Support Services and Economic Development Portfolio

Performance Summary

1. Performance highlights this quarter:

- The West Sussex **OpenDigital programme** has continued its focus on hard-to-reach rural areas. The Digital Infrastructure Team is working with Building Digital UK (BDUK), to support the national "Project Gigabit". The procurement will conclude shortly and will bring a significant investment in areas which are not expected to receive commercial rollouts. It will benefit tens of thousands of homes and businesses across a multi-year programme. The Rural Gigabit voucher scheme continues, with the vast majority of voucher projects complete or expected to be completed by March 2024. The County Council remains on course to meet its target of connecting/passing 10,000 premises.

- The OpenDigital programme is also working innovatively with telecommunications partners to **support improved mobile connectivity** in **the county** and wider region through two Government funded projects; The BEACH project and the Growing Sussex 5G Innovation Region.

- The Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) has confirmed that the County Council has been **successful in its bid to become one of ten UK 'Innovation Regions'**. The Council will receive £3.8m to deliver the Growing Sussex 5G Innovation Region project. This will build on work with West Sussex Growers Association and Brinsbury College and will fund the implementation of private 5G mobile network at the College, complementary growing sites and the viticulture department within Plumpton College in East Sussex.

- The **Members Careers and Skills Task and Finish Group** has met on several occasions during the quarter and has developed an action plan of deliverables, including implementing an 'Apprenticeships First' approach, to attract apprenticeships for care leavers.

Our Council Performance Measures

Note - the performance measures relating to Economy are reported under the Leader Portfolio in **Section 7**.

2. The following section provides KPI updates comparing performance over the last three periods (each measure will explain the reporting period).

Support Services and Economic Development	2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast

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Measure: Percentage of premises able to access gigabit-capable connectivity by 2025 (working towards government target of 85% by the end of 2025) Reporting Frequency: Annually (April)	63.0%	**2020/21**	**2021/22**	**2022/23**		**G**
		G	G	G	↗	
		21.2%	50.3%	60.3% (2022/23 Target: 55%)		

Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Continued working with suppliers with plans and/or completion of existing Voucher schemes. The Project Gigabit procurement was launched in January 2023 and supplier bids have been evaluated for the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology plan contract award in January 2024.

Actions: Continue to support intervention in sub super-fast communities.

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Measure: Leadership and management - percentage positive response to the question: "I am part of a supportive team where we regularly reflect on our successes and challenges enabling us to improve continuously" Reporting Frequency: Bi-Annually (November, May)	80.0%	**Nov-21**	**May-22**	**Dec-23**		**G**
		G	G	G	→	
		81.2%	81.0%	81.0%		

Performance Analysis: Dec-23: The County Council has consistently remained at 81% for this KPI at organisational level for the past three Pulse Surveys (Nov 21, May 22, Sept 23). In services where the positive response to this question has been lower, work is being undertaken to identify reasons why and how we can improve.

All staff were required to undertake the annual refresher training which included various elements on diversity and respect. Managers undertook the equivalent training designed for them. These modules have been designed to promote individuals' awareness of their responsibility in supporting each other in the workplace to make West Sussex County Council a great place to work.

Within Children, Young People and Learning, further work has been undertaken to support the train the trainer's network on how to run "Problem Solving / Quality Circles" to enable more individuals to run sessions and further promote continuous improvement within the service. A values-driven performance management and development approach has been co-designed with staff to help further improve our working relationships.

Actions:
- Supporting directorates to take appropriate action where their score is below the organisational benchmark.
- Further rollout of diagnostic tools for services, teams, and individuals to identify ways to improve.
- 360 Feedback with the next level of leadership within the Fire and Rescue Service.
- Pilot of Aspiring leadership programme and feedback sessions.
- Promotion of 1:1 team performance and development conversations.

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Measure: Wellbeing, values and ways of working - Percentage positive response to the question: "I am treated with dignity and respect by my work colleagues" Reporting Frequency: Bi-Annually (November, May)	88.0%	**Nov-21**	**May-22**	**Dec-23**		**G**
		G	G	G	→	
		89.2%	91.0%	91.0%		

Performance Analysis: Dec-23: The six monthly "Living our Values Everyday Award Ceremony" took place at the end of January, recognising 47 individuals from across all areas of the organisation and the great work they do.

Further work on the Pulse Survey Equality and Diversity information and dashboard has been undertaken and is due to be shared with Staff Groups on how the experiences of colleagues differ based on protected characteristics and demographics. Focused action plans will be developed as part of these conversations to identify how everyone can improve the workplace experience. There are two policies launching to managers this month, the: "Dignity and Respect policy" and "Managing and Responding to unacceptable customer behaviour policy". There will be promotion of team-based conversations on Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) related topics which will become a regular theme throughout the year.

Actions:
- Promotion of the new Employee Recognition platform and how to thank and nominate staff for awards.
- Launch of Dignity and Respect Policy
- Launch of Managing and Responding to unacceptable customer behaviour
- Promotion of team-based conversations on EDI related topics

Support Services and Economic Development	2023/24 Target	Performance Over The Last 3 Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
• Rollout of Managing unacceptable behaviour training, to support colleagues to manage situations of unacceptable behaviour when working with challenging customers, following pilot in Library Services. Resources and support, particularly around stress and anxiety, will be promoted.						

			Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23		
51	**Measure:** Percentage of Customer Service Centre telephone calls that could have been resolved through digital channels Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	30.0%	G	G	G	↗	G
			25.0%	27.8%	25.0%		

Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Note – this measure is aiming low (0%). Currently achieving 25%, which is better than the 2023/24 target of 30% and an improvement on Q2's figure of 27.8%. There are plans to open further digital channels to provide customers choice in how they make contact. Social Media channel is also moving into the Customer Service Centre.

Actions: The aim is that no calls to the Customer Service Centre could have been resolved through digital channels.

62	**Measure:** Percentage of positions which have been vacant from more than [100 days]. Reporting Frequency: Quarterly	TBC	New Measure – No Data	New Measure – No Data	New Measure – No Data		

Performance Analysis: Dec-23: Currently establishing a baseline having undertaken a data cleansing exercise, after which targets can be defined.

Actions: Work is currently being undertaken to cleanse the data, so that a baseline figure can be established. The Council is looking to introducing referral schemes alongside the prospect of sign on bonuses for hard-to-recruit-to roles, exploring a 'refer a friend' scheme for key transport roles and a business case to introduce a market supplement.

Finance Summary

Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Year end budget variation (£m)
Covid-19 pandemic expenditure – HR Recruitment Project	£0.307m	Covid-19 Grant Funding	(£0.307m)	
Customer Experience – Additional costs associated with the Children's statutory complaint process	£0.150m	Customer Experience – Projected underspend on Independent Visitor Scheme mileage and subsistence	(£0.050m)	
Other minor variations	£0.045m	IT Service – Projected underspend on budget set aside for the re-design of the service and associated costs	(£0.230m)	
		Communications and Transformation teams staffing underspend	(£0.225m)	
Support Services and Economic Development Portfolio - Total	**£0.502m**		**(£0.812m)**	**(£0.310m)**

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

3. As at the end of December, the forecast against the Support Services and Economic Development budget is a projected underspend of £0.310m, which is broadly in line when compared to the September position. The main variations within the budget position are described below.

4. As agreed in 2022/23, part of the remaining £0.307m of non-ringfenced Covid-19 grant will be fully used to fund the short-term additional capacity within the **HR Resourcing Team** to support recruitment and retention initiatives.

5. As previously reported, the **Customer Experience Team** is projecting a £0.150m overspend due to changes to how local authorities handle complaints under the children's services statutory complaints process. This overspend is partly mitigated by a £0.050m projected underspend on costs associated with the Independent Visitors Scheme using more on-line visits.

6. An underspend of £0.231m is projected for **IT Services.** In 2021, IT support was transferred from Capita and budget set aside for the redesign of the service and on-going costs. In 2023/24, this budget remains unspent with no immediate plans. This is a proposed saving for the 2024/25 budget.

7. The projected **staffing underspend** has increased slightly to £0.225m, an increase of £0.025m when compared to September.

Savings Delivery Update

8. There are £1.308m of savings to be delivered. Details are reported below:

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be Delivered in 2023/24	December 2023		Narrative
Reduction in Postage and Stationery Budgets	2023/24	£0.200m	£0.200m	G	A saving in postage and stationery with greater use of electronic communication.
Democratic Services Budgets	2023/24	£0.140m	£0.140m	B	Includes the removal of vacant posts and a reduction in the Members and meetings budget and assumes virtual working remains at current levels.
Staffing - Deletion of Vacant Posts	2023/24	£0.120m	£0.120m	B	Removal of vacant posts. Project resources now provided on a project-by-project basis.
Use of uncommitted Public Health Grant (PHG)	2023/24	£0.038m	£0.038m	B	The Help at Home contract was decommissioned in July 2021. The savings will be used to contribute towards other eligible public health spend within the Support Services and Economic Development portfolio.

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be Delivered in 2023/24	December 2023		Narrative
Staffing vacancy increase in vacancy factor from 5% to 6%	2023/24	£0.210m	£0.210m	B	Staffing budgets currently assume a vacancy factor of 5% but over the last few years, this has averaged 6% across the organisation and has remained at this level in 2023/24.
Licencing savings following re-procurement of ERP solution	Prior Years	£0.400m	£0.400m	G	Due to revised implementation plans for Oracle, it is unlikely that this saving will be achieved as originally envisaged in 2023/24. However other opportunities arising across the Directorate will mitigate this in year.
Reduction in legal costs required for child protection cases	Prior Years	£0.200m	£0.200m	G	There has been a steady increase in pre-court cases undertaken where there is concern about a child's wellbeing. This has led to a reduction in the number of cases continuing to court and incurring costly fees. The saving is on track to be delivered.

Savings Key:

R	Significant Risk	A	At Risk	G	On Track	B	Delivered

Capital Programme

Capital Summary

9. The Support Services and Economic Development capital programme; as approved by County Council in February 2023, is a programme totalling £5.848m for 2023/24. Budget of £1.289m, originally profiled to be spent in 2023/24, was accelerated into 2022/23, revising the year's capital programme to £4.559m.

10. Since this time, the profiled spend has increased overall by £1.235m, to give a current year end projection for 2023/24 of £5.794m.

11. The portfolio's capital programme contains eleven schemes. Six of the schemes are in delivery, one is practically complete and within a retention phase whilst snagging and cosmetic works are completed and four are funded from Business Rates Pool and report directly to the West Sussex Councils' Chief Executives' and Leaders' Board. The details for each are reported below.

	Support Services and Economic Development Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2022/23	2023/24 Expenditure to Date	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost	In Flight Projects			
1	**Project:** Arun Growth Programme - Bognor Regis Esplanade	G	G	G	£0.431m	£0.090m	£0.110m	£0.231m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				

	Support Services and Economic Development Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2022/23	2023/24 Expenditure to Date	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost	In Flight Projects			
	Narrative: Revised Programme agreed with Growth Board.							
2	**Project:** Arun Growth Programme - Littlehampton Terminus Road	G	G	G	£1.253m	£0.445m	£0.572m	£0.236m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				
	Narrative: Project is on track.							
3	**Project:** Adur Growth Programme - Southwick Square (Public Realm Improvements)	G	G	G	£0.600m	£0.034m	(£0.034m)	£0.600m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				
	Narrative: Project is on track.							
4	**Project:** Worthing Public Realm - Portland Road	G	G	G	£1.510m	£1.231m	£0.022m	£0.257m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2023			**Project Phase:** Practically Complete – In Retention				
	Narrative: Project is complete. Once final invoices have been settled, any remaining funds will be returned to the Capital Improvement Budget.							
5	**Project:** Worthing Public Realm - Railway Approach	G	G	G	£2.861m	£0.553m	£0.031m	£2.277m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				
	Narrative: Project is on track.							
6	**Project:** Investment in Technology - Block	G	G	G	£0.012m	N/A	£0.025m	(£0.013m)
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				
	Narrative: Majority of funds were accelerated into 2022/23. Some funding from 2024/25 likely to be accelerated.							
7	**Project:** Capital Receipts Funding for Eligible Revenue Projects	G	G	G	£12.275m	£4.248m	£-	£8.027m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024			**Project Phase:** In Delivery				
	Narrative: Funding for flexible use of capital receipts revenue projects. Expenditure for 2023/24 will be considered at the year-end against eligible spend.							
8	**Project:** Business Rates Pilot - Converged Fibre	A	A	G	£4.320m	£4.084m	£0.021m	£0.215m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024/25			**Project Phase:** In Delivery – Business Rates Pool				

Support Services and Economic Development Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2022/23	2023/24 Expenditure to Date	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
	Time	Quality	Cost	In Flight Projects			
Narrative: Project requires some fibre work to be revisited to ensure the resilience of the network through the stages of commercialisation. This will not require additional funding but will require additional time. Funded from Business Rates Pool and reports through the OpenDigital Programme to Districts and Boroughs.							
Project: Business Rates Pilot - Gigabit Voucher Scheme	**G**	**G**	**G**	£5.700m	£1.683m	£1.113m	£2.904m
Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025/26				**Project Phase:** In Delivery – Business Rates Pool			
Narrative: Scheme is on track, with some outlier projects now moving into delivery following supplier delays; although all projects are on target to completed before 2025/26. Funded from Business Rates Pool and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.							
Project: Business Rates Pilot - District and Borough Council Gigabit Projects	**A**	**G**	**G**	£5.640m	£-	£-	£5.640m
Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025/26				**Project Phase:** In Delivery – Business Rates Pool			
Narrative: Delay to project timescales due to external delivery partner. Funded from Business Rates Pool and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.							
Project: Economic Recovery Fund (Business Rates Pool) - Connected Places -WIFI	**G**	**G**	**G**	£0.500m	£0.033m	£0.045m	£0.422m
Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024/25				**Project Phase:** In Delivery – Economic Recovery Fund			
Narrative: Project is on track. Funded from Economic Recovery Fund and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.							

(Row numbers: 9, 10, 11 for the three projects respectively.)

12. A summary of the latest Capital Programme Budget Monitor is reported in **Appendix 4** and full details of all individual schemes are set out in the Budget Report published in February 2023.

Risk

13. The following table summarises the risks within the corporate risk register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks to other portfolios are specified within the respective portfolio sections.

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
CR11	As a result of skill shortages and less favourable employment offers in comparison to other organisations (amplified by the current cost of living situation), there is a risk that we will not be able to **recruit and retain sufficient numbers of qualified/experienced staff** to manage and deliver quality services.	25	25
CR39a	Cyber threat is an evolving, persistent and increasingly complex risk to the ongoing operations. There is a risk of a successful **cyber-attack** directly from external threats or indirectly from individuals falling prey to	25	25

Risk No.	Risk Description	Previous Quarter Score	Current Score
	social engineering or phishing attacks. This could lead to significant service disruption and possible data loss.		
CR39b	**Data protection responsibilities.** The Council is a Data Controller and has obligations and responsibilities arising from that role and needs to avoid data breach or loss. It needs the resources, skills, knowledge, systems and procedures to ensure **obligations** are met.	9	9
CR50	WSCC is responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees and customers. If WSCC staff/services and maintained schools fail to comply with statutory duties, responsibilities and processes (in accordance with WSCC governance arrangements), there is a risk that it will lead to a **serious health, safety and wellbeing incident occurring**.	9	9

14. Further detail on all risks can be found in **Appendix 5** - Corporate Risk Register Summary. Full details of the latest Risk Register, including actions and mitigations can be found under the County Council's Regulation, Audit and Accounts Committee Agenda website.