

Annual Report

2022–2023



Foreword

This has been an historic year as West Sussex County Council joined the nation in mourning the death of her late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. Her passing in September 2022 was followed by the proclamation of the accession of King Charles III to the throne, made locally by the High Sheriff of West Sussex as the first proclamation ever at County Hall, Chichester.

It has been a challenging year too, not least as we adapt to inflationary costs and growing demand and complexity of needs for our services.

Cost-of-living pressures are being felt by everyone across West Sussex, hence our resolve to make best use of our limited resources while our teams build on improvements, ensuring we are providing services that support and benefit West Sussex communities.

I am pleased to say we were able to deliver a balanced budget for the year and approve one for 2023/24 that ensures support, investment and essential services continue for our growing population of more than 882,600 residents and 37,400 businesses.

We do so by focusing on the four priorities in [Our Council Plan](#), with an underlying commitment to protecting the environment:

- Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations
- A sustainable and prosperous economy
- Helping people and communities fulfil their potential
- Making best use of resources.

I am especially proud of the work of our Children's Services teams following the findings of the latest Ofsted inspection in March. Four years after an inspection in 2019 that judged all areas as 'inadequate,' we secured an overall rating of 'requires improvement.' It evidences the hard work of our teams, the investment we've made and our resolution to ensuring the political and corporate weaknesses previously identified are fully addressed.

We have further ambitious plans for growth, improvement and support in the coming years, including £747.2 million over five years for the county's highways, environment, schools, buildings and IT & digital infrastructure through our Capital Programme.

I would like to once again thank my fellow councillors, our partners, and our staff for their ongoing work in delivering our plan and their dedication to serving communities across West Sussex.



Councillor Paul Marshall

Leader of West Sussex County Council

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations

Cost-of-living pressures and increasing demands and complexity of needs for our services created significant challenges in our work keeping people safe.

However, we continued to make improvements and remain committed to investing in essential services for all West Sussex residents.

Our Children's Services were praised by Ofsted for a 'relentless approach to improving practice' following an inspection in March 2023.

Inspectors gave the service an overall rating of 'requires improvement,' with 'good' judgements for children in care and leadership and management. Work to improve outcomes for all our children and young people is ongoing.

We continued to deliver on our Adult Social Care strategy 'The life you want to lead,' putting the voices of people who access care at the forefront of conversations about the future of social care in West Sussex.

We met our safeguarding outcomes target for adults and continued to do everything we can to reduce assessment delays people might be experiencing.

Our libraries offered 4,000 free essential toiletry packs to households affected by cost-of-living pressures, with additional support and information provided through our website and Community Hub.

Together with partners, we continued work to meet the needs of refugees entering the UK through West Sussex, including accommodation, finances, education and transport.

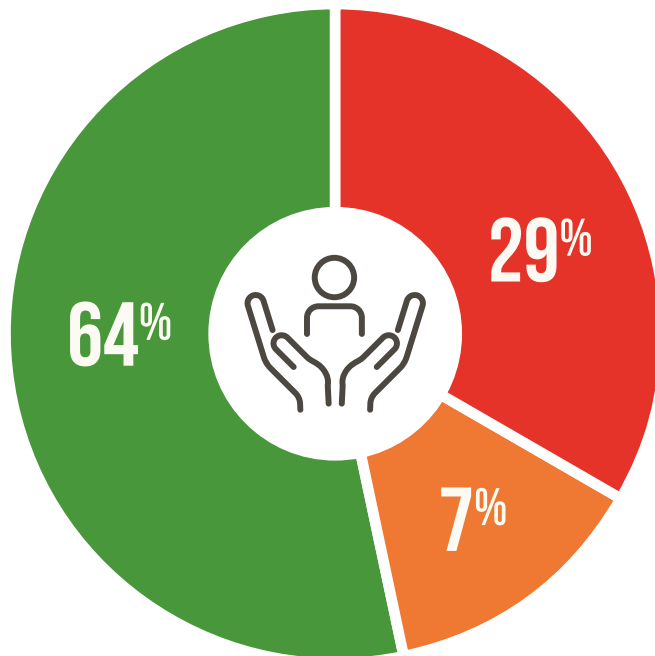
The Fire & Rescue Service exceeded the target for Safe and Well visits and carried out additional visits to homes to install fire safety equipment such as smoke alarms. We secured our first Primary Authority scheme to help a retirement living provider meet their fire safety requirements.

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations

How did we do?

The chart below summarises how our initiatives performed against a range of targets and measures.

GREEN shows the percentage that were on track;
RED those off track; **AMBER** those near target.



Visit our [performance dashboard](#) to see our current progress.

12,912



people received an adult social care service provided or commissioned by us (31 March 2022)

883



children receiving support through our Children's Services (31 March 2022)

4,680



Safe and Well Fire Service visits to homes to improve fire safety



92,436

people supported by the
Community Hub



25,689

views of our cost-of-living advice pages between
launch in October 2022 and March 2023



83%



uptake of the flu vaccine among over 65s



A sustainable and prosperous economy

The economic challenges we are all facing mean it has never been more important to support a sustainable and prosperous economy for the wellbeing of our county.

We invested over £54m into more than 530 schemes to improve, develop and enhance our road and transport networks, delivering safe infrastructure that offers choice and convenience, and that supports economic growth and the environment.

We know there is more to do. A period of hot weather followed by significant rainfall, flooding and cold weather resulted in a very high number of road defects requiring maintenance. The need to manage specific emergency incidents including a road collapse at Wiston bends, an embankment failure on the A29 at Pulborough, and a long-term road closure following a fire in Midhurst added further pressures on achieving our targets.

A focus on performance helped us achieve our target for completing repairs within our timescales and we anticipate further improvements on maintenance targets as a result of ongoing investment.

The council strives to ensure we have in place robust financial planning to support those who need it most. Through our plans,

more than 3,200 West Sussex businesses received our support to start, revive, innovate and grow this year, exceeding our target.

Our Growth Deals with district and borough councils to promote local economic growth and attract investment saw work begin in Burgess Hill, and continue in Manor Royal, Littlehampton, Bognor Regis and Three Bridges.

We are on track to reach our digital growth target of 85% of premises with gigabit-capable connectivity by 2025, achieving more than 60% this year.

In our work to help people develop skills for the future, we exceeded our target for the proportion of students attaining grade 4 and above in Maths and English GCSEs by age 16.

We continue to provide professional development for teachers and school leaders and consultancy support to schools where improvements are needed.

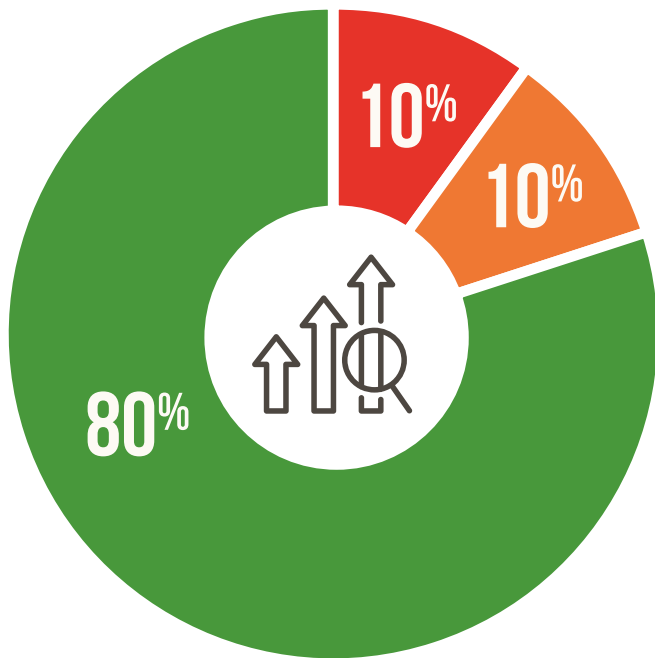
A sustainable and prosperous economy

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96%



of highways defects repaired on time

530+

schemes delivered to
improve our highways
and transport networks



£17.4M

Bus Service Improvement Plan
started this year

60%



of premises had access to
gigabit-capable connectivity

3,270



West Sussex businesses supported
to start, revive, innovate and grow

70%



of students achieved grade 4 and
above in Maths and English GCSE



Helping people and communities fulfil their potential

Enabling people and communities to fulfil their potential is at the heart of our ambition for everyone who lives and works in West Sussex.

Supporting people to live independently in their own homes remains a core focus of 'The life you want to lead,' our Adult Social Care strategy.

Work is ongoing with care providers to increase capacity in our reablement work where significant pressures affected performance.

Our commitment to provide access to excellent education and learning saw more than 94% of children attend schools with a 'good' or 'outstanding' Ofsted rating.

Demand is growing for Education, Health and Care Plans for children with special education needs and disabilities and we are working to reduce the time to complete them.

Our programme of investment in improving school facilities for all children continued, with schemes in Arun, Horsham and Worthing completed this year.

Guided by the Community Risk Management Plan, our Fire & Rescue Service achieved targets for attending critical fires and critical special service incidents.

The service continues to work with partners to improve the time taken to transfer calls and information and maximise the availability of retained firefighters alongside wholetime colleagues.

Library services were accessed more than six million times online and visited more than two million times following work to promote offers including e-books and in-person events.

We promoted the benefits of quitting smoking, launched our Gro Health app to help weight management, and exceeded our target for the number of falls-prevention programmes completed.

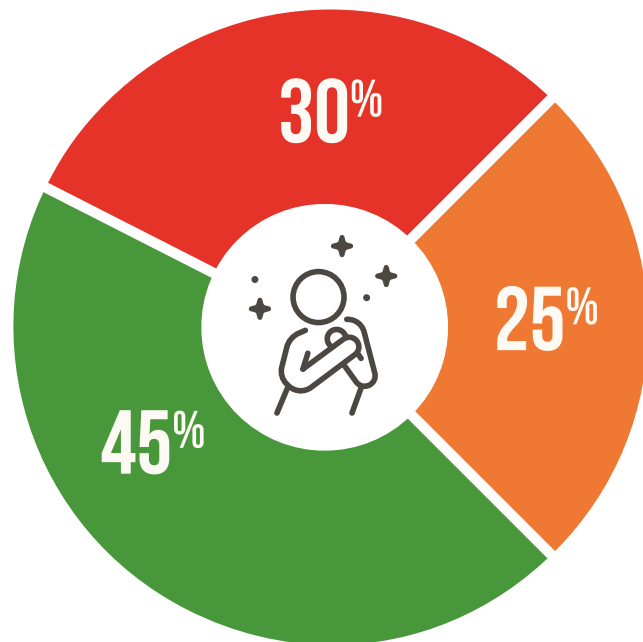
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6.3M

uses of our libraries' digital and virtual services by residents



425



older people completed falls-prevention programmes, reducing the risk of falls and fractures

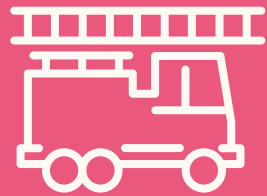


86%



of people using the
Domestic Abuse Service felt
safe upon leaving the service

92%



of first fire appliances met
emergency response standards
in critical fires

91%



of schools in West Sussex rated 'good'
or 'outstanding' by Ofsted and were
attended by more than 94% of pupils



Making the best use of resources

Our commitment to making the best use of resources in all we do includes getting the best from our people, maximising our income and productivity, and securing value for money.

Against the challenges of high inflation and increasing costs, we delivered a balanced budget this year by focusing spend on areas that contribute to the Council Plan and delivering its priorities.

Our revenue expenditure at the end of the year totalled £655.840m with an additional capital investment programme totalling £124.7m.

We have improved our position in terms of unit cost for services compared against 15 similar authorities, moving to eighth from fourth highest in 2020/21.

Our digital journey for customer contact launched in June 2022 to help empower people to self-serve and access support and information when they need it.

We recruited and welcomed new social workers from overseas as part of a recruitment drive to alleviate the pressure of vacancies in both Children's Services and Adult Social Care.

By March 2023 we had reduced our operational space by more than 42,000m² to 119,534m², which included vacating Centenary House in Worthing and letting office space in Horsham.

The Council Plan and budget that ensures support, investment and essential services for all West Sussex residents for 2023/24 was agreed at Full Council in February.

A net revenue budget of £708.8m and an additional capital investment programme of £747.2m over five years were approved.

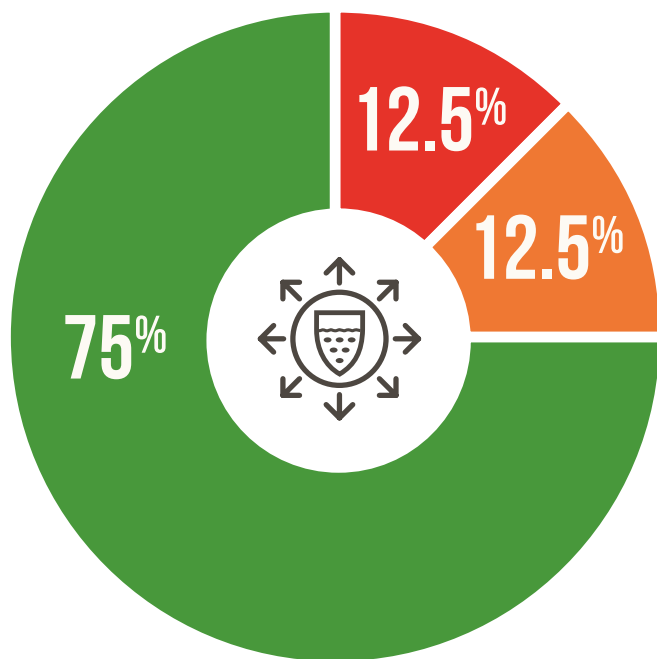
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6,031



members of county council staff and 5,414 full-time equivalents by 31 March 2023

8TH



highest out of 15 most similar authorities for unit cost compared with 4th highest in 2020 to 2021

119,534M²



of operational property, a reduction of 26% from the previous year

64%



of services available online

Protecting the environment

Protecting the environment and taking action on climate change underpin all we do, not least our ambitions for a sustainable economy.

Lower demands for electricity and heat saw carbon emissions from county council activities total 27,264 equivalent tonnes, meeting our target for the year.

Investments focused on the Halewick Lane battery storage farm and property maintenance projects, both of which contribute to our carbon reduction target.

Together with the Manor Royal Business Improvement District and Crawley Borough Council, we established the county's first local energy community at the Manor Royal Business District.

In March the search was launched for Green Business Champions to inspire others as the face of Let's Go! Net Zero initiative, jointly funded by the county council and district and borough councils.

We created more than 5km of new cycleways around West Sussex, including routes from Findon to Findon Valley and Littlehampton to Angmering. It puts us ahead of target to achieve 30km of new cycleways by 2025.

Work began on the Bus Service Improvement plan that will include schemes such as improved bus lanes and new technology to encourage people back on board and reduce traffic congestion.

Further funding was awarded for the rollout of on-street electric vehicle charge points and we are engaging with local residents on the proposals throughout 2023.

Though just under target, recycling rates across West Sussex remain healthy. By March 2023, 53.7% of all household waste was recycled, reused or composted, equal to the previous year.

The amount of collected waste has decreased and returned to pre-pandemic levels, believed to be as a result of fewer people working from home and cost-of-living pressures.

53.7%



of all household waste recycled,
re-used or composted

5.42km



of new cycleways created through the year

27,264



equivalent tonnes of CO₂ emissions produced by
council activities – a reduction of 19% from 2019/20

£18.5m

investment over five years to
make our operations more
environmentally friendly by
reducing carbon emissions

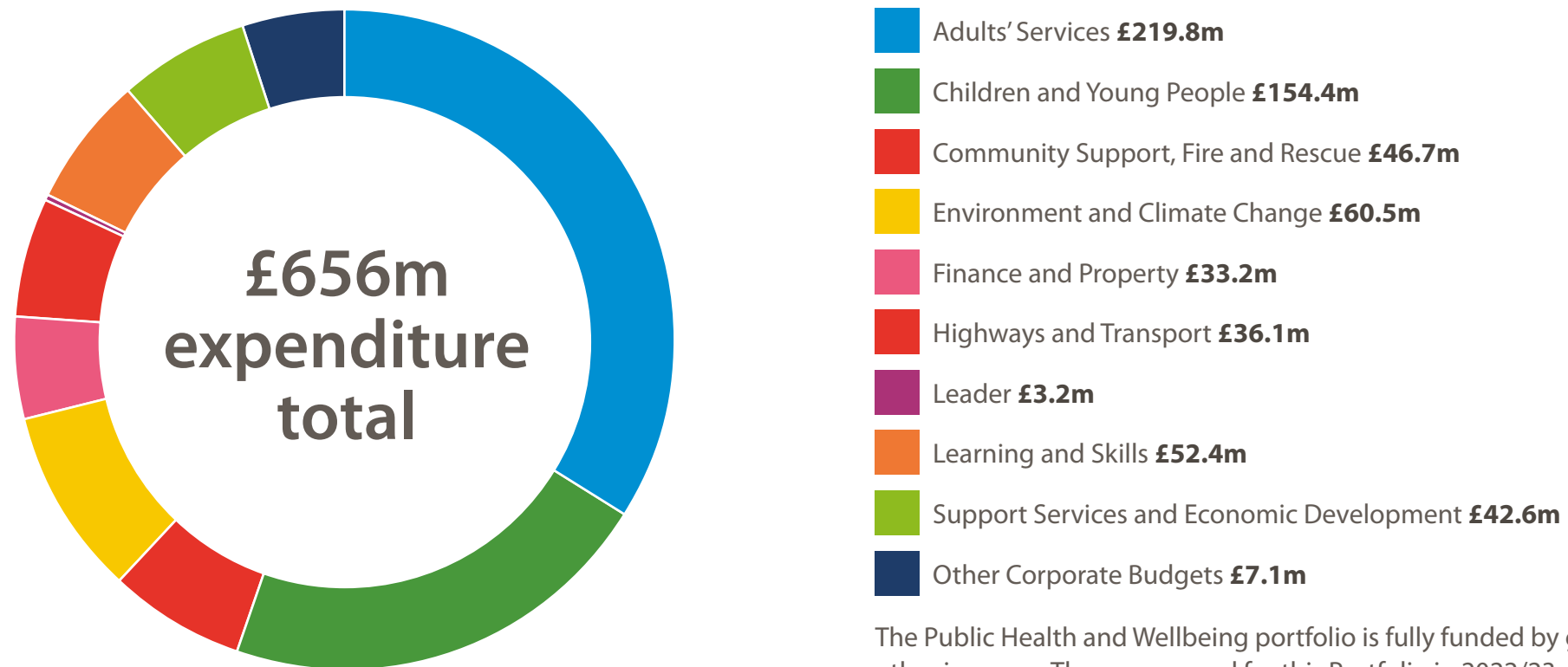
7,431



subscribers to our Environment
and Climate Change newsletter

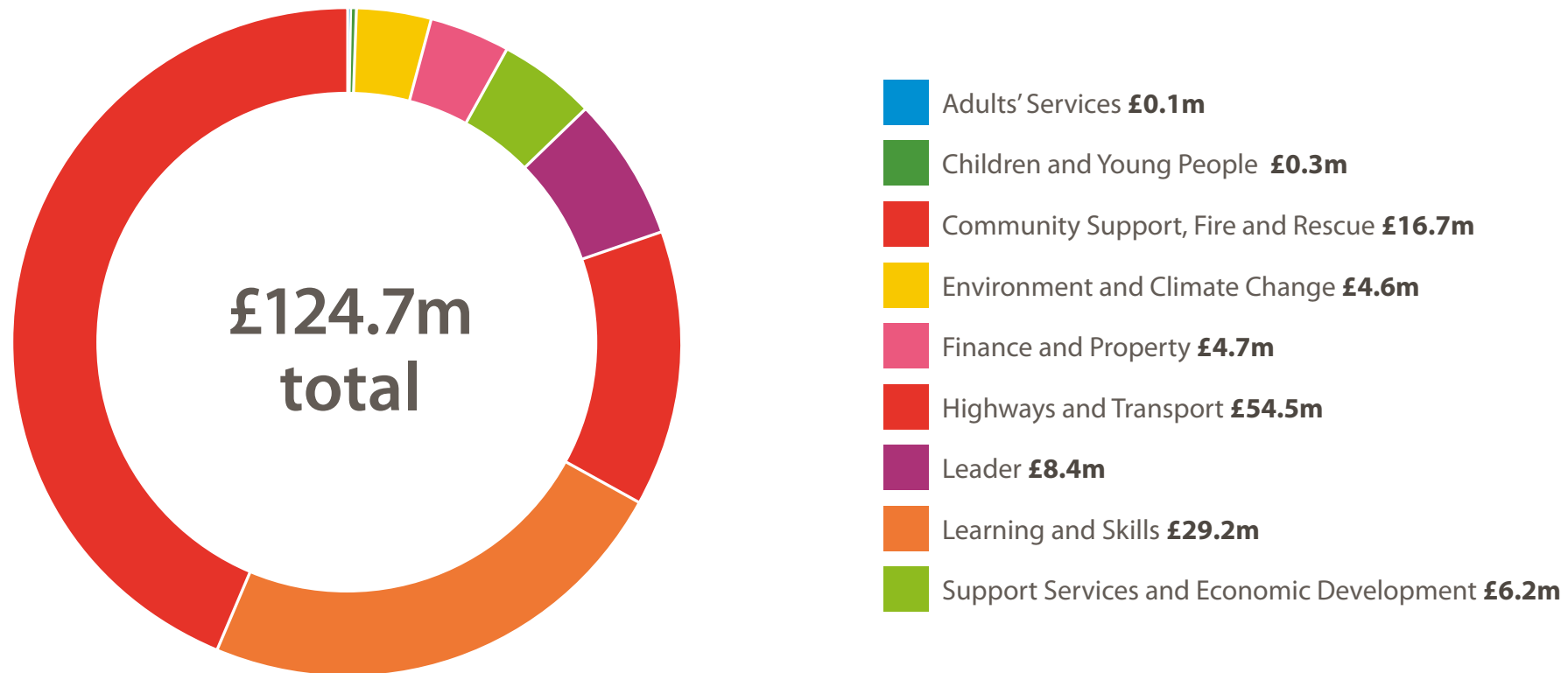
Our expenditure for the year 2022 to 2023

How we spent your money



The Public Health and Wellbeing portfolio is fully funded by grants and other incomes. The gross spend for this Portfolio in 2022/23 was £23.2m

Our total portfolio capital expenditure for the year 2022–2023



Our Cabinet

The County Council is made up of 70 councillors (sometimes called members) who are each elected every four years to represent one electoral division.

Functions are allocated across the full council itself, the Cabinet and a range of committees. Many functions are delegated from the Cabinet and committees to officers.

The West Sussex Cabinet (the 'Executive') currently has nine members selected from the Conservative majority. The Cabinet proposes the key policy decisions of the Council, which are subject to agreement by the full County Council. Each member is allocated a portfolio of work for which they take personal responsibility. Most decisions will be made by Cabinet Members individually.



Paul Marshall
Leader of the
County Council



Duncan Crow
Cabinet Member for
Community Support,
Fire and Rescue



Joy Dennis
Cabinet Member
for Highways
and Transport



Jeremy Hunt
Cabinet Member for
Finance and Property



Amanda Jupp
Cabinet Member for
Adults Services



Bob Lanzer
Cabinet Member
for Public Health
and Wellbeing



Jacquie Russell
Cabinet Member
for Children &
Young People,
Learning and Skills



Deborah Urquhart
Cabinet Member for
Environment and
Climate Change
(and Deputy Leader)



Steve Waight
Cabinet Member for
Support Services
and Economic
Development

Website: [westsussex.gov.uk](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk)

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