4: Corporate Services 2024/25

Corporate Services Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Business Planning & Performance	416	356	363	7
Business Transformation	209	317	300	(16)
Information Technology	1,397	1,136	1,208	73
Finance	1,579	1,369	1,472	103
Human Resources	381	391	338	(53)
Internal Audit & Fraud	217	248	243	(4)
Legal	226	238	238	0
Democracy	870	852	825	(27)
Land Charges	7	(86)	(41)	46
Corporate Management Team	(93)	(214)	(224)	(10)
Net Position	5,209	4,605	4,724	119

5.1 The projected outturn is **£119k overspent**. This is a £230k reduction from the 23/24 provisional outturn reflecting a reduction in agency and interim spend. As referenced in paragraph 1.6 above, Corporate Services budgets are planned to be reviewed on a line-by-line basis in September/October to bring them back to a balanced or reduced position.

The main variations are:

5.2 Information Technology £73k additional costs.

£70k - additional contract costs re: revised Civica contract.

£124k - additional costs for Microsoft Licensing.

(£102k) - reduced costs of mobiles phones under new contract.

(£19k) – reduced costs for servers and desktop support.

5.3 Finance £103k under resourced.

£100k – Increased insurance premiums. The cost for this budget heading will be recharged to related services areas and removed from Financial Services.

£25k – increased Treasury Management Broker fees.

(£22k) – net savings from not recruiting to Head of Finance post.

6. Service Delivery

Service Delivery provides services including Housing & Homelessness support, Waste & Environmental Services, Income Maximisation & Welfare and Regulatory Services.

Table 5 Service Delivery 2024/25

Service Delivery Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	Base Budget	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
£000					
Emergency and Temporary Accommodation	3,984	1,048	1,048	3,439	2,392
Customer First - Other	1,282	1,093	1,003	1,275	271
Bereavements	(927)	(1,575)	(1,613)	(936)	677
Environment First	4,850	5,181	5,181	5,185	4
Homes First - Other	175	676	676	786	110
Neighbourhood First	2,479	1,739	1,726	2,239	513
Director of Service Delivery	35	(308)	0	0	0
Net Position	11,878	7,853	8,021	11,988	3,967

6.1 The Provisional Outturn is **£4.2m overspent**. The main variations are:

6.2 Emergency & Temporary Accommodation £2.4m added pressure.

Both Customer First and Homes First provide support for Emergency and Temporary Accommodation. These budgets are now presented together to show a consolidated position. The remaining Customer First and Homes First budgets are shown separately as “other”.

There is a provisional general fund overspend of £2.4m (includes accommodation and subsidy loss projection £3.4m) to meet the current costs of providing homeless support and housing. This is a net improved position of £500k from the 2023/24 provisional outturn reflecting both the prevention work undertaken and an expectation that numbers will continue to slowly reduce.

In addition, there is work happening alongside to increase the overall housing supply including reduction in voids, building new homes, (e.g. 100 new homes planned at Bedfordwell Road recently approved by Cabinet), enhanced and extended private sector leasing schemes.

6.3 Customer First (non-EA/TA) £271k pressure plus £107k capitalisation

£98k – Additional cost of Regulatory Services

£19k - Public Health Burials – the service is developing an extended income generation and cost recovery operational model

£20k - Licensing Income reduced due to betting premises reducing as gambling moves more online. The team are working to assess the impact on income and related costs.

£34k Under budget on postage costs which are forecast to be similar to 2023/24.

£69k – *Redundancy costs Functional Leads budgets – to be capitalised.*

£38k – *Redundancy payment – to be capitalised.*

6.4 Bereavement Services £677k net reduction in income.

Bereavement Services continue to contribute around £1m to the Council but the post COVID-19 effects on the national death rate means that the service is under recovering against its budget expectation. A review of the service and its operating times is expected to generate more income, but it is likely that the budget will need to be restructured to a more realistic level as part of the planned budget review exercises.

6.5 Homes First (non-EA/TA) £110k net shortfall plus £79k capitalisation

£55k - additional pressure for waste services management of Fly Tipping

£38k - One off Solar Panel Income relating to 23/24

£92k - Increase to bad debt provision calculated at Quarter 1

£71k - *Redundancy payment – to be capitalised.*

6.6 Neighbourhood First £513k pressure (£78k to be recovered in Q2).

A comprehensive review the service is underway to identify immediate savings.. Neighbourhood First has developed and is delivering a savings plan. The service will be scrutinised carefully in the forthcoming budget review exercises with a view to reducing some large areas of spend. The current pressures are.

£130k - Devonshire Quarter grounds maintenance

£125k - Parks and Gardens Contract

£187k - Neighbourhood First Team

£91k - Town Hall

£32k - College Road office

£17k - Surface water management (potentially could be funded from S106 monies)

£43k - Children's playgrounds

In Q2, £53k with Grant Funding, S106 monies and a recharge to EHL of £25k will be recovered and this is included in the forecast.

7. Regeneration and Planning

The Regeneration and Planning Department delivers services including Estates & Property, Estate Management and Regeneration & Planning activity across the borough.

Table 4 Regeneration and Planning

Regeneration & Planning Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Building Control	42	62	62	0
Planning	195	252	406	154
Commercial Business & Property	18	36	56	20
Estates & Property	(443)	(960)	(908)	52
Housing Delivery	(109)	6	(276)	(283)
Regeneration & Planning	276	269	264	(5)
Net Position	(21)	(334)	(395)	(60)

7.1 The provisional outturn is **£60k underspent**. The main variations are:

7.2 **Planning £154k pressure.** Consultant's fees for developing the Local Plan which was paused in 2023/24 is expected to cost £150k otherwise the Council will fail to be meet the existing government submission deadline. However, following the new government announcement confirming a review of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) currently out to consultation, the timescales to progress the Plan may change to ensure alignment with government policy. This will continue to be reviewed.

7.3 **Housing Delivery £283k underspent.**

This is due largely to external income generation from other public sector services including with the East Sussex College Group and Hastings Borough Council, as well as from the Clear Futures Partnership. Higher capitalisation of salaries.

8. Tourism and Culture

The Tourism and Culture Directorate delivers a range of cultural activities across the area including the Devonshire Quarter, Leisure, and Sporting facilities as well as ongoing and one-off yearly events and productions.

Table 7 Tourism and Culture

Tourism & Culture Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Director of Tourism and Culture	475	432	446	14
Events	246	(136)	205	341
Seafront	(43)	(287)	(248)	39
Sports Delivery	582	262	688	427
Tourism	193	180	259	79
Theatres - LACC	405	(776)	(499)	277
Heritage	143	(54)	148	202
Conference & Catering	894	(344)	423	767
Net Position	2,895	(722)	1,424	2,146

8.1 Tourism & Culture are undergoing a significant programme of transformation and are set to deliver over £2m of annual savings. The variations included in this report are primarily caused due to timing and complexity of the work involved. Agenda item 10 provides a detail view of these savings.

9. Centrally Controlled Budgets

9.1 Centrally controlled budgets include Capital Financing and contingency budgets.

Table 8 Technical/Centrally controlled.

Central Budgets Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Contingency - S&G Buffer	(208)	957	0	(957)
Contingency - Pressures	0	485	0	(485)
Contingency Pay Award	0	583	622	39
Levies	265	237	265	27
MRP	478	1,699	1,707	8
Interest payments	4,532	4,382	5,118	736
Interest received	(1,871)	(1,398)	(1,670)	(272)
Net Position	3,196	6,946	6,042	(904)

9.2 Centrally Managed Budgets are reporting a forecast outturn of **£0.904m underspend**. Contingency budgets are held (largely unspent) but are contributing to

reducing the overall bottom line. They are also increased by any over recovery of Stability and Growth savings.

The main variations are:

- 9.3 **Contingencies S&G £957k underspent**. This is held to offset any undelivered Stability and Growth savings which are currently forecast to be under achieved by a higher amount than this contingency.
- 9.4 **Contingencies Pressures £485k underspent**. This is held to offset service pressures which are currently higher than this contingency. This contingency will be used as part of the budget review exercise scheduled for September/October this year.
- 9.5 **Contingencies Pay Award £39k additional pressure**. This is held to distribute later in the year when the pay award is agreed. The pressure of £39k relates to the pay offer made, which is currently rejected by the Unions.
- 9.6 **Capital financing costs net £0.456m additional pressure**. Capital financing costs are expected to be overspend by £0.456m, primarily as a result of increased borrowing for EFS. The projected outturn assumes that the 2024/25 capital programme will be fully spent. As an interim measure, the council has introduced additional spending controls to reduce the cost of financing. A full review of the existing capital programme will be undertaken in the autumn, and it is anticipated that interest payment expenditure will reduce.

10.0 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The Housing Revenue Account is a ring-fenced account used to manage the Council's Housing Stock. The costs of managing and maintaining the properties, collecting rents, and meeting the interest cost of monies borrowed to pay for investment in the housing stock are all charged to the Housing Revenue Account.

EBC Housing Revenue Account 2024/25

	Original Budget £000's	Revised Budget £000's	Forecast Actuals £000's	Q1 Variance £000's
INCOME				
Dwelling Rents	(17,849)	(17,849)	(17,774)	75
Non-Dwelling Rents	(378)	(378)	(378)	0
Charges for Services	(1,471)	(1,471)	(1,430)	41
GROSS INCOME	(19,698)	(19,698)	(19,582)	116
EXPENDITURE				
Management Fee	9,477	9,477	9,477	0
Supervision and Management	1,722	1,722	1,722	(0)
Provision for Doubtful Debts	82	82	82	0
Depreciation	5,772	5,772	5,772	0
Debt Management Costs	33	33	33	0
GROSS EXPENDITURE	17,086	17,086	17,086	0
NET COST OF HRA SERVICES	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,496)	116
Loan Charges - Interest	1,923	1,923	1,923	0
Interest Receivable	(203)	(203)	(203)	0
NET OPERATING COST OF HRA	(892)	(892)	(776)	116
Capital Financing and Interest Charges				
Contribution to Capital Expenditure	906	906	906	0
HRA (SURPLUS) / DEFICIT	14	14	130	116

- 10.1 The Housing Revenue Account is reporting a forecast outturn position pressure of £116k, which is the first outturn projection reported for financial year 2024/25 compared to the original budget.
- 10.2 During the reporting period, the Council's HRA is projected to see pressures of £75k in lost rental income and £26k in lost service charge income on properties in void. Whilst void repairs are progressing and not restricted by the financial constraints seen in 2023/24, the arising pressure represents how effectively the council is able to turnaround void properties to relet. The current rate of rental income loss is 2.25% of the total rental income due compared to a budgeted 1.81%.
- 10.3 The outturn projection has been prudently calculated to assume a continued 2.25%, however Officers are investigating the underlying causes with a view to mitigating this pressure over the coming months.
- 10.4 Charges for Services also includes a pressure of £15k which represents reduced income resulting from the applied cap of 7.7% to elements of the Retirement Housing Service Charges.

11.0 General Fund Capital Programme

GF CAPITAL PROGRAMME	Original Budget 2024-25	Carry Forward 2023/24	Other Variations	Revised Budget 2024-25	Spend to Date	Variance to Revised Budget
	£'000					
General Fund Housing	1,666	423	-	2,089	213	1,876
Regeneration	9,190	8,449	-	17,639	303	17,336
Asset Management	2,280	787	-	3,067	171	2,896
Service Delivery	1,571	950	-	2,521	58	2,463
Tourism & Leisure	35	-	-	35	-	35
Information Technology	250	71	-	321	120	201
Digital Transformation	255	79	-	334	-	334
Corporate	150	142	3,000	3,292	-	3,292
General Fund	15,397	10,901	3,000	29,298	865	28,433

11.1 The total original budget for the 2024/25 Capital budget is £15.397m. The revised 2024/25 budget assumes the carry forward of prior year allocations due to slippage against the GF Capital Programme 2023/24 of £10.901m. In addition, there is a further variation following the provision by MHCLG (formerly DLUHC) of a Capitalisation Direction to allow the council to capitalise expenditure related the significant levels of EA/TA placement activity detailed earlier in this report.

11.2 A detailed review of the council's capital programme is scheduled to commence from September to significantly reduce the council's capital commitments and the reduce the associated capital financing costs in future years.

11.3 Total spend to date at the end of Quarter 1 is £0.865m.

11.4 General Fund Housing

11.5 Includes loan allocations for council housing companies that have not yet been drawn and the allocation of funding for home adaptations via the Disabled Facilities Grant that will be undertaken throughout the financial year.

11.6 Regeneration

11.7 The vast majority of capital funds allocated to Regeneration (£17m) is supported by government grants including Levelling Up Funding and UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The lack of spend reflects the overall complexity of those programmes and whilst a significant amount of preliminary work has been undertaken over recent months it is likely that the majority of this programme will be reprofiled to future years.

11.8 Asset Management

11.9 Includes a variety of schemes associated with the ongoing programme of improvement and modernisation of council owned assets including items required to ensure the councils meets it Health and Safety obligations. Spend in this area will be impacted by the council's asset disposal programme and will be reviewed.

11.10 Service Delivery

11.11 Capital schemes in this area include the councils ongoing Coast Defence Management, expenditure on council play areas and funding of the ongoing refresh of the SEESL waste fleet and bin stock part of which (£0.800m) is grant funded

11.12 Tourism & Leisure

11.13 Minor updates to the Western Lawn for Health & Safety purposes.

11.14 Information Technology

11.15 Includes rolling allocations to refresh the council's stock of laptops and IT infrastructure

11.16 Digital Transformation

11.17 These are schemes funded to support the implementation of digital solutions designed to increase the council's efficiency and effectiveness.

11.18 Corporate

11.19 Includes an annual allocation to support continual development of the council's financial system, it also includes the £3m Capitalisation Direction mentioned earlier in this report

12.0 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME	Original Budget 2024-25	Carry Forward 2023/24	Other Variations	Revised Budget 2024-25	Spend to Date	Variance to Revised Budget
Major Works	6,272	1,904		8,176	387	7,789
Disabled Adaptations	478			478	-	478
Helpline	50			50	-	50
New Build	8,618	1,183		9,801	649	9,152
Total HRA	15,418	3,087	-	18,505	1,036	17,469

12.1 The total original budget for the 2024/25 HRA Capital Programme is £15.418m. The revised 2024/25 budget assumes the carry forward of prior year allocations due to slippage against the HRA Capital Programme 2023/24 of £3.087m. There are no other variations.

12.2 Major Works

12.3 Whilst spend to date is low compared to the revised budget all planned major works up to this date has been completed with an ongoing exercise to identify the relevant capital expenditure which will be coded throughout the financial year.

12.4 Helpline

12.5 No spend has been allocated to this area to date.

12.6 New Build

12.7 Initial viability and surveys have been carried out on several acquisitions properties that are now delayed. Works are progressing well on the Calvery Road site with practical completion expected by Oct 2024. Snagging has started on several plots however here have been some minor delays relating to asbestos removal, utilities and recent inclement weather which has resulted in potentially a staggered handover.

13.0 Funding

The Council's General Fund expenditure is funded from Council Tax Income, Business Rates Income, Government grants and reserves.

Table 10 Funding

Funding Budgets Forecast Outturn	23/24 provisional outturn	24/25 Revised Net Budget	24/25 Forecast (Actuals)	24/25 variance
	£000			
Council Tax Income	(9,639)	(9,919)	(9,919)	0
NNDR	(4,179)	(6,096)	(4,928)	1,168
Grants and Contributions	(1,822)	(1,639)	(1,639)	0
Exceptional Financial Support	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	0
Flexible Use of Capital receipts	0	0	(625)	(625)
Reserves Transfers	(4,289)	335	0	(335)
Net Position	(19,929)	(20,319)	(20,111)	208

13.1 Council Tax

Council Tax income is currently projected to be on target.

13.2 Business Rates

Overall business rate income is currently anticipated to show a £1.168m under recovery due to an increase in the prior year deficit of £0.554m and a reduction in current in-year income of £0.585m. Officers are currently reviewing the assumptions built into the estimates with respect to total rateable values, however initial analysis suggests a structural reduction in the overall rateable value due to a change in the valuation of a number of hereditaments particularly within the retail sector.

13.3 Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

The Council is delivering an ambitious and challenging savings and transformation programme. In December 2017, the Secretary of State announced the continuation of the capital receipts flexibility programme, which provides Local Authorities the freedom to use capital receipts generated from the sale of assets (except for Right

to Buy disposals) to fund revenue costs arising from transformational revenue projects that deliver savings or service improvements.

The council has developed its Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for the schemes detailed in S&G programme. Full Council approval will be required and a submission to MHCLG outlining the intended use of the receipts.

14.0 Financial appraisal

14.1 The provisional outturn position for 2024/25 is an overspend of £5.476m before Exceptional Financial Support of £3.0m.

14.2 Urgent action is being taken to bringing the budget back into line and Cabinet can expect a revised budget to be proposed at Qtr2.

15.0 Legal implications

15.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

16.0 Risk management implications

16.1 There are no risk management implications arising directly from this report.

17.0 Equality analysis

17.1 There are no environmental sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

18.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - EBC Capital Monitoring Q1 2024/25

Appendix 2 – Glossary of Terms

Scheme	Original Budget 2024-25	2023/24 Carry Forward	Other Variations	Revised Budget 2024-25	Q1 Spend	Variance Q1 to Revised Budget
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT						
Major Works	6,272,000	1,904,221		8,176,221	387,120	7,789,101
Disabled Adaptations	478,000			478,000	-	478,000
Helpline	50,000			50,000	-	50,000
New Build	8,618,000	1,182,784		9,800,784	648,909	9,151,876
Total HRA	15,418,000	3,087,005	-	18,505,005	1,036,029	17,468,976
General Fund Housing						
Disabled Facilities Grants	1,200,000			1,200,000	209,469	990,531
BEST Grant (housing initiatives)		10,698		10,698	3,624	7,074
Total General Fund Housing	1,200,000	10,698	-	1,210,698	213,093	997,605
Loans to Housing Companies						
EHIC - Elm Park Mansions	416,000	-		416,000	-	416,000
EHIC - Gowland Court	50,000	-		50,000	-	50,000
AH - Loan 183 Langney Rd		411,800		411,800	-	411,800
Total Loans to Housing Companies	466,000	411,800	-	877,800	-	877,800
GENERAL FUND HOUSING	1,666,000	422,498	-	2,088,498	213,093	1,875,405
REGENERATION						
Black Robin Farm	5,990,000	4,181,716		10,171,716	34,249	10,137,467
Towner Centenary Project		450,194		450,194	-	450,194
Victoria Place Pedestrianisation	2,940,000	3,512,273		6,452,273	-	6,452,273
Retail Refurbishment		60,000		60,000	-	60,000
E4 Edeal Enterprise Agency	10,000	6,705		16,705	18,791	2,086
E8 SDNPA		50,000		50,000	-	50,000
Shinewater Toilets & Kiosk (UKSPF)		188,368		188,368	-	188,368
Leisure Estate	250,000	-		250,000	250,000	-
Total Regeneration	9,190,000	8,449,256	-	17,639,256	303,040	17,336,216
Asset Management						
Changing Places		31,832		31,832	-	31,832
Beachy Head Bunker	75,000	-		75,000	-	75,000
Fort Fun - Site Clearance		40,000		40,000	40,000	-
Sovereign Centre - Existing building	600,000	38,871		638,871	2,400	636,471
Dev Park Theatre (H&S)	300,000	51,413		351,413	-	351,413
Congress Theatre Roof		83,211		83,211	32,657	50,554
Redoubt incl Colonnade demolition	450,000	246,647		696,647	70,972	625,675
ILTC - Lifts	150,000	8,750		141,250	5,783	135,467
Town Hall Health & Safety	200,000	74,862		274,862	-	274,862
Bridges at Princes park		91,000		91,000	-	91,000
Seafront Railing	30,000	30,000		60,000	-	60,000
Crematorium Generator Lease	125,000	-		125,000	-	125,000
Towner Improvements	100,000	1,670		98,330	-	98,330
Seafront Lighting	150,000	21,854		171,854	-	171,854
Bandstand & Promenade Renovations	100,000	87,615		187,615	19,177	168,438
Total Asset Management	2,280,000	786,886	-	3,066,886	170,989	2,895,897
SERVICE DELIVERY						
Coast Defences Beach Management	554,000	-		554,000	-	554,000
Cycling Strategy		40,600		40,600	-	40,600
Play Area Sovereign Harbour		27,000		27,000	-	27,000
Play Equipment - Palesgate		35,000		35,000	34,829	171
Play Equipment - Vancouver Rd		35,000		35,000	-	35,000
SEESL Loan		254,100		254,100	-	254,100
EBC Bin Stock for Food Waste 1	300,000	-		300,000	-	300,000
EBC Mixed/dual waste bin stock & Dog Bins	48,000	47,000		95,000	22,961	72,039
Purchase of 4 currently leased vehicles	119,000	31,000		150,000	-	150,000
Fleet Re-body (SEESL Loan)		480,000		480,000	-	480,000
Food Waste Vehicles	550,000	-		550,000	-	550,000
Total Service Delivery	1,571,000	949,700	-	2,520,700	57,790	2,462,910
TOURISM & LEISURE						
Western Lawns H&S Issues	35,000	-		35,000	-	35,000
Total Tourism & Leisure	35,000	-	-	35,000	-	35,000
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY						
IT - Block Allocation & Laptop Refresh	250,000	70,666		320,666	120,164	200,502
Total Information Technology	250,000	70,666	-	320,666	120,164	200,502
DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION						
Transformation Projects Rebase		79,283		79,283	-	79,283
Telsolutions for Council Tax	10,000			10,000	-	10,000
Smart Technology and Robotics	210,000			210,000	-	210,000
Housing Compliance System	35,000			35,000	-	35,000
Total Digital Transformation	255,000	79,283	-	334,283	-	334,283
CORPORATE						
Finance Transformation	150,000	124,795		274,795	-	274,795
Sculpture		17,500		17,500	-	17,500

Appendix 1

Capitalisation Direction			3,000,000	3,000,000	-	3,000,000
Total Corporate	150,000	142,295	3,000,000	3,292,295	-	3,292,295
General Fund	15,397,000	10,900,585	3,000,000	29,297,585	865,077	28,432,508
HRA	15,418,000	3,087,005	-	18,505,005	1,036,029	17,468,976
Total	30,815,000	13,987,589	3,000,000	47,802,589	1,901,105	45,901,484

Appendix 2 - Glossary

Capital Expenditure	Capital Expenditure is the funds invested in long term assets like buildings, infrastructure, equipment, or technology. The expenditure is significant and provides lasting benefits and are depreciated over time. It contrasts to operating expenditure which are day to day expenditure.
Capital Financing	Capital Financing is how we raise money for to invest in capital projects. It can involve selling assets, borrowing money, using existing balances, and obtaining grants. Borrowing money means interest payments during the life of the loan plus the repayment of loan.
Capital Programme	A strategic plan outlining long term investments in assets like building and technology. It identifies projects and budgets, sets timelines, assesses risks and has approval processes. The plan aligns Capital Expenditure with Corporate Objectives.
Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DHUHC)	The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, formerly the Ministry for Housing, Communities, and Local Government, is a department of His Majesty's Government responsible for housing, communities, and local government in England and the levelling up policy
Depreciation	An accounting method that allocates the cost of a tangible asset over its useful life. The process matches the cost of the asset with the benefit it provides reflecting its diminishing value over time.
Eastbourne Housing Investment Company Ltd (EHICL)	EHICL is a Council owned housing investment company (HIC) used to develop new homes on Council owned sites and acquire and regenerate existing mixed retail and residential sites.
Financial Regulations	Financial regulations are a set of financial procedures and rules that ensure good financial governance is observed. They include policies, procedures, financial delegation, and approvals and protect both staff and the council from financial misconduct.
General Fund (GF)	The main operating fund used for expenditure such as salaries and the running costs of day-to-day operations.

Grants and Contributions	Financial support received from external sources such as Central Government or developers. They can be for specific projects or more general.
Housing Revenue Account (HRA)	A separate accounting system for local authorities to manage their housing services. It includes rental income, housing related costs and is distinct from the General Fund. The HRA is used for improvements, maintenance and operational expenses related to local-authority owned housing.
Pevensey Levels IDD	Internal drainage boards (IDB) are the public body that manage water levels in an area. These are also internal drainage districts (IDD), where there is a special need for drainage. IDBs undertake works to reduce flood risk to people and property and manage water levels for agricultural and environmental needs within their district. The Council contributes to the costs of the IDD through a special levy payment.
Medium Term Financial Strategy	This Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and provide a framework within which decisions can be made regarding future service provision and council tax levels. It is based on a five-year rolling forecast and is reviewed annually. The MTFS provides the financial context for the Council's financial resource allocation and budget setting processes.
Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	An annual provision made to set aside funds for repaying debt associated with Capital Projects. It ensures the gradual allocation of resources to cover debt repayment obligations and is set out in the Prudential Code.
Section 151 Officer	Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and appoint a S151 Officer, also known as a Chief Financial Officer (CFO), to have responsibility for those arrangements.

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	18 September 2024
Title:	Stability and Growth Programme
Report of:	Robert Cottrill, Chief Executive
Cabinet member:	Councillor Stephen Holt, Leader of the Council and Chair of Cabinet (Community Strategy, Local Strategic Partnership, the Corporate Plan, Performance and Staff)
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of report:	To set out key savings proposals to address the exceptional financial challenges currently being experienced by the council
Decision type:	Key
Officer recommendation(s):	Cabinet is recommended to: (1) Note the establishment of the Strategic Finance Programme, replacing the Stability and Growth Programme. (2) Approve the proposals set out at paragraph 3.1, to enable budget reductions to be achieved in the current financial year. (3) Authorise the arrangements (as set out at paragraphs 3.3 and 3.4) for public consultation, partner engagement and equality and fairness analysis, ahead of final decision at the next Cabinet meeting. (4) Agree the new policy for flexible use of capital receipts appended to this report, and recommend the adoption of the policy to Full Council. (5) Delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for the relevant decision, to take all necessary actions to implement the decisions, including any final amendments to the draft consultation document.
Reasons for recommendations:	Following the Assurance Review undertaken in July/August 2024, and in light of the exceptional financial challenges being faced by the council, there is a need to bring forward a range of significant savings to meet the council's funding gap.
Contact Officer(s):	Name: Jo Harper Post title: Head of Business Planning and Performance Email: jo.harper@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk Telephone number: 07925 893201

1 Introduction

- 1.1 For the past four years, through its Stability and Growth Programme the council has sought ways to manage its financial challenges.
- 1.2 Since 2011, the council has found savings and efficiencies, as well as additional income, which has offset the need to reduce frontline and discretionary services, along with other pressures experienced over that period. This was in response to the council's spending power being reduced significantly over the last 14 years, most notably through the government's phased reduction of the revenue support grant previously received by the council, **from £10m in 2010 to zero since 2019**. Instead, the council receives £3.4m of business rate income which is quite volatile and subject to change.
- 1.3 Increased demand in levels of homelessness and temporary accommodation placements are the principal reasons for the current challenges, compounded by high interest rates, reduction in business rates income and inflationary pressures.
- 1.4 Eastbourne Borough Council (EBC) has led a year-long national campaign lobbying the government about the human and financial crisis created by spiralling homelessness and the high costs of temporary accommodation. The council has been spending £4.5m on temporary accommodation, which equates to 49p in every £1 collected in council tax.
- 1.5 The council is not alone in dealing with this emergency, with many authorities in recent weeks and months announcing that they are having to make severe cuts to services.

2 The Strategic Finance Programme

- 2.1 Significant savings, efficiencies and increased income generation have been achieved through the Stability and Growth programme. However, it is recognised that at this point further savings are required which are to be achieved through a new Strategic Finance Programme. This will, at pace, address the outstanding financial pressures with a substantial package of budget reductions.
- 2.2 Savings of £3.053m were budgeted for in 2024/25. This programme has been very successful but is not sufficient in itself to address the full extent of the budget shortfalls the council is experiencing.
- 2.3 Continued high levels of homelessness have been accommodated in the past three years by repeated calls on the council's reserves. This has totalled over £10m since 2021.
- 2.4 The council receives a subsidy from the government when people are placed in temporary accommodation, but the subsidy levels were frozen by the government in 2011, and this has greatly exacerbated the council's financial burden.

- 2.5 Because of this, the council has also had to accept Exceptional Financial Support arrangements from the government by taking on additional borrowings of £3m in 2023/24 and a further £3m in 2024/25.

Reserves have reduced to a very low level and no further calls can be made on them therefore, the council is forced to make a series of service reductions in order to deliver a balanced budget for 2025/26.

- 2.6 When considering the council savings required, the following guidelines are being considered, where possible:
- a) Prioritising services that it has a **statutory duty to deliver**
 - b) Prioritising services that provide **directly for those most in need**
 - c) Seeking opportunities to make **reductions (temporary where possible)** which can be reinstated once budgets allow

- 2.7 The Stability and Growth Member Board has been augmented to include three Independent Panel members. Cabinet was advised of this at its last meeting in July. The augmented Board has also taken on the new title of Strategic Finance Member Board, reflecting the new emphasis within the programme. The contents of this report will be considered by this Board ahead of the next meeting (on 17 September 2024).

- 2.8 The Board will continue to fulfil its role overseeing the delivery of the Strategic Finance Programme, focusing on the existing Stability and Growth savings, alongside the new savings proposals set out in the next section of this report. The Independent Panel will undertake the role of 'critical friend' within the Board whilst also having a duty to report to government on the council's progress.

3 Savings proposals

- 3.1 Using the principles set out at paragraph 2.6 above, Cabinet is asked to consider and approve the following areas for immediate spending reduction:

Non-statutory Services:

- **Devonshire Quarter theatres**

Following previous consideration by Cabinet of alternative governance arrangements for the Congress and Devonshire Park theatres to secure financial and cultural benefits, work has been progressing to transfer the theatres to a Local Authority Controlled Company (LACC). It was anticipated that a LACC would then enable the theatres to transfer to an alternative model of governance once detailed financial modelling had been undertaken. A shadow Board of the LACC has been established and is making a valuable contribution to the development of the Eastbourne Theatres offer. However, the financial risk in this model remains with EBC thereby creating further financial pressures for the authority.

In this context, it is proposed that an external theatre operator will be sought with the aim of a transfer by April 2025. This is expected to be financially advantageous for the authority providing additional investment and expertise to run our theatres, whilst reducing the subsidy and risk to the authority..

The theatres are a non-statutory service, however they have a significant and highly valued economic impact on the town forming an important part of Eastbourne's tourism and cultural offer, so every effort is being made to secure their ongoing future.

- **Devonshire Quarter conference and catering**

Following a comprehensive expression of interest process for conference and catering services within the Devonshire Quarter, the council entered an exclusive period of negotiation with a private operator to explore the terms of an agreement. Negotiations have now reached a decisive stage. Live discussions are taking place at the time of writing this report to understand the impact and consequences of the theatres' transfer process on these negotiations given the interconnectivity and interdependencies of the buildings.

As above, these are non-statutory services however EBC is aware that the provision has a positive, highly valued economic impact on the town and forms a core part of the council's tourism offer, so every effort is being made to secure their ongoing future.

- **Events and seafront services**

We recognise the important role of our Events and Seafront Team in ensuring Eastbourne enjoys a busy diary of entertainment and events throughout the year for local residents, businesses and visitors.

However, whilst we understand the significant value of this team in providing world class events for the benefit of our local economy, national government do not deem this to be a statutory service.

An initial exercise has already been undertaken to reduce the cost of events and staffing, and a further review of the operating model and ways of working is underway to ensure sufficient income generation to cover the costs of this service.

- **Estates and other assets**

Income generation opportunities will be progressed through disposal and lease agreements with third parties. The Council will continue to make best use of assets, including disposal, lease, income maximisation and alternative delivery models. Extensive work has already been carried out on our estates, including a long-term lease of the Golf Course as well as the former Pavilion and Stage Door.

- **Towner**

The Towner will receive an immediate, in year, reduction in grant support from the council. This ensures our contractual commitments with other funding agencies are adhered to (including Arts Council England), whilst also recognising the additional burdens that the Towner will be expected to undertake as a result of the storage of heritage collection. A further (and increased) reduction will take place in 2025/26.

- **Heritage service**

Immediate closure of the Beachy Head Story and heritage service. We will protect the council's heritage collection by transferring it to the Towner who will ensure this is appropriately retained, stored and curated. The collection will continue to be owned by EBC (which mirrors the position with EBC's art collection that Towner looks after). The council will also explore options for the future of the Beachy Head Story building.

3.2 In addition, also in line with the principles set out at paragraph 2.6, Cabinet is asked to note the following proposals, which are subject to public consultation, partner engagement and a full equality and fairness analysis given their potential impact on local people, and particularly those from protected groups. The proposals will be brought back to the next meeting of Cabinet in November, for further consideration, when the above actions will be completed.

It is important to note that all the proposals listed below have previously been adopted by other authorities across the country to reduce the expenditure of the council and increase financial resilience.

- **Public conveniences**

We understand the importance of public conveniences (toilets) across the town, both to residents and tourists.

Last year, the cost of providing public conveniences was in excess of £300,000, and this cost increases annually (with rising utility, salary and supply costs).

There are a number of challenges associated with the operation of public conveniences, including:

- Anti-social behaviour and vandalism increase costs. In 2023/24, repairs of the public conveniences cost the council over £100,000.
- The age and condition of a number of the council's public conveniences means significant investment is required to extend their use and to mitigate increased maintenance costs.
- A high number of complaints are received about the condition of and the impact of misuse on the council's public conveniences.

The current operating model is both expensive and provides genuine scope for improvement.

In light of the above, we will, subject to consultation, adopt a new community toilet scheme, using the best examples of other authorities which will, :

- Protect the overall level of public convenience provision in the town ,
- make the best use of council resources,
- increase the quality of provision, and
- improve the resilience of the public conveniences in managing anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

- **Street cleansing**

The council is committed to the high standard of street cleanliness across the town. At present, the town centre, seafront and high footfall areas are prioritised and will continue to be so whilst a review of some of the other areas takes place as well as current non-statutory services that are provided. For example, EBC currently subsidises weed control on pavements within the Borough which is a County Council responsibility. Unless there is sufficient financial support from the County Council, this service will revert back to them.

In addition, greater fines will be placed on those who fly poster, fly tip and graffiti the town to act as a deterrent. |

- **Grounds maintenance**

We have received a number of complaints from the public with regards of the current provider of the service. We will deliver a targeted enhancement by focusing on core services (including working with community groups to explore jointly prioritised plans for key locations across the town).

- **Customer service**

Following significant upgrades to the council's systems, new online forms and ways to apply for different services will become functional from this month. A review of customer service will be undertaken to ensure that telephone and face to face services will continue at the times when most people use them. This may reduce opening hours. Many other councils have already undertaken such reviews and adjusted opening times accordingly, without significant impact on customers. The review will also explore how the online service offer can be further enhanced to provide 24/7 access to a wider range of services without needing to call the council.

- **Car parking**

Charges to use EBC operated car parks across the town are a source of income for the council and, following 8 years without price increases, a review of the levels of car parking charges and the hours of operation will support the council in responding to the current financial challenges. The review will benchmark any proposal for increases against other local car parks not operated by EBC and will explore opportunities for further income generation.

- **Sovereign Centre**

The age of the centre means that significant investment is required in key aspects of the infrastructure. The plant and equipment supporting the fun pool is now end of life and requires replacement soon.

The centre, as a whole, is expensive to run, and this year the Sovereign Centre is projected to spend £424,000 (including corporate landlord costs), with the fun pool being a significant proportion of the cost, in addition to the (as yet unbudgeted) significant capital costs of plant replacement currently needed.

It is proposed, therefore, to consider different options for the future of the centre, including rationalising the number of pools available, whilst protecting swimming lessons, school swimming, and structured sessions such as lane swimming. Transferring the facility to Wave Active in 2025 will enable them to take the facility forward, alongside the recently opened Hillbrow Health and Wellbeing in Meads.

- **Rent support and other grant reductions**

In light of the financial challenges being faced, all EBC grants (including Rent Support Grant) will be subject to a review to ensure that they remain financially sustainable, and that they continue to support the council's priorities.

- **Town Hall**

With its rich history and deep connection to local public life, the Town Hall is an important symbol of Eastbourne. At nearly 140 years of age, the building is costly to operate and requires significant investment to maintain it as a working and functional building for the town, the council and its tenants. Any investment in the Town Hall would be in addition to the costly roof replacement and clock tower repairs undertaken in recent years to address potential health and safety risks. A review of the Town Hall will explore how to reduce the running costs and the capital investment that would be required over the coming years.

- **Splash Pad, Princes Park**

Following affordability challenges to the splash pad in Princes Park opening in the summer of 2024 (with a one-off externally funded solution being found part way through the season), a review of the future of the splash pad in Princes Park will be undertaken. Options for future sponsorship of the facility will determine whether it will be possible to open for the 2025 season and beyond.

Consultation arrangements

- 3.3 A full public consultation on the proposals at paragraph 3.2 will be carried out for a six-week period ahead of November Cabinet. A draft version of the consultation document is appended for Cabinet's consideration (Appendix 3). The consultation process will include the attached document being available online and paper copies. Residents will also be able to request this in different languages and formats. The council will use a range of online and offline communications channels to encourage participation in the consultation.
- 3.4 Community groups that represent people with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act, will also be contacted directly to invite a response to the consultation. The council will offer to meet with community groups during the consultation period to discuss the proposals.

Further savings

- 3.5 In addition to those items listed above, there will continue to be further efficiencies made to back-office services during a series of fundamental service

reviews across all areas of the council's business. This will ensure the council is being as streamlined as possible in its processes. This will include a general review of non-statutory services to determine the scope for further savings.

3.6 Alongside savings in revenue spending, the council continues to actively consider the cost of its capital expenditure and opportunities for disposal of assets in order to pay back the amounts borrowed for the Exceptional Financial Support arrangements, and to start rebuilding its reserves. This is an essential part of the council's programme to deliver a balanced budget for 2025/26 and a sustainable financial position in the future.

3.7 Taken together, these service reductions will assist the council in working towards achieving the savings required to deliver a balanced budget in 2025/26, and achieving sustainable medium term financial position. Further detail on the savings it is proposed will be delivered through the service reductions can be found in Appendix 2.

4 Flexible Use of Capital Receipts

4.1 Attached at Appendix 1 is a draft policy for flexible use of capital receipts. This document enables the council to use income from the sale of certain assets to fund the short-term revenue costs that support transformation, invest-to-save and efficiency projects in order to provide revenue savings in the future. To make use of this provision, authorities must submit to the Secretary of State a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy setting out how the provision will be applied during the financial year. Appendix 1 proposes a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2024-25 to support the Stability & Growth Strategy.

5 Assurance Review

5.1 The council was subject to a third Assurance Review in August 2024. This was a condition of receiving Exceptional Financial Support for 23/24 and 24/25. The review lasted for around 10 days and made a very thorough assessment of the council's financial and governance situation.

5.2 At the time of writing, formal feedback has not been received.

6 Financial appraisal

6.1 Significant savings and efficiencies have been achieved through the Stability and Growth Programme. However, more significant and very urgent savings are required, and these will be achieved through the new Strategic Finance Programme. This will identify and deliver additional savings over and above what has already been identified to ensure that the council can balance its 24/25 budget without the need to draw down on the general reserves, to enable the council to set a balanced budget in 2025/26 and to be able to build back its reserves over the medium term. If the council does not take immediate action to identify savings and efficiencies, the council's financial position will soon become unsustainable and at risk of issuing a section 114 notice.

7 Legal implications

- 7.1 Legal advice has been taken, and will continue to be taken, in respect of specific actions arising from the assurance review and to support the activities of the Stability and Growth programme.

Disposals and leases of assets will be subject to section 123 Local Government Act 1972 requiring the council to obtain the best price reasonably obtainable.

Any existing contractual commitments will be reviewed to ensure that decisions are in line with commitments.

In relation to the proposals outlined in paragraph 3.2, the council is ensuring that it consults so that steps are taken to secure that the representatives of local people are involved in the exercise of its functions.

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8 Risk management implications

- 8.1 The risks within the Stability and Growth programme are regularly assessed and managed as part of programme/project management activities. This will continue to be the case as the new Strategic Finance Programme develops. The identification and management of significant risks in relation to the programme will be reported, along with mitigation plans to address them, as appropriate.

9 Equality analysis

- 9.1 Cabinet is reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. Equalities analysis will be completed as noted below to ensure the decision-making process is fair and transparent.

- 9.2 An equality and fairness screening will be undertaken covering all the savings set out in this report. A further detailed analysis will be undertaken where necessary. The results of this will be reported at the next Cabinet meeting.

10 Environmental sustainability implications

- 10.1 The proposals in this report do not adversely impact on the council's long-term carbon reduction aims, as set out in the EBC Climate Emergency Strategy.

11 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy for 2024-25
Appendix 2 – Savings to be delivered through the service reductions
Appendix 3 – Have your say on council savings proposals DRAFT

12 Background papers

None

**Flexible Use of Capital Receipts
Strategy 2024 to 2026
September 2024**

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Background**
- 3. 2024/25 Budget**
- 4. Impact on Prudential Indicators**
- 5. Monitoring the Strategy**

1. Introduction

- 1.1. To support local authorities to deliver more efficient and sustainable services, a time limited flexibility is currently available to use capital receipts from the disposal of property, plant and equipment assets to fund the revenue cost of service reform.
- 1.2. Under normal rules, capital receipts can only be used to fund capital expenditure such as the purchase of capital assets or improvements to existing assets.
- 1.3. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) previously known as Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities have issued an extension to a Direction and published guidance that enables Councils to use income from the sale of certain assets to fund the short-term revenue costs that support Transformation, Invest-to-save and efficiency projects in order to provide revenue savings in the future.
- 1.4. This strategy sets out the intended use of this flexibility and applies to the financial year 2024/25 and for each subsequent financial year to which the flexible use of capital receipts direction applies (currently 2029/30 is the last year). The Strategy will be updated as part of the annual budget process in subsequent years.
- 1.5. The flexibilities fit well with the Council's Stability & Growth Programme for achieving financial sustainability through a variety of schemes, including efficiency measures and invest-to-save projects. Given the level of savings required over the medium-term and the number and scope of projects within the S&G programme, it will be important to provide funding for these projects. The use of capital receipts means that these essential projects can be progressed without putting additional pressure on revenue resources.

2. Background

- 2.1. Capital receipts can only be used for specific purposes, and these are set out in Regulation 23 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 made under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2.2. The main permitted purpose is to fund capital expenditure, and the use of capital receipts to support revenue expenditure is not allowed by the regulations. The Secretary of State is empowered to issue Directions allowing revenue expenditure incurred by local authorities to be treated as capital expenditure and therefore funded by capital receipts.

- 2.3. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government issued a Direction in March 2016, giving local authorities greater freedoms to use capital receipts to finance expenditure, initially up until 2018/19. Allowing local authorities to treat qualifying expenditure on transformation projects as capital expenditure and to fund it from capital receipts received after April 2016.
- 2.4. Qualifying expenditure was defined as: "Expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners."
- 2.5. There have been number of extensions to the scheme since 2018/19 and on 18 December 2023 it was confirmed as part of the Provisional Local Government Settlement that the current scheme, which currently applies to expenditure and receipts incurred between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2025, had been extended to 31 March 2030.
- 2.6. Therefore, to make eligible use of the scheme the capital receipts any qualifying revenue expenditure incurred between 1 April 2024 and 31 March 2030 can be considered.

3. 2024/25 Revenue Budget

- 3.1. The 2024/25 budget approved by Full Council on 28 February 2024 included £3.053m of savings to address the exceptional financial pressures facing the council. It is proposed that costs (including one off costs) associated with supporting the delivery of these savings are funded from a proportion of capital receipts the council holds and intends to obtain during the financial year.
- 3.2. Alongside revenue savings identified in the 2024/25 budget, the council continues to actively consider other reductions in spend to enable it to set a balanced budget in 2025/26 and to rebuild its reserves. To achieve this, the use of capital receipts to support activity could which includes funding the costs associated with service reconfiguration, restructuring or rationalisation (staff or non-staff), where this leads to ongoing efficiency savings or service transformation will also be required throughout 2025/26.
- 3.3. The Council will use the powers under the Governments Statutory Guidance to the flexible use of capital receipts to fund of up to £5m of qualifying expenditure to support the S&G programme summarised in the tables below

Transformation - Better Use of Resources - TBC				
Project	Lead Officer	Value	Anticipated Saving	Use of Capital Receipt (Yr)
Total				

Digital - Better Use of Data -TBC				
Project	Lead Officer	Value	Anticipated Saving	Use of Capital Receipt (Yr)
Total				

Reducing Wasteful/Non-Statutory Spend - TBC				
Project	Lead Officer	Value	Anticipated Saving	Use of Capital Receipt (Yr)
Total				

3.4. Whilst these broad proposals are underpinned by a number of individual areas of these have yet to be fully costed. However, with all change programmes there will be a need for upfront investment in areas that will deliver capacity and objectivity.

3.5. Officer have identified suitable assets, and the table below provides summary details where the council has already obtained a capital receipt and assets due to be marketed by the Council marketed by the Council.

Assets for Disposal	Value
Receipts Available 2024/25	£0.625m
Assets identified for Disposal	£1.700m
Assets not yet identified	£2.675m
Estimated Value of Available Capital Receipts	£5.000m

4. Impact on Prudential Indicators

4.1. The Council has due regard to the requirements of the Prudential Code and the impact on its prudential indicators from the application of this Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

4.2. Any capital receipts which are received and not allocated will be used to fund revenue costs incurred to support the Council's and delivery of savings and efficiencies.

4.3. These receipts have not been earmarked as funding for any other proposed capital expenditure and therefore there is no anticipated additional impact on the Council's prudential indicators as set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

4.4. The prudential indicators show that this strategy is affordable and will not affect the Council's operational boundary and authorised borrowing limit.

4.5. The Council will also have due regard to the Local Authority Accounting Code of Practice when determining and including the entries required from undertaking and funding this scheme within the 2024/25 and 2025/56 Statement of Accounts.

5. Monitoring the Strategy

5.1. Implementation of this Strategy will be monitored as part of regular financial reporting arrangements.

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Appendix 2

Summary by Savings Phase	Built into 24/25 Budget	Current Target	24/25 Current Forecast
24/25 Budget	-£3,053,000	-£2,131,000	-£815,500
In year efficiencies	£0	-£730,062	-£342,085
Going Further savings	£0	-£2,210,000	-£928,833
	-£3,053,000	-£5,071,062	-£2,086,418

Going Further Analysis	Consultation required	24/25 Revised Target	24/25 Current Forecast	25/26 Additional Target
Beachy Head Story & Heritage service		£0	-£36,000	-£83,000
Car Parking	Yes (1)	£0	£0	tba
Contribution from EA		£0	-£70,000	£0
Corporate services review		-£250,000	-£125,000	-£675,000
Customer service	Yes (2)	£0	-£40,000	-£130,000
D Quarter - Conference & Catering		-£500,000	£267,000	-£267,000
D Quarter - Theatres		-£500,000	-£223,000	-£277,000
EBC reduce grants to vol orgs	Yes (3)	-£24,000	-£24,000	-£91,000
Fees and Charges		£0	£0	tba
Further reduction in capital budgets		£0	£0	tba
Grant to Towner		£0	-£100,000	-£100,000
Assets and estate (wider)		tba	tba	£1,500,000
Grounds maintenance	Yes (4)	£0	£0	-£100,000
Public conveniences	Yes (5)	-£200,000	-£29,500	-£271,500
Sovereign Centre	Yes (6)	-£359,000	-£239,333	-£184,667
Splash Pad	Yes (7)	-£25,000	-£25,000	£0
Staff alignment		£0	-£38,000	£0
Tourism events		-£80,000	-£50,000	-£80,000
Town Hall	Yes (8)	-£44,000	-£44,000	-£132,000
Waste/street cleansing	Yes (9)	-£228,000	-£152,000	-£153,000
Total		-£2,210,000	-£,928,833	-£4,044,167

	Consultations		Full Year Target 25/26 (£)
1	Car Parking	Reviewing charges and hours of operation	TBC
2	Customer Service	slightly reducing our face-to-face and telephone operating hours	£170,000
3	EBC reduce grants to vol orgs	reducing our budget for grants to our voluntary sector partners (including Rent Support Grants) after April 2025	£115,000
4	Grounds maintenance	focussing on core activities and seeking community support in other areas	£100,000
5	Public conveniences	Move to community toilets scheme	£300,000
6	Sovereign Centre	reviewing which of the four swimming pools to keep open and which we may need to temporarily close or change their use	£424,000
7.	Splash Pad	Options for sponsorship to enable continued opening	£25,000
8	Town Hall	explore ways to reduce the costs and consider alternative uses for the building	£167,000
9	Waste/ Street Cleansing	focussing activity on areas with higher footfall	£305,000
	Total		£1,606,000

Have your say on council savings proposals

Eastbourne Borough Council is facing exceptional financial challenges due to the high costs of homelessness and temporary accommodation. This has been compounded by high interest rates, reduction in business rates income and inflationary pressures.

Despite including over £3m of savings in the 2024/2025 budget, additional savings of over £2.7m are needed in the current financial year and a further £3m of savings for the following financial year.

The council is not alone in dealing with this emergency, with many authorities in recent weeks and months announcing that they are having to make severe cuts to services.

When considering the savings required, the following guidelines are being considered, where possible:

- Prioritising services that we have a statutory duty to deliver
- Prioritising services that provide directly for those most in need
- Seeking opportunities to make temporary reductions (temporary where possible)

Savings proposals for non-statutory services

We are seeking the views of residents, visitors, business, partner organisations and other stakeholders on proposals for further changes to non-statutory council services.

All of the following proposals have previously been adopted by other authorities across the country to reduce the expenditure of the council and increase financial resilience.

The proposals being considered:

- **Public toilets:** moving to a community toilet scheme.
- **Street cleansing:** focussing activity on areas with higher footfall.
- **Grounds maintenance:** focussing on core activities and seeking community support in other areas.
- **Customer services:** slightly reducing our face-to-face and telephone operating hours.
- **Car parks:** reviewing charges and hours of operation.
- **Sovereign Centre:** considering different options for the future of the centre, including rationalising the number of pools available, whilst protecting swimming lessons, school swimming and structure sessions such as lane swimming.
- **Community grants:** reducing our budget for grants to our voluntary sector partners (including Rent Support Grants) after April 2025.

- **Town Hall:** explore ways to reduce the costs and consider alternative uses for the building.
- **The splash pad at Princes Park:** identify options for future sponsorship for it to remain open.

The consultation will run from Thursday 19 September to Thursday 31 October 2024.

Paper copies of the consultation information will be available from Eastbourne Town Hall or can be posted on request.

To request the information in a different language or format, please email CustomerFirst@lewes-eastbourne.gov.uk

Survey questions

1. In what capacity are you responding to this consultation?

- A local resident
- A business
- A visitor
- A voluntary, community or partner organisation

If you are responding as a businesses or other organisations, please tell us which one (free text).

Where “you” are referred to in this response, this will be deemed to mean the organisation or group you represent.

2. **Public toilets:** moving to a community toilet scheme

We understand the importance of public toilets across the town, both to residents and tourists.

Last year, the cost of providing public toilets was over £300,000, and this cost increases each year. Many council-owned public toilets are old and expensive to maintain.

We are proposing moving to a community toilet scheme. This would involve identifying toilets available for public use across Eastbourne and closing most council-owned public toilets.

All Changing Places toilets would remain open, as would the public toilets at the bandstand.

Community toilet schemes have been put in place in other parts of the UK and have proven to work well and improve the range and quality of toilets available for public use.

What impact would moving to a community toilet scheme have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you are involved with a business or community group and would be interested in being part of a community toilet scheme, please enter its name, location and an email address below (free text).

If you have any ideas or suggestions for alternative ways for toilets to be provided for public use, please tell us below:

3. Street cleansing: focussing activity on areas with higher footfall

The council is committed to the high standard of street cleanliness across the town. Under this proposal, we would focus our activity on the town centre and seafront which are high footfall areas. We would in-turn reduce street cleansing in other parts of the borough.

We will continue to offer street cleansing on request in other areas when needed.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the council could reduce the costs of its street cleansing, please tell us below (free text):

4. Grounds maintenance: focussing on core activities and seeking community support in other areas.

Providing a grounds maintenance service is complex and expensive. Annually, we receive a number of complaints from residents and visitors about the grounds maintenance service provided. As such, we will review this discretionary service with a view to reduce costs while delivering a targeted service enhancement.

The review will focus on providing core services, including:

- Maintaining prioritised spaces and areas across the town
- Ensuring a safe environment for residents and visitors
- Promoting biodiversity

We will also work with community groups to explore jointly prioritised plans for key locations across the town.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the council could reduce the costs of grounds maintenance, please tell us below (free text):

5. Customer services: slightly reducing our face-to-face and telephone operating hours.

Many of the council's services are now available to access via our website and there have been significant upgrades to the council's systems.

We are looking at reducing our customer service team's face-to-face and telephone operating hours during quieter times.

Many other councils have reduced their opening times without significantly impacting customers.

Our customer service team's current operating hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

Our revised operating hours would be:

- Telephone: 9am to 4pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday (10am to 4pm on Wednesday)
- Face-to-face: 10am to 2pm, Monday to Friday.

We will also explore ways to improve our online services to provide 24/7 access to a wider range of services.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the council could reduce the costs of its customer services or to improve its online services, please tell us below: (free text)

6. Car parks: reviewing charges and hours of operation.

We have not increased parking charges at council-owned car parks for the last eight years. Under this proposal, we would look to bring charges in-line with other local car parks.

We are also looking at extending the hours of operation. These are currently 8am to 6pm. We are considering increasing this to 8am to 8pm (10pm at College Road, Hyde Gardens and Wish Tower car parks).

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the council could increase income from its car parks, please tell us below: (free text)

7. Sovereign Centre: considering different options for the future of the centre, including rationalising the number of pools available, whilst protecting swimming lessons, school swimming and structure sessions such as lane swimming.

Most leisure centres operate a single swimming pool. The Sovereign Centre currently has four separate pools. The age of the centre means that significant investment is required in key aspects of the infrastructure. For example, the plant and equipment supporting the fun pool is now end of life and requires replacement soon.

The centre as a whole is expensive to run, and in 24/25 the Sovereign Centre is projected to cost £424,000.

We are looking at options for the future of the centre, including reducing the number of pools available, whilst protecting swim lessons, school swimming, and structured sessions such as lane swimming.

We intend to transfer the centre to Wave Active in 2025.

We are considering closing the fun pool and diving pool, and exploring different uses for these such as soft play, a climbing wall or greater gym capacity.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the council could reduce the costs of running the Sovereign Centre, while safeguarding its long-term use, please tell us below: (free text)

8. Community Grants: reducing our budget for grants to our voluntary sector partners (including Rent Support Grants).

The council currently provides grant funding for a number of voluntary and community organisations. This includes through Rent Support Grants for groups that operate out of council-owned buildings.

We are looking at reducing the overall amount of grant funding we offer to our voluntary sector partners, with 100% Rent Support Grant remaining in place for community centres. Any changes would not come into effect before April 2025.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for alternative ways to reduce budgets for voluntary sector partners, please tell us below:

9. Town Hall: explore ways to reduce the costs and consider alternative uses for the building.

With its rich history and deep connection to local public life, the Town Hall is an important symbol of Eastbourne. At nearly 140 years old, the building is costly to operate and requires significant investment to maintain.

We are looking for ways to reduce the running costs and investment that would be needed over the coming years. This could include making the building available for other uses.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you have any ideas or suggestions for how the Town Hall could be used by different organisations or for different purposes in future, please tell us below: (free text)

10. Splash pad at Princes Park: identify options for future sponsorship for it to remain open.

The splash pad at Princes Park currently costs around £25,000 a year to run. To enable the splash pad to continue to operate, we would need to identify sponsorship funding from one or more outside organisations.

We are looking at sponsorship options to open the splash pad for 2025 onwards. If we aren't able to find sponsorship, we would need to close the splash pad.

What impact would these changes have on you?

- Positive impact
- Negative impact
- Little or no impact
- Don't know

Please give the reasons for this (free text):

If you or someone you know would be interested in sponsoring the splash pad at Princes Park, or if you have other ideas for funding the facility, please provide details below (free text).

If you have any ideas or suggestions for alternative ways to fund the Splash Pad, please tell us below:

11. Do you have any other comments to make about the savings being considered by Eastbourne Borough Council?

12. Questions about you (equality monitoring questions)

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