

# Hastings and St Leonards Local Strategic Partnership

Minutes 24 April 2017

**Present:**

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## **Statutory Sector**

Cllr Peter Chowney	Hastings Borough Council
Cllr Nigel Sinden	Hastings Borough Council
Steve Curry	Sussex Police
Julie Gilbert-King	EFRS
Simon Hubbard	Hastings Borough Council
Mike Thompson	Amicus Horizon
Richard Watson	Hastings and Rother CCG
John Williams	Sea Change Sussex
Wayne Edmunds	Department of Work and Pensions

## **Community & Voluntary Sectors**

Marie Casey	Hastings Community Network
Steve Manwaring	Hastings Community Network
Catherine Orbach	Hastings Community Network
Naomi Ridley	Hastings Community Network
Annie Whelan	Hastings Community Network
Theresa Andrews	Hastings Community Network
Jacqui Everard	Hastings Community Network
James Ellis	Hastings Community Network

## **Business Sector**

Clive Galbraith

Chamber of Commerce

Andrew Knight

Chamber of Commerce

## **In Attendance:**

Shabana Bayjou	Hastings Borough Council
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## **Apologies for absence were received from:**

Cllr Rob Lee

Hastings Borough Council

Clive Cooke

SCCH

Cllr Nick Bennett

East Sussex County Council

Annie Whelan

Hastings Community Network

Paul Frost

University of Brighton

Jane Feather

<p><b><u>17</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING (CHAIR)</u></b></p> <p>We are still awaiting a reply from the University          Young People's health – Theresa will speak to Emile regarding engaging young people in schools.          High Energy Drinks – letter from Amber Rudd MP has been circulated to everyone</p>	
<p><b><u>18</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>DISTRICT COMMANDER - CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR HASTINGS, CHIEF INSPECTOR STEVE CURRY (10 MINS PLUS 10MINS DISCUSSION)</u></b></p> <p>District commander, Steve Curry, reported on the key challenges and force priorities. The financial challenges facing the force at the moment are challenging and a saving of £42m needs to be found.          With regard to the Local Policing Programme, there are different strands to this including response teams, investigation teams and Prevent strand.          He will be attending a board meeting tomorrow to obtain key decisions prior to implementation of the programme but it will be challenging.          At present there is a severe threat level in place and the key aim is to keep the community safe. There are key issues that they are focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> <li>• identifying and protecting vulnerable people</li> <li>• Preventing and responding to harm</li> <li>• Catching criminals</li> <li>• Valuing and making the best use of resources</li> <li>• Targeting enforcement of heroin and crack cocaine use</li> <li>• Identifying exploitation in the community including identifying people living in sub-standard accommodation and working below the minimum wage – car washes have already been targeted in this respect.</li> <li>• Anti-social behaviour – This is a key priority for the future and St Leonards is being targeted</li> </ul> <p>Steve Manwaring invited Steve Curry for a discussion on community safety which Steve accepted.          Marie – People in crisis/mental health is a massive issue and currently a priority and they are currently working along with others including mental health nurses to look at this. Cannabis factories are a concern with regard to the mental health of the community in the future.          The business community have expressed concerns about the area and are moving out due to the negative impact that they are having on the local community and their business.</p>	
<p><b><u>19</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>UNIVERSAL CREDIT ROLL OUT OF FULL SERVICE AND THE BENEFIT CAP - WAYNE EDMUNDS, COUNTY PARTNERSHIP MANAGER, DWP (15 MINS)</u></b></p> <p>Wayne Edmunds, County Partnership Manager at the DWP gave a presentation on Universal Credit.          East Sussex is one of the first to roll out the full digital service. This is a</p>	

major change in the way the DWP interacts with different claimants and services and it brings together various benefits. The full service is currently only available for new claimants. Legacy benefits and Universal Credit are now running parallel. This simplifies the system and removes the number of hours that someone can work and will depend on income they are receiving. This is a different way of delivering the service. People must make their claim digitally and it is now easier to make an initial claim and then people must attend an interview at the job centre to discuss the way forward. Each claimant has an account and will have access to a service centre at the start of the claim and can interact with their coach. They will be paid monthly in arrears but if necessary they can have advance payments. Payment can be between 5-6 weeks after making their initial claim.

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**RESPONSE FROM ADVICE AGENCIES - TERESA ANDREWS, HARC**

Teresa Andrews (HARC) responded as someone who goes out to train different agencies on benefits etc and runs the Welfare Benefits hotline. Although the service went live in December some changes will only take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April and therefore feedback is limited. They have been working with officers from Hastings Borough Council to assist in the transition, including 300 families that have been affected by the benefits cap. A lot of people are frightened by it and need reassurance. There are two major concerns, one being that sickness benefit is being included in universal credit. People are not finding it easy and many do not have internet access and go along to make a claim only to find that additional information is required so they have to return home and make another appointment. It is also having an impact on the library service as this is creating more work for them with people coming into use their computers and many staff do not have the relevant training to assist people so this is something that needs to be addressed. There is also the concern that permitted work is not now in place.

With regard to employment support allowance, under the old system there would be an assessment/medical then a decision would be made. Under the new system, if someone is in a group that are not well but are well enough to work, it can be six months before they are given a medical. During this time they will be forced to work or to be seen to be seeking work while they await their medical and a decision is made which is proving to be very difficult for people.

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**IMPACT OF WELFARE REFORM AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT - JOINT PRESENTATION (15 MINS)**

Amicus Horizon gave a presentation on the Impact of Welfare Reform and Universal Credit. There was a concern that the benefit cap was causing problems with people not having enough money to pay their rent. Concerns were also raised about literacy needs/inaccurate medicals/digital access and the number of evictions that may occur as a result of changing over systems and they wanted to know what support systems would be put in place for people. Wayne Edmunds said that he was happy to meet with agencies to discuss their concerns. It was also confirmed that the DWP is funding a Benefit Cap Co-ordinator and that both digital and personal budget support was available via Hastings Borough Council as well as the DWP giving

	<p>massive support to people to get them back into work. Issues had arisen with people asking for help that are not able and fit enough to work, in particular people with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and therefore HARC confirmed that they now have a dedicated person to help MS sufferers with appeals, etc.</p> <p>Questions were raised about where people should go when Amicus are unable to house people due to non-payment of rent following the implementation of the new system and if there were enough jobs around in Hastings for people who need to return to work. Steve Manwaring said that he was happy to arrange a meeting to discuss this with the various agencies.</p>	
<p><b><u>22</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING - FEEDBACK FROM WORKSHOP 15/03/2017 JOHN WITTINGTON (INSERT TITLE) AND ANDREW PALMER, HEAD OF HOUSING (VERBAL 10 MINS)</u></b></p> <p>John Whittington gave a talk on homelessness prevention within the area. The welfare reforms had put a strain on social housing and there was also a shortage of affordable rental homes. There has been a 400% increase in people reporting for housing and a huge increase in the amount of B&amp;B accommodation that is being provided with problems for people moving on to social housing. In 2011 there were 3 homeless people in the area and that number has now risen to 26.</p> <p>There are now 50 people from 25 organisations who are getting together to help the street community including the homeless and street drinkers. A list will be drawn up of what everyone is doing and their activities will then be co-ordinated.</p>	
<p><b><u>23</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>REGENERATION UPDATE</u></b></p> <p>The Report was noted.</p>	
<p><b><u>24</u></b></p>	<p><b><u>NEXT MEETING DATE - MONDAY, 17TH JULY 2017</u></b></p>	