



Annual Report

2021–2022



Foreword

The past year has been one of real progress for West Sussex County Council as we continued on our improvement journey while delivering vital services for our communities.

This progress was recognised in a government decision that our Children's Services remain with the County Council and following a successful inspection of our Fire & Rescue Service.

At the same time, we continued to meet the challenges of Covid-19: remaining at the heart of the local Public Health response; supporting vulnerable households through our Community Hub; and helping small businesses recover, to highlight a few examples.

The ongoing pandemic does, however, continue to present us with significant operational challenges that have impacted on some areas of performance. Together with developments such as the conflict in Ukraine and the rising cost of living, we are seeing a growing need for the services we commission and provide.

To support our communities, we will continue to adapt to meet these challenges while remaining focused on our four core priorities, underpinned by the cross-cutting theme of tackling climate change:

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

The priorities are outlined in [Our Council Plan 2021 to 2025](#), which establishes the key performance indicators against which our progress is measured.

While challenges remain, there are also ambitious opportunities for further growth and collaboration with partners, not least those afforded to us by our Economy Plan and Growth Deals, and the innovations being developed for greener, more sustainable travel and energy use across the county.

We still have a way to go on our improvement journey, which is why we remain committed to continually raising performance and enhancing the services we provide to our residents and communities, delivering them as effectively and as efficiently as possible.

As Leader of the County Council, I would like to extend my thanks to my fellow councillors, to our partner organisations, and to our staff, whose dedication and commitment to putting our communities first remains the foundation on which we will continue to improve and deliver.



Paul Marshall

Leader of West Sussex County Council

Keeping people safe from vulnerable situations

When people need extra help, we are there to provide timely support, especially to the most vulnerable.

Our Children and Young People's Services have made significant improvements since an 'inadequate' Ofsted rating in 2019. This was recognised when the government decided this year that the service would not be moved to a Trust, and instead remain with the County Council. A Family Safeguarding model was introduced to focus on keeping families together and helping children stay safe at home.

Despite unprecedented demand in Adults' Services, we met targets for the percentage of initial contacts that progress to a social care assessment and a resulting support plan. Diverting capacity to prioritise support for people discharged from hospital impacted some measures. A team to manage reviews for older people was established; with similar approaches developed for lifelong and mental health services, we expect improvements.

We helped protect communities from Covid-19, working with partners to embed infection control measures and drive uptake of the vaccine and testing, especially among communities most affected.

Our Community Hub supported thousands of vulnerable residents. Together with partners, we used the Household Support Fund to help more than 14,000 people with their food, energy and water bills in the first three months of 2022 alone.

We provided support to refugees from around the world under government schemes, including from Afghanistan, Syria and Ukraine.

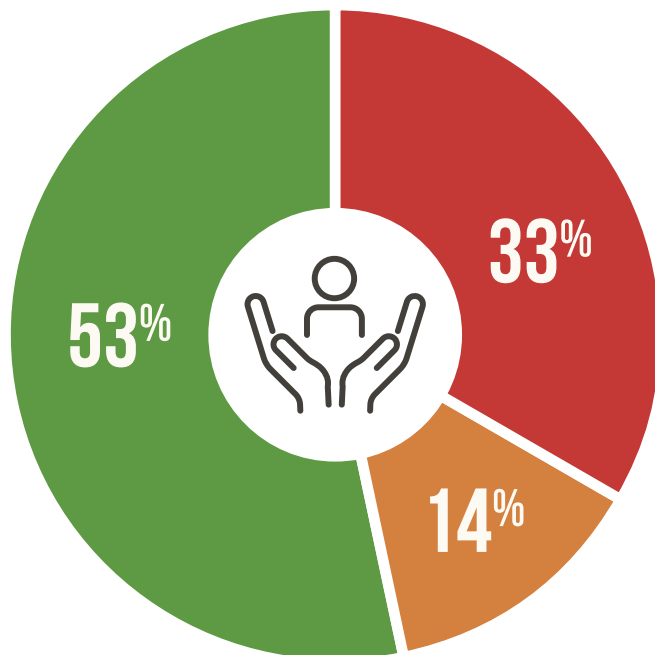
As a Fire & Rescue Service, we took every opportunity to conduct 'safe and well' visits to improve fire safety at home. Where the pandemic meant we couldn't always conduct a full visit, we attended homes to provide smoke detection equipment and advice.

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.

12,394

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



867

children and young people were in our care (31 March 2022)



3,355

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



75%



of residents had received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccination by 31 March 2022

76,477

people supported by the Community Hub during the Covid-19 pandemic

100%



of suspected scam victims referred to us were offered support from Trading Standards

A sustainable and prosperous economy

A sustainable and prosperous economy is key to the future wellbeing of the county, especially as we recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

We played our part this year by ensuring that thousands of businesses were supported to start, recover or grow, and that conditions are right for enterprise and innovation, including in green energy.

Our Economy Plan is underpinned by Growth Deals with districts and boroughs. These support infrastructure and town centre improvement projects. In Mid Sussex and Worthing projects were reaching completion. In Crawley, we part funded the £60m deal to promote business investment and employment opportunities. In Littlehampton we approved £1.25m to enhance the town centre and develop sustainable transport.

On our highways, a multi-million-pound investment programme funded hundreds of schemes that improved carriageways, pavements, bridges, public rights of way, and general road safety across the county, alongside initiatives to tackle flood issues.

Weather events and increased demand affected road maintenance targets. We aim to see improvements as a result of sustained investment and the introduction of new proactive approaches to monitoring, resourcing and undertaking repairs.

We consulted widely on The West Sussex Transport Plan, which will guide future investments in the network. It focuses on sustainable travel, access to education, employment and services, and decarbonising the transport system.

Gigabit connectivity across the county expanded to reach more than half of premises, up from 8.8% last year. We continued working with government and commercial partners to accelerate growth in digital infrastructure to ensure we achieve our target of 85% connectivity by 2025.

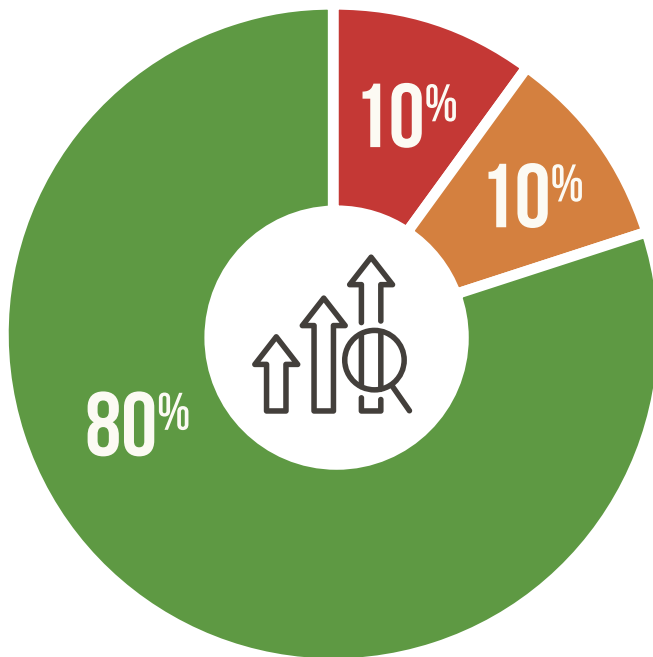
A sustainable and prosperous economy

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2,385 

enterprises supported to start, revive, innovate and grow

50.3% 

of premises with gigabit connectivity





£32M

total invested in highways
and transport

650

road improvement
schemes delivered



More than

23,000

potholes repaired on
West Sussex highways



Helping people and communities fulfil their potential

It has never been more important to help communities fulfil their potential, feel safe and connected, and benefit from a prosperous, sustainable economy to live independent, healthy lives.

In our schools, Ofsted inspections resumed in September, and we exceeded our target for the proportion of students attending good or outstanding schools.

Though higher than the national figure, the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training, or their status unknown, fell to 5.9%, with careers advisors helping to build confidence and skills.

Our libraries supported literacy and learning and helped prevent isolation through the pandemic. More and more people accessed e-books and other online library services, and we started encouraging visitors to return in-person.

We published 'The life you want to lead,' our strategy for delivering adult social care. It focuses on building relationships, empowering people to lead on decisions about their lives,

supporting them to live independently in their own homes, addressing gaps, and inclusion and tackling inequalities.

We promoted the benefits of quitting smoking and the support available and helped increase uptake of the free flu vaccination among over 65s and at-risk groups.

Continued improvements within the Fire & Rescue Service raised emergency response standards to within target in the last quarter. The Community Risk Management plan, which is key to preventing fires and community safety, was published and is guiding operations.

Projects are ongoing and in the pipeline to improve road safety and reduce the number of collisions resulting in a death or serious injury. These include a Major Road Network survey and analysing routes with clusters and high collision rates.

Helping people and communities fulfil their potential

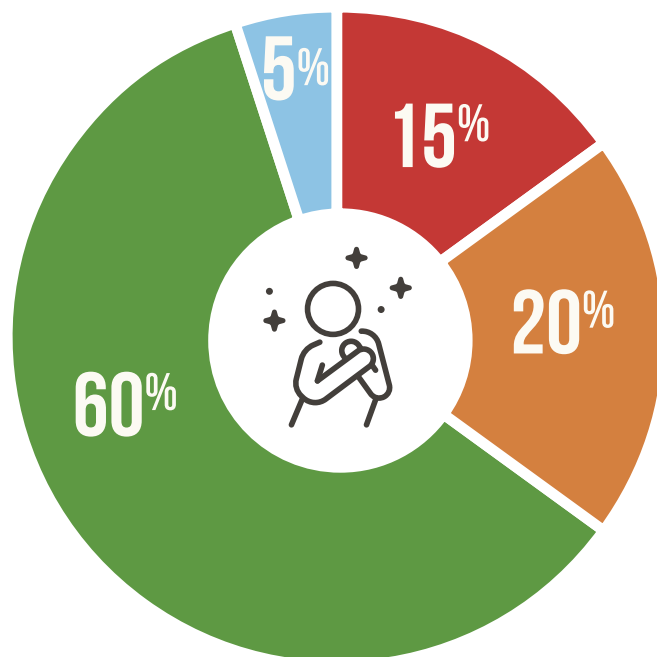
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BLUE those where data was unavailable at the time.



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88.8%

of schools rated either Good or Outstanding by Ofsted and were attended by 89.3% of pupils and students.

100%



of 19,566 children who applied were offered a school place in September

5.81M

uses of our libraries' digital and virtual services by residents



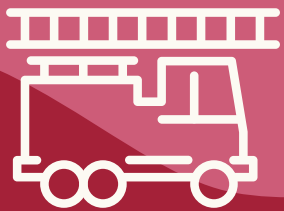
85%

uptake of flu vaccine in
65s or at-risk groups



93.6%

of first appliances met
emergency response
standards in critical fires



331

wholetime
firefighters

286

on call (retained)
firefighters

120

fire service
support staff



Making the best use of resources

As the need for our services rises, we are finding more efficient ways of working in line with our priorities and our commitment to putting communities first.

This means working together as one council, supporting our people to get the best from them, maximising our income and assets, and working in partnership to achieve best value for money.

We undertake a staff survey several times a year and the majority of our staff surveyed said they felt treated with dignity and respect and part of a supportive team. Leaders and managers remained focused on providing development opportunities, working with staff networks and Unison to embed equality and inclusion. As we adapted to Covid-19, our Smarter Working programme began shaping practices that enable our people to work in the location that's most effective for the requirements of their job.

We exceeded our target to reduce the size of our operational estate, with the aims of reducing our carbon footprint and delivering services more effectively to people who need them the most. This

included the Early Help service, which was redesigned to reach our most vulnerable children, young people and families.

A continued focus on enabling people to self-serve meant we surpassed our target for the proportion of services available online. Being able to apply, ask, book and pay online empowers our customers to access support and information when they need it.

A trial booking scheme to reduce queues and better manage demand at six of our Recycling Centres was made permanent. Same-day booking was trialled in Worthing and later went live across all six sites.

We were positioned fourth highest relative to our 15 most similar authorities for the budgeted unit cost of our services in 2020–21. Our forecasting predicts an improvement to eighth for 2021–22.

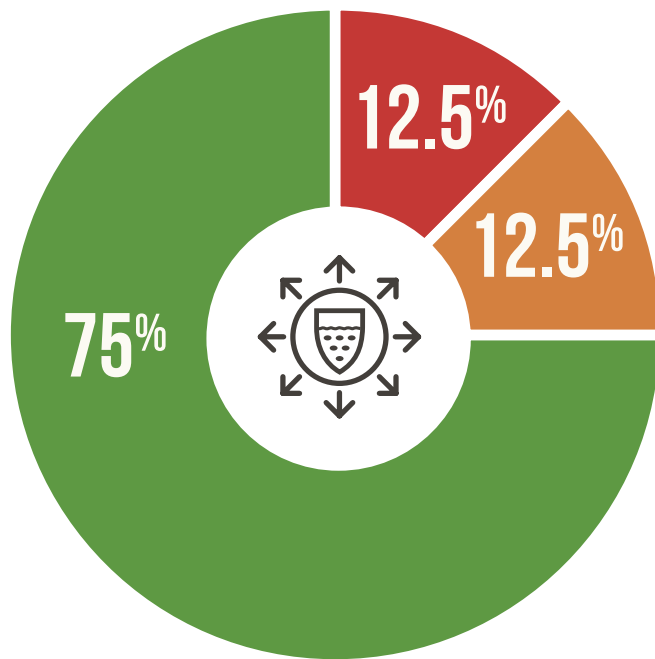
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81.2%

of staff surveyed felt part of a supportive team



89.2%



of staff surveyed felt treated with dignity and respect by work colleagues

161,625M²



of operational property, a reduction of 11% from the previous year

64%



of services available online

Climate change

The climate change challenge we face cannot be underestimated, which is why it underpins everything we do.

The actions we are taking now to develop more sustainable ways to live and work will benefit the environment and communities in our county for generations to come.

Carbon emissions from the County Council's operational activities were down 10% from our baseline of 2019/20. Heating our schools generated the greatest emissions as students and teachers returned to classrooms following the easing of restrictions.

We are working hard to further reduce emissions and achieve our pledge of being a net zero carbon organisation by 2030. Our Energy Strategy will support these efforts through projects that develop sustainable energies and reduce emissions within the council and across West Sussex.

With partners, we announced plans to install thousands of electric vehicle chargepoints across the county over the next decade. It is the largest installation of its kind and will help the transition to electric vehicles.

We promoted Active Travel schemes, encouraging parents and carers in particular to look at alternatives to the school run, such as cycling and walking.

Similar initiatives that received our support included solar farms, the launch of our first 'Pollinator Highway' in Lancing, and a project with the South Downs National Park Authority to look at turning other grass verges into similar havens for insects and wildflowers.

We responded to consultations about projects with an environmental impact. These included the A27 Arundel bypass, Biodiversity Net Gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscapes, a Nature Recovery Green paper, and proposed targets for waste, water, air quality and biodiversity.

30,400

equivalent tonnes of CO₂
emissions produced by County
Council activities – a reduction
of 10% from 2019/20

16.3KM

of new cycleways created
through the year

£20M



investment approved to help us tackle
climate change over the next five years

£270,000+

of Government funding secured to
develop cycling and walking schemes

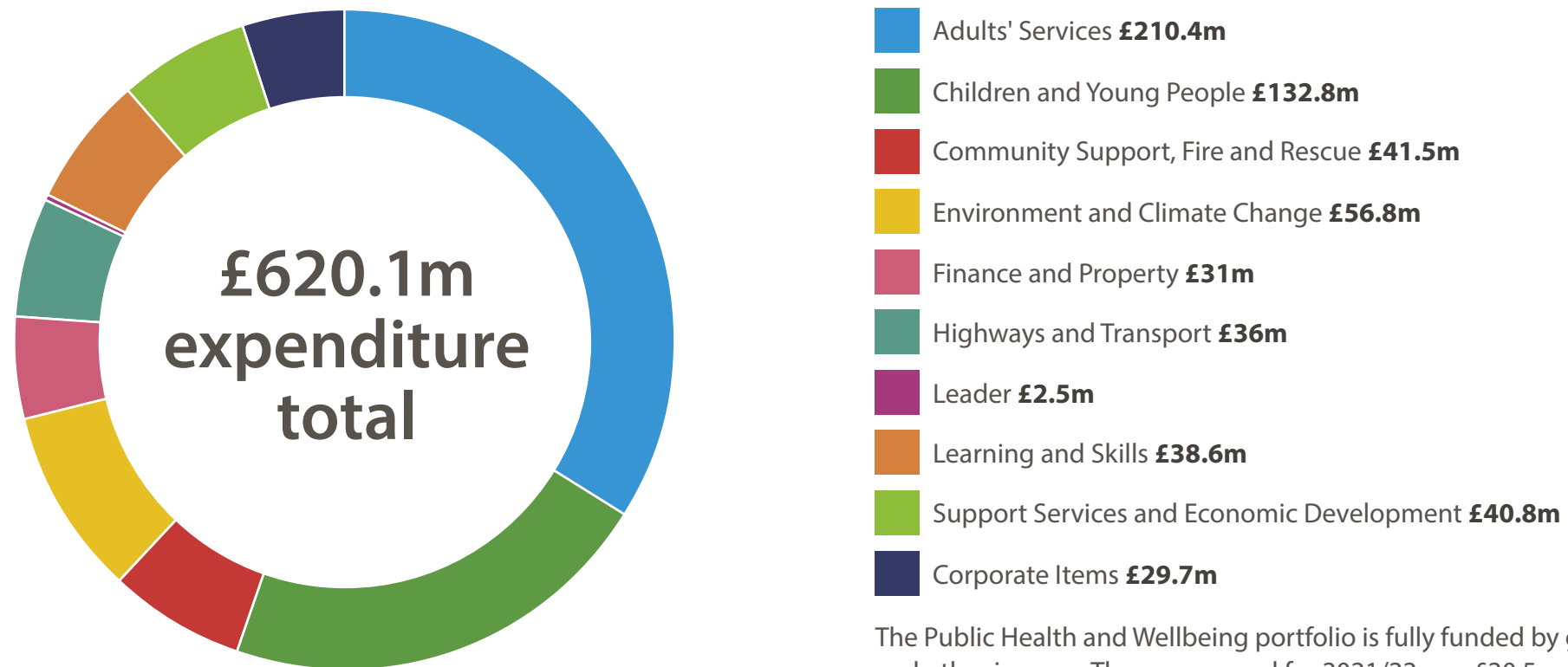
53.7%



of all household waste recycled,
re-used or composted

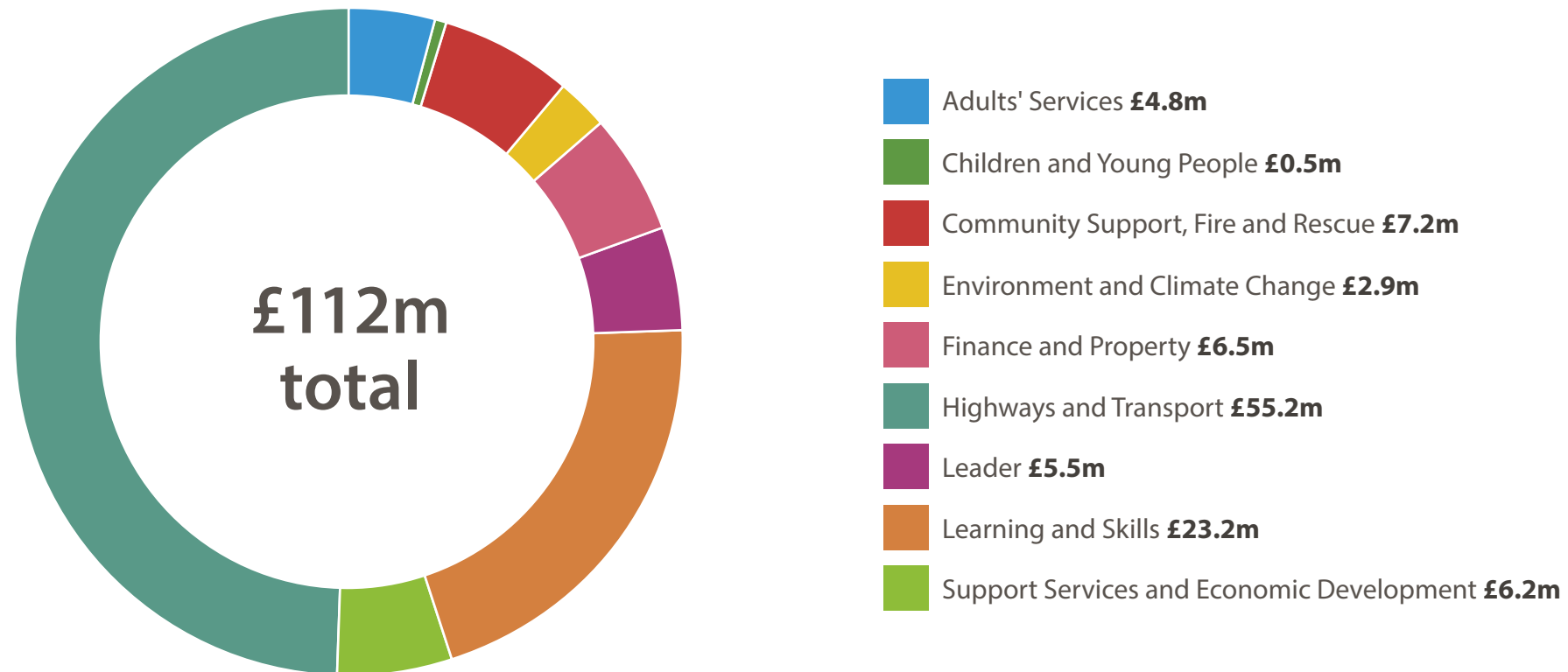
Our expenditure for the year 2021 to 2022

How we spent your money



The Public Health and Wellbeing portfolio is fully funded by grants and other income. The gross spend for 2021/22 was £20.5m

Our capital expenditure for the year 2021–2022



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') has ten 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



Nigel Jupp
Cabinet Member for
Learning and Skills



Bob Lanzer
Cabinet Member
for Public Health
and Wellbeing



Jacquie Russell
Cabinet Member for
Children & Young
People and Lead
Member for Children



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



Steve Waight
Cabinet Member for
Support Services
and Economic
Development

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