

ESCC update to Brightling Parish Council on 12th July 2023

Increase to Highways budget

EXTRA investment of £15.7m this year, to help improve the condition of East Sussex's roads and protect them for years ahead was agreed last week at Cabinet.

The recommendation comes after cabinet members asked at the start of the year for detailed modelling of how extra investment could be most effective and, if agreed, would bring the council's spending on highways this year to almost £34m.

Cabinet's request followed one of the wettest winters in recent years, an example of how more extreme weather is causing roads across England to deteriorate faster.

At their meeting on Tuesday June 27th cabinet members were asked to agree the additional spending of £5.6 million from reserves to pay for extra patching and drainage work, and to increase the capital programme by £5.1 million, funded through borrowing.

Cabinet was also asked to agree a further £5 million for the capital programme, (subject to ratification by a full meeting of the council in July) to help with early improvements to make the road network more resilient.

The report to cabinet suggests the capital programme could be increased by £5.1m each year for the next 10 years and, on top of that, by an extra £5m in 2023-24 and 2024-25. That combined investment would move 40 more miles of roads into good condition and significantly reduce the proportion of roads in East Sussex needing repair.

Cabinet approved the additional investment for 2023/24 and decisions on future investment will be made during the council's normal budget setting process, starting in the autumn.

Extra investment has already been made in the county's highways after this was set as an area of priority. In 2022-23 an additional £8.9m was allocated, increasing the capital programme by £3.1m for 10 years and £5.8m which boosted the council's patching programme. This led to an additional 730 sections of the road network being treated, funded 280 additional works to pavements, and repaired and maintained road markings, road signs and signposts across the county.

East Sussex County Council continues to lobby central Government for better and longer-term funding for road maintenance.

Million-pound boost for active travel

Walking, wheeling, and cycling schemes in East Sussex have been given a £1.22 million funding boost from national government. East Sussex County Council successfully applied for England's Active Travel Fund 4 to support schemes that encourage people to become more active and help reduce carbon emissions.

The capital funding is part of a £200 million national Active Travel Fund, which will help develop initiatives to make it safer and easier for children to walk, wheel or cycle to school.

Part of the funding will be used to develop the county's School Street's programme to identify measures to support walking, wheeling and cycling in the school neighbourhood. The money will also support previously secured funding for a second phase of improvements for pedestrians in Eastbourne town centre.

More information about this story can be found [here](#).

Children's Services

The Council has obtained £8m in funding to provide a complete rebuild of the Heathfield Youth Centre and a full refurbishment of the Peacehaven Youth Centre. The funding is time limited and requires the project to be completed by March 2025. The funding includes £400,000 in revenue to ensure continuity during the build phase.