

Commissioning Better Outcomes for West Sussex

A COMMISSIONING STRATEGY
FOR WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

APPENDIX A



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About this document

Commissioning is the strategic activity of identifying need, allocating resources and procuring a provider to best meet that need, within available means.

This document sets out West Sussex County Council's approach to commissioning to achieve better outcomes for West Sussex residents, businesses and visitors.

It aims to be an easy read, high-level summary which provides readers with an overview of our vision of commissioning. We want to be clear where commissioning will take us as an organisation, what is required to get there and what success will look like. This document is not intended to be a comprehensive guide to commissioning. Further information can be accessed on the WSCC intranet.

A glossary of terms (Appendix 1) is included to help you with some technical language often used in commissioning.

“This is our approach to achieving better outcomes for West Sussex residents, businesses and visitors.”

Our view of commissioning

There is a collective will across the public sector to do things differently and to focus on the things that make a significant difference to our residents. This is what we mean by outcome based commissioning. Commissioning is about achieving positive outcomes for our residents and communities, based on their needs and aspirations. The current economic climate means that we must look at service delivery in different ways, innovate and look for alternative solutions. Through commissioning we can make sure that we use available resources in a variety of ways to improve outcomes in the most efficient, effective and sustainable way.

We support an integrated approach to understanding our residents and communities. This means using the insight we have about our communities to ask questions about what and how we should be commissioning to best meet their needs. This will involve challenging ourselves about how well we know our communities and asking ourselves whether we are using our resources in the most effective ways.

This approach uses interdependencies between residents, communities, organisations and service providers and will involve changes in the way we think and work and how we relate to our partners and communities.

Commissioning allows us to embed democratic leadership at every stage, involving everyone in setting the strategic direction so that we can re-balance the contribution from public services, communities and residents

to improve lives and the places where we live. It is not about doing more of the same for less, but making the most of what we have to achieve our shared goals.

Our residents and communities have changed, as have their needs and how they want to engage with public services and get support. Adapting to these changes requires strong, ambitious and visionary leadership from politicians and public sector staff as well as from residents and communities.

We also believe it is important to keep our approach flexible so that it can work at all levels - strategic or operational; covering the whole county, a district or a locality; meeting the needs of different communities or groups of people, a family or an individual.

We are taking an innovative approach to commissioning in order to find new ways of seeing old problems and using new solutions. The result will be a shift in the type and efficiency of the services on offer.

The focus remains on commissioning FOR outcomes rather than commissioning services.

What's different about our approach to commissioning?

To achieve more positive outcomes for our communities we need to have an excellent understanding of what is important to them.

We recognise that we cannot achieve these outcomes on our own. There are interdependencies that require us to work with other public and third sector organisations, private businesses and direct with our communities.

We are responding to increasing financial pressures by seeking to effectively commission outcomes and maximise the use of all resources available to us directly, via our partners, the private and voluntary sectors and the relationship we build with our communities. We also want to ensure that we are exploiting our assets to provide greater benefits to communities and residents, for example, by our use of capital and our ability to generate income from fees and charges.

The challenges to public funding mean it is more important than ever to transform how public services are delivered. By joint commissioning and co-designing with stakeholders and people who use our services we are confident we can find greater efficiencies and achieve higher levels of productivity. However, we must remain focused on improving quality of life as well as efficient delivery.

For us, co-design means working with residents and communities, combining knowledge and expertise to prioritise which services should be provided for which people, in what way, using our collective resources. Co-design encourages us to work with private and third sector providers, including user-led organisations, to ensure we include them in the commissioning process. We need to use the expertise of potential providers, develop market management, and choose to decommission or to disinvest if this will bring better outcomes.

To make our commissioning even more robust, we will look to maximise the potential offered to us through the huge technological changes of the last decade. We now have access to a wide range of information on the effectiveness of services and the impact of change. We can build sophisticated models that will help us to plan services that are most likely to deliver the outcomes we want, monitor whether they're achieving them and see what changes might be needed to make them even more effective. Using social media we can ensure that everyone in the county has the opportunity to tell us about their experiences and what's important to them, so that we can ensure services are responsive to local people. So, commissioning provides opportunities to shift the balance of power. It means we can redefine the relationships between public services, residents and communities and improve lives.

What are we here to deliver?

At the highest level, commissioning activity in West Sussex is driven by 'Future West Sussex', our vision for the county (appendix 3). This sets out our key principles, ambitions and priorities centred around three ambitions; Start of Life, Economy and Later Life. Everything we commission and deliver should contribute to these high-level outcome areas.

Our guiding principles are...

- Help you to help yourself
- Help the most vulnerable feel supported and safe
- Do the things that are best delivered collectively
- Minimise the burden of local taxation.

Our goal is to help our residents to lead happier, healthier and longer lives and the aim is that by 2017, West Sussex will be a county where:

- All children and young people are given the best start in life so that they are able to reach their full potential
- Children are "school ready"
- Young people will be "work ready" when they leave education and training
- People are able to remain independent for longer
- Road, rail and air transport links are reliable

We know we can't achieve these outcomes on our own and will work with partners to make sure that, even where we don't have direct responsibility for something, we can help to achieve what is best for residents, businesses and communities.

Our commissioning principles

Our core commissioning principles are:

- All commissioning decisions will be evidence based
- All commissioning decisions will be outcomes focused
- The commissioning process will be transparent and fair at every stage
- We will commission efficient services that deliver the greatest benefit to our communities
- We will engage residents, service users, communities and providers when commissioning
- We will involve a broad range of suppliers, including those based locally and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) wherever possible
- We will apply the principles of digital by default and self-service wherever possible, guided by our Digital Strategy
- We will use our policies on Social Value and the Community Right to Challenge to guide and inform our commissioning decision
- We will work collaboratively with others
- We will maximise our assets in terms of leverage, usage and value
- We will make best use of available resources, including those within our communities, avoiding duplication and ensuring value for money
- Our commissioning will be shaped by our understanding of the needs and priorities of our communities now, and in the future.

Our high level commissioning principles are based around the three Future West Sussex themes. They are...

Start of Life

- Early intervention
- Commission for families not individuals
- Partner with and commission from the voluntary sector to generate community capacity, prevent duplication and support more effective and efficient ways to meet objectives

Economy

- Maximising the benefits for West Sussex through sustainable economic growth in the Gatwick Diamond
- Maximising sustainable economic growth in Coastal West Sussex
- Maximising sustainable economic growth in West Sussex through championing enterprise
- Maximising sustainable economic growth through supporting local people to acquire the skills the economy needs

Later Life

- Become an enabler, using evidence to determine how services are best delivered
- Partner with and commission from the voluntary sector to generate community capacity, prevent duplication and support more effective and efficient ways to meet objectives
- Support the development of the market for personalised community-based care and support, using self-sustaining asset-based approaches and business models
- Support digital solutions at every opportunity, using integrated data and predictive analysis to enable self-directed problem solving
- Make early intervention a priority at every step of the care journey, including developing advocacy, support planning and brokerage services

The importance of partnerships and local leadership

Over £4,581m of public money is spent each year in West Sussex by a variety of public bodies. Of this amount, West Sussex County Council is directly responsible for spending £1,283m which is around 28% of the total spend.

In addition, each organisation and community has access to a wealth of other resources such as buildings, equipment, and people's expertise, time and knowledge.

This means success in commissioning is dependent on good partnerships and effective community leadership to make an impact, avoid duplication of activity and to generate efficiencies.

Leadership, at strategic and local level, can often rest with organisations other than the County Council. We are looking to develop productive working relationships to positively influence how collective resources are best used.

As a democratic organisation, we will ensure the voices of our residents, directly and through their elected members, are heard at every stage. We want to make sure that everyone is able to input and have their say.

Our vision is that West Sussex County Council, as an upper tier local authority, strengthens and exercises its role as a "community leader" in the way that it approaches commissioning across West Sussex.

How we work

Commissioning is central to our new way of working and becoming an excellent commissioning organisation won't just happen without changes to our culture, structures, processes and skills.

'Future Council' means becoming a commissioning led organisation. This new operating model is based on separating responsibility for commissioning and delivery. The County Council will work across its organisational boundaries to achieve greater efficiency and better outcomes.

This model enables us to:

- Take an integrated view of what residents and communities need
- Understand what the market is able to provide
(or could be stimulated to do)
- Identify how services should be configured; and so
- Buy these services from the most effective provider

However, we will not commission in isolation from delivery. Commissioners will learn from our experience of delivering services to inform their planning and decisions.

Service delivery will operate on a 'mixed economy' model. This means services will be delivered by the most appropriate provider based on their ability to achieve results and give us value for money. This will include private sector companies, voluntary organisations, various new organisational forms (i.e. staff mutual) or using our own in-house service.

Residents and communities will continue to access services through the contact centre and website as part of an integrated customer services function, managed by our external support services provider.

Internally we have a structure based on people, place and support service functions. We work hard to ensure we are focussed on outcomes and so work across the organisation as much as possible.

Governance

Democratic Leadership

The County Council is led by its elected members. Decisions about outcomes and how they can best be met will be made by Cabinet, with the involvement of other members at critical points. All-member events can be used to consider big issues and smaller short-life groups can work up detail and help develop plans (at a local level if required). Members on Select Committees will scrutinise plans openly as they emerge and challenge delivery and performance.

Working with others

Elected Members have a key role to play at a local level in building relations with communities and local partners as well as with local residents and service users when designing or promoting local solutions and allocating local funds and grants.

At the strategic level Cabinet Members sit on the Boards at which joint commissioning is planned and collective performance and outcomes are monitored. Members will also sit on the Partnership Boards we establish with larger delivery partners to develop new ways of working together and to oversee delivery performance.

Decision making

Cabinet Members will take the bigger decisions within their area of responsibility and will focus on how outcomes are best achieved and funded and when to pursue alternative solutions. They will use clear principles to guide commissioning and ensure decisions are coherent and open. Commissioning decisions and performance management will be delegated to senior officers. Individual Cabinet Members will also direct those senior officers who are responsible for the services provided in house and so provide a valuable link between commissioning and delivery.

Assurance

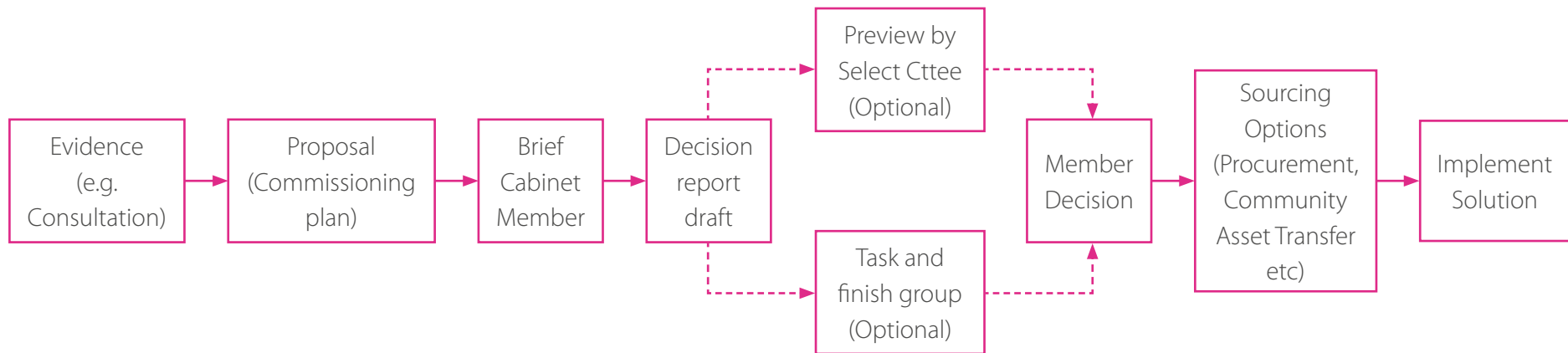
A single scrutiny committee of members will be responsible for checking the effectiveness of commissioning arrangements. Individual scrutiny committees will hold the Executive to account on the performance of contracts when looking at whether specified outcomes are being delivered.

Commissioning Governance Process

We have a duty as a public body to ensure we operate within the law, we are transparent and open and the decisions we make are subject to scrutiny and that the council will provide value for money. Good governance is needed to ensure key decisions and working practices are legal, reflect best practice and maintain an appropriate level of control across the Council.

It is also critical that the Council effectively manages risks which could impact on service delivery, the Council's reputation and financial and legal exposure.

The Diagram below shows how a commissioning plan achieves member endorsement or review and meets internal rules and validation to be approved.



What commissioning is not

It's not all about money

Securing better outcomes relies on a mix of activities often from many different sources. Supporting a family, for example, could involve the resources and assets of many agencies (public, voluntary, private), the local community and buy-in from the family themselves.

We seek to influence others through our commissioning process – not just focusing on spending our budgets. We will often look to commission jointly with others, using an integrated approach to achieve the best outcomes.

It's not all about outsourcing

Services aimed at ensuring better outcomes should be delivered by those best placed to do so at the best value. This does not always mean an external provider.

It's not just about us

By involving everyone in the design stage, including current and potential service users, staff and providers, we can be confident that we are commissioning in a way that will make the most impact.

It's not all about procurement

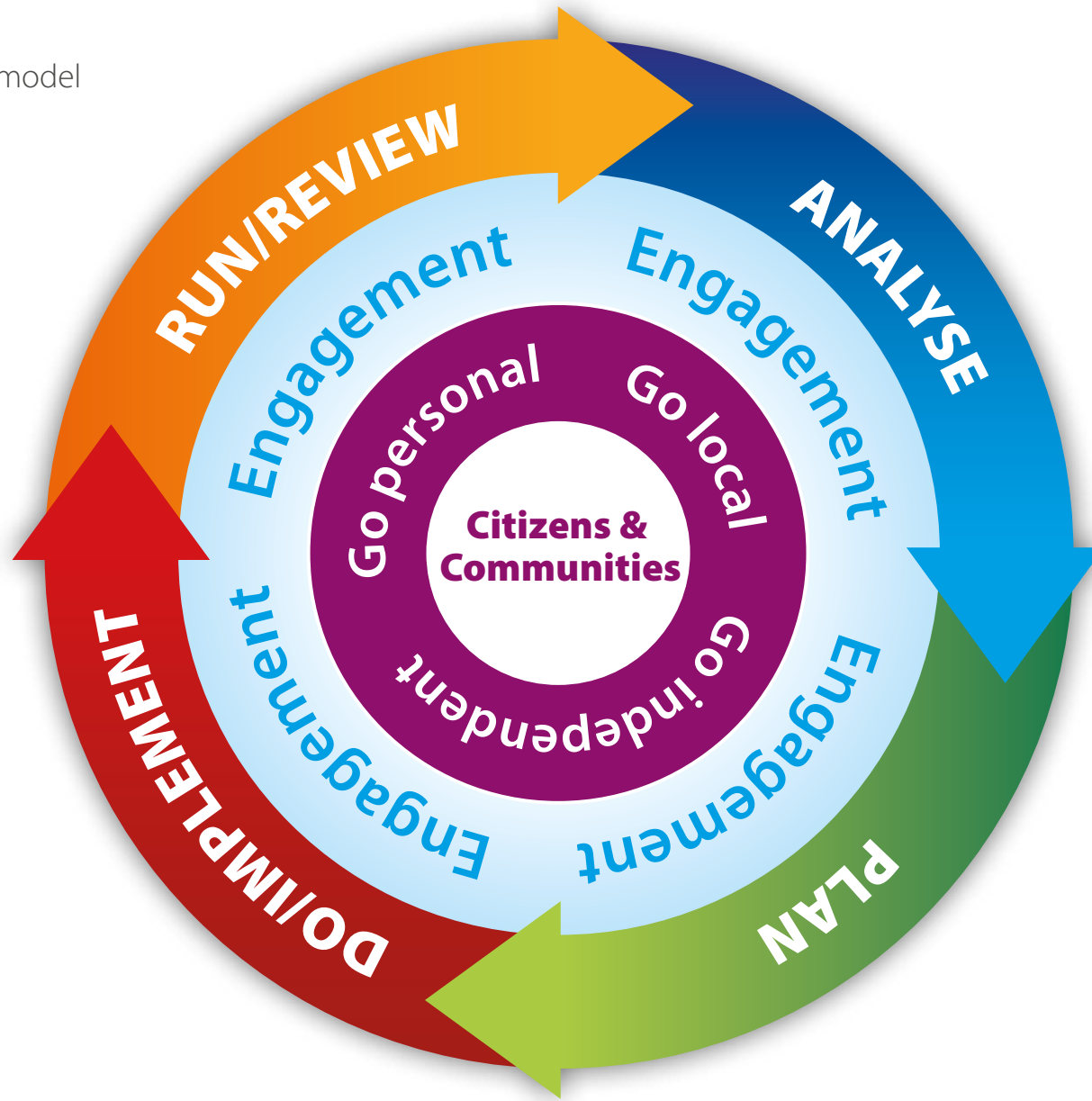
Commissioning is much wider than procurement processes and contracts. The majority of time should be spent on agreeing the purpose for commissioning, developing options with a wide range of stakeholders, and

crafting the specification. This will be informed by an understanding of the market and of procurement best practice but not constrained by them.

Useful tools available within commissioning:

- Devolving commissioning or parts of the process to communities or individuals
- Influencing others to deliver the outcomes, including joint commissioning within the County Council and with partners
- Focussed use of grants
- Being willing to change our own rules and practices or to persuade others to change theirs
- Transferring funds for others to deliver activity
- Incurring the spend but recovering full or part-cost via charging
- Choosing to decommission/stop doing things
- Managing demand through the use of information, advice and guidance to prompt behaviour change
- Using mutuals, co-operatives, social enterprises
- Being open to innovation

Our commissioning model



The stages

Stage 1 – Analyse

The 'analyse' stage of the commissioning cycle is used to ensure the right outcome is being commissioned. It involves taking a step back and asking what we are commissioning, what problem we are trying to solve, what gaps need filling and what future demand we are trying to meet. In answering these questions we will work together to shape thinking and facilitate the conversations that need to happen to make sure commissioners feel confident that they have understood how to make a difference to our priority outcomes.

The most important thing at this stage is to be creative. We must think innovatively, move away from the status quo and constructively challenge in order to understand how outcomes can be genuinely improved. We also need to listen to everyone, not just existing service users and those who shout loudest. This is not just a dialogue, think co-design and community led solutions.

Asking questions should result in some follow-up work and information gathering. Here we should test assumptions and ask further questions before focussing on the issues which will have the most positive impact on outcomes.

Evidence is key at the analyse stage. Our Customer Insight Team provides a wealth of information on the people and places of West Sussex and will work with commissioners to provide evidence-based recommendations on the needs of their communities. We will also use a range of sources, including community engagement, surveys, consultations, customer relationship management data (CRM) and analysis of social trends. Commissioning leads, council officers and Members will also provide a key link into this process by engaging communities and identifying local issues and understanding how these activities will relate to local priorities.

Insight will also enable us to test the relevance of our proposed outcome and make sure it resonates with the stakeholders, partners and residents. At this point we should also investigate delivery models through working with different suppliers, new and existing operators as well as the full range of public sector partners in West Sussex.

We would also look to encourage commissioners to embrace the opportunity to co-create potential solutions with communities at this stage. Colleagues will be on hand to support community engagement initiatives, ideas for co-production and to help commissioners get the most out of the insight we have available on our communities.

Stage 2 – Plan

By now there should be a clear sense of the scope of the commissioning plan and the questions that need to be addressed through the process. There will also be a clear sense of which outcomes we are working towards achieving and how this will support our commissioning principles.

This stage involves commissioners working with senior managers and directors to ensure that our commissioning plans complement each other and combine to achieve our vision. Here we can apply a consideration of our commissioning levers and look for opportunities to influence partners and add value. Resources are scarce so we need to define the outcomes we are seeking to achieve and decide how this fits with other competing priorities. The agreed outcomes and priorities must directly answer the question, reflect the insight and be deliverable within the available resources. Continuous engagement and dialogue should be used to test and refine.

Having defined the outcome we need to understand what is required to achieve it. We will need to continue to find or create ways to engage and involve key stakeholders to co-produce radical solutions. Working within the resources available, options could involve supporting community led delivery, creating, developing and influencing markets or redesigning to achieve the best balance of cost, health, social economic and environmental benefits.

This approach could mean that an existing service is decommissioned as it no longer meets the priorities, or where a provider has underperformed. Undertaking an Impact Assessment at this stage will help ensure this is done as sensitively as possible and minimise any negative impact on existing users of the local community. In addition, activity at this stage should take account of:

- The commissioning intentions of other organisations, including national bodies e.g. NHS Commissioning Board, Highways Agency etc.
- The distinctiveness of groups or local areas and the evidence base
- The policy context of your work and the need to future proof the final solution through including scope for innovation and flexibility

Stage 3 – Do/Implement

Having now developed the commissioning plan, this stage will need to take account of where we are now and what activity is needed to achieve detailed outcomes. This could involve short term actions, as well as medium to long term plans such as developing the market. Remember, commissioning is much wider than a single organisation and there will typically be a 'mixed economy' involved in the delivery of outcomes and ensuring that the delivery mechanism supports the local community and economy.

At this stage, if we are purchasing a service then the type and length of contract will need to be decided alongside service specifications. This will need to take into account quality and value for money as well as broader issues such as the impact on the local economy (using local labour, apprentices for example).

More work is currently being undertaken to establish how we embed social value into our commissioning approach. Please contact our in-house procurement team if you are undertaking any procurement. We also need to be fair and transparent in our approach to encourage a range of sectors to become involved in our commissioning process.

Stage 4 – Run/Review

Effective performance management, appropriate to the commissioning plan, is essential at this stage in order to ensure that outcomes are being improved as a result of our commissioning. Customer experience and feedback should be a key part of these performance measures.

Working with colleagues from across the organisation commissioners should think carefully about how to develop meaningful measures of success that will allow us to use leading indicators to monitor progress, as well as assessing whether outcomes have been achieved. Performance and evaluation measures will have been developed and agreed at the point of commissioning, ideally in conjunction with providers and users to make sure we are measuring what matters.

At this stage it is also appropriate to consider how we will measure the return on our investment, both qualitative and quantitative. We will also need to ensure that we take note of any lessons learnt and use them in all future commissioning.

Through effective monitoring, commissioners will be able to effectively decide if activities are meeting the outcome, review the process and, if appropriate, make recommendations which will lead to improved outcomes.

Becoming a commissioning organisation

Our ambition is to be an excellent commissioning organisation. So how will we know when we have got there?

In an excellent commissioning organisation:

- Every decision – strategic, commissioning and delivery – is insight based.
- We are outcomes driven – confident about what is important to residents and communities and that our resources are focused on achieving those outcomes.
- We deliver efficient and effective services that make the best use of resources.
- We recognise the interdependencies between residents, communities, organisations and services.
- Democracy is embedded in everything we do and the voices of residents and communities are sought and listened to.
- We understand our strategic and community leadership role and the resources and assets available through working with partners, providers and communities.
- Our employees understand what we are trying to achieve and their role in this and feel that their contribution is valued and recognised.
- Our Members and communities understand what we are trying to achieve and their role in this and feel that their contribution is valued and recognised

Conclusion

This strategy sets out our approach to commissioning the best outcomes for our residents and communities whilst maximising the use of all available resources.

The importance of adopting this approach is reflected locally and nationally. In West Sussex, our commitment is reflected in the operating model we have adopted, how we are structured and the investment being made into embedding the principles outlined in this strategy throughout the organisation.

Commissioning provides a route to deliver the radical change needed. Success is dependent on colleagues at all levels believing that a better understanding of residents, communities and localities will ensure the right support and services are commissioned to improve lives.

Appendix 1

Glossary of Terms

Commissioner

Title used to describe the person or group who is accountable for public service outcomes.

Commissioning

Commissioning in West Sussex County Council is achieving positive outcomes through the best use of resources, to meet the needs of residents, communities and services users in West Sussex.

Co-design

The County Council working with our residents and communities and using combined knowledge and expertise to design services and inform commissioning plans.

Co-production

Delivering public services in an equal and reciprocal relationship between professionals, people using services, their families and their neighbours. Where activities are co-produced in this way, both services and neighbourhoods become far more effective agents of change.

Decommissioning

Decommissioning is stopping provision of a service or a significant part of a service in order to bring about an improvement.

Insight

The sourcing and collating of evidence of residents, service user and stakeholder needs, wants aspirations and experience to provide intelligence to inform commissioning.

Mutuals

A public service mutual is an organisation which has left the public sector but continues to deliver public services. Mutuals are organisations in which employee control plays a significant role in their operation. There are many forms of mutual from major employee-owned businesses like John Lewis to smaller co-operatives and social enterprises.

Outcomes

The result of our changes on residents, communities and wider society. Outcomes are what we want to achieve as a result of our actions.

Procurement

Process of acquiring goods, works or services from (usually) external providers or suppliers, and managing these through to the end of the contract.

Social Enterprise

A social enterprise is a business that trades for a social and/or environmental purpose. It will know what difference it is trying to make, who it aims to help, and how it plans to do it. It will bring in most or all of its income through the selling of goods or services. There will be clear rules about what it does with its profits.

Vision

An aspirational description of what an organisation would like to achieve or accomplish in the mid or long term future. It is intended to serve as a guide for choosing current courses of action. It should have a compelling aspect that serves to inspire, motivate and engage people.

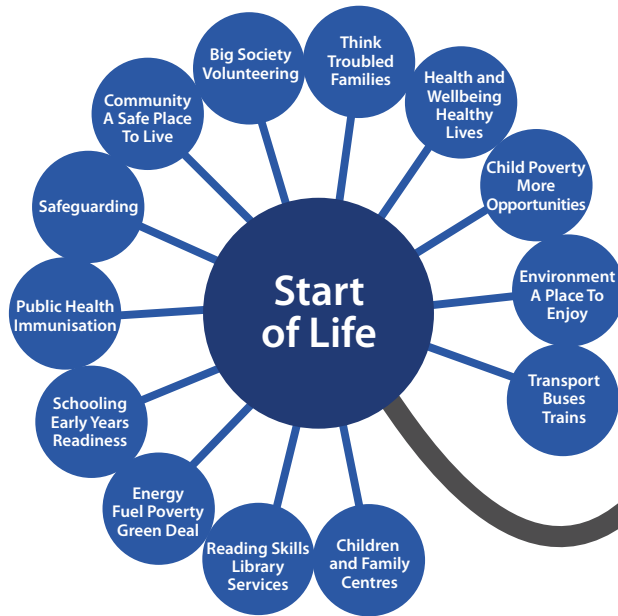
Children who are confident, secure and happy are ready for school

Children and young people must be healthy to get the best start in life

Children who have resources, skills and ambition realise their potential

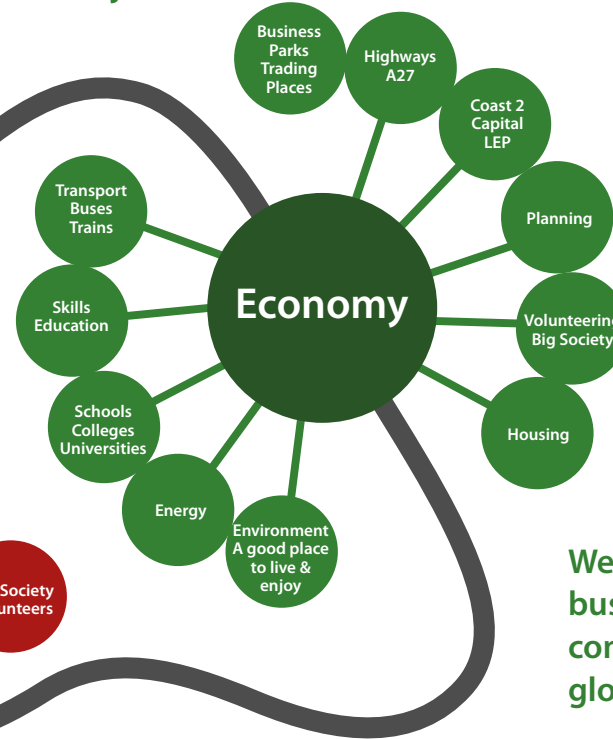
People who are capable, healthy, resilient and prepared are secure in later life

People who make informed choices and exercise control over their health and social wellbeing are able to maintain their independence for longer



A vibrant business community offers more opportunities in higher value jobs

An appropriately skilled flexible workforce supports a diverse economy



Well-connected businesses compete in the global economy

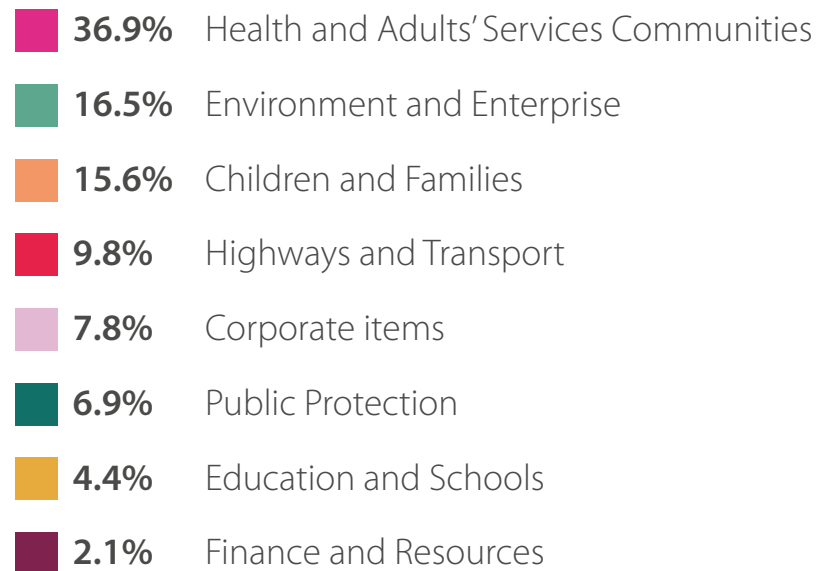


Appendix 2

Future West Sussex Diagram

Appendix 3

West Sussex Spending Diagram 2013/14



The 2013 Five Billion Pound-a-gram | West Sussex

Appendix 4

Public Sector Spend in West Sussex



■ Department for Work and Pensions
 ■ West Sussex County Council
 ■ NHS CCGs in West Sussex
 ■ District Councils of West Sussex
 ■ Sussex Police Authority
 ■ Education Funding Agency



County Hall,
West St,
Chichester,
West Sussex
PO19 1RG

Tel: 01243 777100

www.westsussex.gov.uk

