

Support Services and Economic Development Portfolio - Summary

Performance Summary




1. Performance highlights this quarter include:


- **The Customer Experience Service have successfully implemented the new Contact Centre AI Platform (CCAIP)** which has resulted in fewer faults with receiving calls and transferring customers than the previous system. This improvement in performance has enhanced customer satisfaction and has reduced telephone call abandonment rates to 1.7%, meaning only two in every 100 customers abandon their call.
- The County Council's £3.8m **Growing Sussex 5G Innovation Region project** continues to work with the appointed supplier to design and deploy four 5G private networks at the four pilot sites at Brinsbury and Plumpton Colleges and commercial growers, The Greenhouse Sussex and Wicks Farm. Fibre has now been deployed and planning has been secured across three of the four Growing Partner sites. The project continues to generate national and industry interest reported upon in trade publications and a successful panel discussion sponsored at national level industry and sector events. Significant progress has been undertaken in relation to the website for the project in this quarter with this due to be launched imminently.
- The **West Sussex Digital Infrastructure Team continues to support BDUK (Building Digital UK) in delivering their national "Project Gigabit"** which will roll out gigabit capable broadband across the country. BDUK and CityFibre have finalised the design for Drawdown 1 of which, around 1,000 premises in West Sussex without a gigabit capable connection will benefit. It is expected the build will commence within West Sussex in early 2025 and with the first premises set to go-live summer 2025. The progress of these works will be subject to availability of road space and securing necessary approvals from Highways.
- The Digital Infrastructure Team have also been continuing to **explore opportunities to improve mobile connectivity across the county**. Engagement with residents and businesses within Chichester has identified 'limited' and 'patchy' mobile connectivity within the City Centre as a barrier. The team undertook and completed initial mapping of mobile coverage within the area to better understand mobile 'not spot' areas.

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		2024/25 Target	Performance Over The Last Three Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
20	<p>Measure: Percentage of premises able to access gigabit-capable connectivity by 2025 (working towards government target of 85% by the end of 2025 and nationwide by 2030).</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Annually (April).</p> <p>Aim High Measure.</p>	72.0%	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		G
			G	G	G		
			50.3%	60.3%	70.1% (2023/24 Target: 63%)		
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The County Council continues to support BDUK in the delivery of their Project Gigabit Programme which will seek to bring gigabit-capable broadband to premises not expected to be the recipients of commercial investment.</p> <p>Actions: Continue to work with commercial suppliers to create best possible conditions to maintain West Sussex status as an attractive market to invest. Support BDUK and its supplier in its delivery of Project Gigabit. Work is on-going with BDUK and suppliers to explore opportunities to utilise Government funded voucher projects should it un-pause in West Sussex.</p>							
47	<p>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".</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Bi-Annually (Nov, May).</p> <p>Aim High Measure.</p>	82.0%	May-22	Dec-23	Dec-24		G
			G	G	G		
			81.0%	81.0% (2023/24 Target: 80%)	83.0%		
<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The 2024 Pulse Survey took place in Q3. There was a 55% response rate, with a total of 3,648 responses received. The expanded Pulse Survey has provided the County Council with a wealth of information that will support teams to reflect on their strengths and identify areas for development. The Q3 percentage reported is a small rise from 81% to 83% since last year, however this is the first increase in the score for four Pulse Surveys and a testament to the work happening within the organisation.</p> <p>The focus for Q4 will involve rolling out the Pulse Survey results to teams so they are able to review their scores for each question. Services will be asked to do this at directorate and local levels to identify and celebrate their strengths and explore actions to improve on areas for development.</p> <p>The organisation will also continue to promote the Thank You and Award Platform, with staff encouraged to nominate colleagues who have demonstrated best practice in their working area. Working alongside this to promote a culture of celebrating strengths within teams, a Strengths and Compliments Team Activity has been developed to encourage and share qualities that they value about their colleagues.</p> <p>Further celebrations of the great work that happens within the organisation can be seen from recent award ceremonies. West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service recently celebrated the dedication, bravery and commitment of its staff at its annual Recognition and Achievement Awards Ceremony (Fire Service Honours). On a national scale, the County Council has recently had the following winners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Health who won "Best Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Employer" Award at the recent Local Government Chronicle Workforce Awards, and The Children's Mental and Emotional Health Team won the Silver Award in the Children's Services Team of the Year. <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rollout of Pulse Survey Results, promotion of action planning tool and supporting directorates to take appropriate action where their score is below the organisational benchmark. Promotion of the annual review conversations process, as part of the Performance and Development Framework to support staff to reflect on their achievements and identify areas for improvement and how this will be undertaken. 							
48	<p>Measure: Wellbeing, values and ways of working - Percentage positive response to the question: "I am treated with dignity and respect by my work colleagues".</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Bi-Annually (November, May).</p> <p>Aim High Measure.</p>	90.0%	May-22	Dec-23	Dec-24		A
			G	G	A		
			91.0%	90.7%	89.0%		

	Support Services and Economic Development	2024/25 Target	Performance Over The Last Three Periods				DoT	Year End Forecast
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The 2024 Pulse Survey took place during Q3. There was a 55% response rate, with a total of 3,648 responses received. The expanded Pulse Survey has provided the County Council with a wealth of information that will support teams to reflect on their strengths and identify areas for development. The Q3 figure has seen a small decrease from 90.7% to 89% for this KPI. This small decrease and an increase in the KPI target this year has seen the KPI RAG rating move from a Green status to Amber.</p> <p>To address this, the organisation will be promoting the Dignity and Respect Policy to ensure all staff understand their role in creating a workplace where everyone feels valued. Teams will also be encouraged to engage in bi-monthly discussions on equality, diversity, and inclusion topics. Additionally, the County Council continues to promote the Values in Behaviours and Expectations (West Sussex ViBE) to support managers during year-end performance and development conversations, especially where conduct needs improvement.</p> <p>A high number of managers and staff (92%) successfully completed their annual mandatory training. This year's training included a crucial module on sexual harassment, emphasising the importance of respectful and acceptable behaviour.</p> <p>West Sussex County Council strives to foster an inclusive and supportive culture where everyone has a positive experience. The recent pulse survey showed high positive disclosure rates for optional protected characteristic questions, ranging from 91.5% to 95.2%. Using this data, a protected characteristic dashboard will be created to measure employee experiences across different groups and identify areas for improvement, ensuring a fair and equitable workplace.</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On-going work to raise awareness and embed the principles contained within the Dignity and Respect Policy and the Managing and Responding to Unacceptable Customer Behaviour policies. On-going work in collaboration with Staff Networks to ensure they have a clear voice and are able to support the organisation to identify areas for improvement. On-going work to create a Protected Characteristic Dashboard from the collated Pulse Survey Data to support action plans at both a corporate and local level. 							
51a	<p>Measure: Percentage of customers who are satisfied with the service they receive from the Customer Service Centre.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p> <p>Aim High Measure.</p>	80.0%	<p>Jun-24</p> <p>R</p>	<p>Sep-24</p> <p>R</p>	<p>Dec-24</p> <p>G</p>		G	
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The Council is focused on making sure that when a customer contacts the Customer Service Centre, the organisations main contact point, that it is as easy as possible to gain the information, support, and advice they require when they need it, reducing the need for a customer to call back or be handed to other officers across the Council. To help monitor if the Council is achieving this, customers are asked, through a short survey, to express how satisfied they were with the service they received from the Customer Service Centre. The Council aims to have 80% of customers feeling satisfied.</p> <p>During Q3, 85% of customers were satisfied with the service they received from our Customer Service Centre, exceeding the 80% target. The Customer Experience Team will continue to implement improvements and actions to increase this score.</p> <p>Actions: A new IT platform (CCAIP) was implemented on the 24th September which has not inherited the technical issues experienced with the previous system. This quarter's results reflect how a stable platform supports our staff to deliver the good service our customers expect. The Customer Experience Team will continue to maintain and improve on what is now an above industry standard score.</p>							
51b	<p>Measure: Percentage of customers who agreed it was easy to find and access the council service needed from the Customer Service Centre.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	80.0%	<p>Jun-24</p> <p>R</p>	<p>Sep-24</p> <p>R</p>	<p>Dec-24</p>	<p>N/A</p>	A	
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The Council want to make sure that when a customer contacts the Customer Service Centre, the Councils main contact point, that a customer finds it as easy as possible to gain the information, support, and advice they need when they need it, reducing the need for them to call back or be handed to other officers across the Council. To help monitor if the Council is achieving this, customers are asked through a short survey three simple questions: 51a. % Customers are satisfied with the service they receive from the Customer Service Centre. 51b. % How easy was it to find and access the council service you need. 51c. % How easy was it to get the help you wanted from the council today.</p> <p>On September 24th, 2024, the Council successfully launched a new customer contact platform. Due to the platform capabilities the Council can no longer ask three questions and needs to move to one. The service will ask the primary</p>							

Support Services and Economic Development		2024/25 Target	Performance Over The Last Three Periods			DoT	Year End Forecast
<p>Customer Satisfaction question (51a) to identify areas of strong and weak performance. Currently the service is exploring digital solutions that will provide greater insight to the Councils Customers experience. Last quarter exceeded the 80% target, with 85% of customers reporting they were satisfied with the service they have received, demonstrating the new customer contact platform is performing well and our customers are receiving a positive experience when contacting the Council.</p> <p>Actions: A new IT platform (CCAIP) was implemented on the 24th September which has not inherited the technical issues experienced with the previous system. This quarter's results reflect how a stable platform supports our staff to deliver the good service our customers expect. The Customer Experience Team will continue to maintain and improve on what is now an above industry standard score.</p>							
51c	<p>Measure: Percentage of customers who agreed it was easy to get the help wanted from the council through the Customer Service Centre.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly.</p> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	80.0%	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24		A
	<p>Performance Analysis: Sep-24: See Narrative from 51b.</p> <p>Actions: See Narrative from 51b.</p>		R	R			
			55.5%	58.4%	N/A	N/A	
64	<p>Measure: Achievement of Gatsby Benchmarks, the national framework for careers excellence, in West Sussex schools and colleges in the Careers Hub.</p> <p>Reporting Frequency: Quarterly in arrears.</p> <p>Aim High Measure</p>	5.5 out of 8		Jun-24	Sep-24		G
	<p>Performance Analysis: Dec-24: The Careers Hub have completed the academic year with 'Teacher Encounters', a series of 10 learning opportunities where teachers visit West Sussex employers over two days, to understand their recruitment process, what they are looking for in young recruits and the staffing needs of the business. During the visit, they take part in a workshop to develop a learning resource to take back to their school to share with other teachers and with pupils. These have taken place at businesses including tech business Universal Quantum in Mid Sussex and the Weald and Downland Living Museum in Chichester District. The Summer Conference was well attended, bringing together businesses, schools and partners to celebrate successes through the year. The Strategic Hub Plan has been agreed for 2024/25 academic year, and plans are underway to deliver a second year of the successful 'Teen Tech Sussex Festival'.</p> <p>Actions: The Hub will be delivering Teen Tech Sussex virtual and in-person Festivals. An estimated 50 businesses will attend the in-person event to showcase opportunities for careers in Tech industries including design, engineering, digital and med-tech. The What Next Sussex careers fair is due to take place and the Hub will continue to support Careers Leads in all the county's state funded secondary schools and colleges to design and deliver effective careers education. This year will see a focus on different delivery models for Work Experience and embedding careers into the curriculum.</p>		New Measure – No Data	5.6	5.8	▲	

Finance Summary

Portfolio In Year Pressures and Mitigations

Pressures	(£m)	Mitigations and Underspending	(£m)	Projected Year End Budget Variation (£m)
Customer Experience – Assimilation costs	£0.175m	HR – Reducing Expenditure – ELT In Year Action Plan	(£0.060m)	
HR and Organisational Development	£0.290m	IT – Reduction in planned expenditure	(£0.565m)	
		IT – Deferral of IT Contract into 2025/26 – ELT In Year Action Plan	(£0.100m)	
		Digital Infrastructure – Holding Vacancies in the short term - ELT In Year Action Plan	(£0.070m)	
		Law and Assurance – Reduction in Legal and Agency Expenditure – ELT In Year Action Plan	(£0.070m)	
		Chief Executive – Holding Vacancies in the Short Term - ELT In Year Action Plan	(£0.020m)	
		Staffing underspending within Portfolio	(£0.270m)	
		Other minor underspending	(£0.047m)	
Support Services and Economic Development Portfolio - Total	£0.465m		(£1.202m)	(£0.737m)

Financial Narrative on the Portfolio's Position

- As at the end of December, the forecast for the Support Services and Economic Development Portfolio is a projected underspend of £0.737m, an increase in the forecast underspend of £0.292m when compared to September.
- The **Customer Experience Team** is projecting a £0.175m overspend, a reduction of £0.025m when compared to September. This overspend has arisen from the assimilation of staff following the Capita contract insourcing.
- Following a number of academy conversions, some schools have withdrawn from County Council **HR Service Level Agreements** this year, which has led to a projected overspend of £0.290m. This pressure has been partially offset through the planned delivery of £0.060m of **in year saving actions agreed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) within the HR and Organisational Development Service**. These savings include the freezing of general expenditure within the HR Management Team, a reduction of specific training provision and the release of a saving from the HR counselling contract.
- It is forecast that **IT Services contract expenditure** will underspend by around £0.565m in 2024/25. In addition, the recently agreed ELT In Year Action Plan has taken the opportunity to direct the deferral of £0.1m of **non-urgent IT contract spend** until 2025/26.
- As part of the ELT Action Plan, the **Digital Infrastructure Service** are holding £0.070m of specific staffing vacancies whilst **Chief Executive** is also holding £0.020m of short-term staffing positions vacant.

8. A reduction in expenditure of £0.070m is also targeted within **Law and Assurance** following efforts to reduce legal expenditure and agency costs in accordance with the In Year ELT Action Plan.
9. Together, HR, Law and Assurance and Chief Executive services are reporting £0.270m of underspending in relation to **general staffing vacancies**. Where possible, posts have been held vacant in year in accordance with the corporate workforce controls currently in place.

Savings Delivery Update

10. There are £1.480m of savings to be delivered within the portfolio in 2024/25. Details on each saving are reported in the table below:

Saving Activity	Year	Saving to be Delivered in 2024/25	December 2024		Narrative
Review of Support Services	2024/25	£0.680m	£0.680m	B	Saving delivered as originally envisaged.
IT Services – Following Transfer from Capita	2024/25	£0.500m	£0.500m	B	Saving delivered as originally envisaged.
Support Services Outsource (SSO) Contract – Following Transfer from Capita	2024/25	£0.300m	£0.300m	B	Saving delivered as originally envisaged.

Savings Key:

R Significant Risk **A** At Risk **G** On Track **B** Delivered

Capital Programme

Capital Summary

11. The Support Services and Economic Development Capital Programme; as approved by County Council in February 2024, agreed a programme totalling £9.987m for 2024/25. Budget of £0.029m, originally profiled to be spent in 2024/25, was accelerated into 2023/24, revising the year's capital programme to £9.958m.
12. Since this time, the profiled spend has increased overall by £1.982m, to give a current year end projection for 2024/25 of £11.940m.
13. The portfolio's capital programme contains 11 schemes. Nine of the schemes are in delivery and two are complete. The details for each are reported below.

	Support Services and Economic Development Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2023/24	2024/25 Expenditure	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost	In Flight Projects			
1	Project: Arun Growth Programme	G	G	G	£3.053m	£1.250m	£0.164m	£1.639m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025				Project Phase: In Delivery		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: Project is on track.								
2	Project: Adur Growth Programme - Southwick Square (Public Realm Improvements)	B	B	G	£0.600m	£0.000m	£0.583m	£0.017m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: N/A				Project Phase: Complete		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: Practical completion reached. Final settlement of funds to be agreed.								
3	Project: Worthing Public Realm	G	G	G	£4.417m	£2.315m	£1.092m	£1.010m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: Spring 2025				Project Phase: In Delivery		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: Project is on track.								
4	Project: Investment in Technology - Block	G	G	G	£1.336m	£0.056m	£-	£1.280m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: On-going				Project Phase: In Delivery		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: Project is on track.								
5	Project: Capital Receipts Funding for Eligible Revenue Projects	G	G	G	£15.670m	£10.911m	£-	£4.759m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: On-Going				Project Phase: In Delivery		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: Funding applied for flexible use of capital receipts revenue projects.								
6	Project: Business Rates Pilot - Converged Fibre	R	R	G	£4.320m	£4.105m	£0.002m	£0.213m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2024/25				Project Phase: In Delivery – Business Rates Pool		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: The Supplier is undertaking remedial works under the original contract. This will not require additional funding but will require additional time. Funded from Business Rates Pool through the OpenDigital Programme.								
7	Project: Business Rates Pilot - Gigabit Voucher Scheme	G	G	G	£5.700m	£3.862m	£-	£1.838m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025/26				Project Phase: In Delivery – Business Rates Pool		Direction of Travel: ▶	
Narrative: The scheme has met its objectives with around 11,400 premises have been connected, exceeding the 10,000 premises target. Some outlier premises remain, the majority of which were connected in Autumn/ Winter 2024. The final payment request from BDUK for voucher reimbursements was the end of 2024. Funded from Business Rates Pool and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.								

	Support Services and Economic Development Capital Projects	Performance RAG Status			Total Project Budget	Previous Years Expenditure To 2023/24	2024/25 Expenditure	In Flight Remaining Project Budget
		Time	Quality	Cost	In Flight Projects			
8	Project: Business Rates Pilot - District and Borough Council Gigabit Projects	A	A	G	£5.640m	£-	£-	£5.640m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: 2025			Project Phase: In Delivery – Business Rates Pool		Direction of Travel: ►		
	Narrative: Project being re-scoped due to changes in requirements by the district and boroughs, and the call-off contracts have been cancelled between them and Cityfibre. In-flight remaining budget to be confirmed based on the completion of the Worthing Borough Council Gigabit project. Planning underway with the district and boroughs regarding alternative projects to align with this ring-fenced allocation. Funded from Business Rates Pool and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.							
9	Project: Economic Recovery Fund (Business Rates Pool) - Connected Places -WIFI	A	A	G	£0.500m	£0.090m	£0.005m	£0.405m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: End 2025			Project Phase: In Delivery – Economic Recovery Fund		Direction of Travel: ►		
	Narrative: Two sites have planning approval, two sites are currently being rescoped and new designs will be approved with local stakeholder group before submission to planning. One site has now been de-scoped from the project and consultation is underway with the final site, with the expectation that they will also be de-scoped. Currently undertaking impact assessment to determine new scope and budgets of the project. Funded from Economic Recovery Fund and reports direct to Chief Executives' and Leaders' Boards.							
10	Project: Growing Sussex 5G	A	G	G	£3.800m	£0.057m	£1.703m	£2.040m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: March 2025			Project Phase: In Delivery		Direction of Travel: ▼		
	Narrative: Our supplier continues to finalise the list of devices, software and Code Agreements to be utilised within the project to meet the requirements of the identified use cases. Three of the four growing partner sites have received planning approval - a significant milestone in the project. A bid has been submitted to DSIT for an extension and additional funding to deliver further innovative use cases and extend the benefits of the project.							
11	Project: Digital Beach Programme	B	B	G	£1.168m	£0.140m	£0.624m	£0.404m
	Latest Estimated Completion Date: March 2025			Project Phase: Complete – In Retention		Direction of Travel: ▲		
	Narrative: All capital works for the BEACH Project are now completed, final snagging works to be finalised prior to the end of the project in March 2025. All small cells have been installed and a private 5G network is currently in operations enables the concessions to have seamless connectivity to take cashless payments.							

Key:

R Significant Risk **A** At Risk **G** On Track **B** Complete

14. 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 2024.

Risk

15. The following table summarises the risks within the corporate risk register that would have a direct impact on the portfolio. Risks relating 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 across various sectors, and less attractive employment offers in comparison to other organisations and locations (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.	20	20
CR39a	Cyber threat is an evolving, persistent and increasingly complex risk to the ongoing operation of County Council. There is a risk of a successful cyber-attack from external threats , either directly or through the use of AI to counter traditional mitigations; or indirectly as a consequence of members or staff falling prey to social engineering or phishing attacks. The potential outcome may lead to significant service disruption and possible data loss.	25	25
CR39b	Data protection responsibilities. The Council is a Data Controller and has obligations and responsibilities arising from that role. Council needs resources, skills, knowledge, systems and procedures to ensure obligations are met.	9	9
CR50	WSCC are responsible for ensuring the health, safety and welfare of its employees and residents/ customers. If WSCC staff/services and maintained schools fail to comply with health and safety statutory duties, responsibilities and processes (in accordance with WSCC governance arrangements and legal obligations), there is a risk that it will lead to a serious health, safety and wellbeing incident occurring .	12	12
CR78	If the programme to replace the Council's current Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system fails to fully engage with services to identify, define, control and deliver the scope and operational/functional requirements, there is a risk that the Council will not effectively adopt and operate Oracle Fusion as a new ERP software system nor realise the benefits derived from it .	20	20

16. 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.