

IN ATTENDANCE

ESSP Members present:

Mark Andrews
Cllr Bill Bentley
Olivia Carroll
Carole Dixon
Cllr David Elkin
Cllr Kim Forward
Jane Hartnell
Steve Manwaring (Chair)
Cllr Carl Maynard
Petrina Mayson
Graham Peters
Nicola Walker

East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
East Sussex County Council
Sussex Police
Speak Up
East Sussex County Council
Hastings Borough Council
Hastings Borough Council
Speak Up Representative
Rother District Council
Action in Rural Sussex
South East Local Enterprise Partnership
Sussex Police and Crime Commission

Also in attendance (official observers):

Gill Cameron-Waller
Sarah Feather
Jo Harper
Becky Shaw
Alison Spring
Andrew Palmer (speaker)
Jon Wheeler (speaker)

Wealden District Council
East Sussex County Council
Eastbourne and Lewes Councils
East Sussex County Council
Rother District Council
Hastings Borough Council
East Sussex County Council

Apologies for absence:

Cllr Keith Glazier
Cllr Elayne Merry
Michael Turner
Andrea Saunders
Ashley Scarff
Cllr Bob Standley
Keith Stevens
Dawn Whittaker

East Sussex County Council
Lewes District Council
Environment Agency
Probation Service
East Sussex CCGs
Wealden District Council
Sussex Associations of Local Councils
East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

NOTES

1) Welcome, introductions and Apologies

Steve Manwaring welcomed ESSP members, delegates, observers, guests and speakers to the meeting and apologies were given.

2) Urgent items of business

There were no urgent items of business.

3) Notes of the meeting held on 15 January 2019 and Matters Arising

The minutes were agreed as an accurate record, with a minor amendment, and actions from the meeting were complete.

4) Nominations for Chairperson and proposal to review the ESSP

Steve explained, in Cllr Glazier's absence, that the position of Chair is now open to everyone. Partners were invited to make nominations and Cllr Glazier, Becky and Steve are happy to talk to anyone if they have any questions about the position. Steve reminded the group that any nominations can be sent to essp@eastsussex.gov.uk by Friday 3rd May 2019. The new Chair will take up the post after this year's Assembly.

ACTION: Partners are invited to make nominations for the ESSP chair by Friday 3rd May.

5) Housing update – Andrew Palmer Chair of the East Sussex Housing Officers Group

Steve introduced Andrew Palmer to provide the update on housing across East Sussex. Andrew told the group that there have been a number of significant legislative and strategic developments nationally which continue to have an impact on local approaches to housing and homelessness. Andrew explained that the Homelessness Reduction Act presents both challenges and opportunities. Local authorities are required to work with people at risk of homelessness at an earlier stage and provide a more intensive level of support to each applicant. The steps the council and the individual will take to address their housing situation are set out in a Personalised Housing Plan (PHP), which must be reviewed regularly. So far, 1,323 PHPs have been issued across the county.

The Act also introduced a new Duty to Refer people at risk of homelessness to their housing authority for certain public bodies (including adult social care, prisons and the DWP), to ensure assistance was given at an earlier stage.

Andrew said that the number of homeless households in East Sussex has increased by 122% over the past 5 years and this is compared to a national increase of 9%. The number of rough sleepers across the county has increased by 208%, compared to a 70% rise nationally. Andrew highlighted that people are requiring temporary accommodation for longer and one family is costing a local authority £50k a year to temporarily house and it is unlikely that an alternative that meets the family's needs will be found for the next five years. Hastings now has the highest rate of rough sleeping outside of London, it used to be Brighton but their rough sleeping numbers have been reducing. Andrew said that reasons for homelessness and rough sleeping have not changed but more people are requiring support than previously and indicated this was most likely down to welfare changes.

Andrew pointed out that the opportunity to refresh and enhance existing multi-agency approaches to tackling homelessness was a strength. Local housing authorities are trying to address demand by setting up housing companies to address the issue of housing supply and there have been some successful partnership bids for money. However, the grants and bid funding does not solve the problem as these funding streams are only for short periods of time. Carol Dixon, Speak Up, agreed that the partnership approach had delivered some of the best solutions as well as acting as a model for other pieces of work.

Becky Shaw, ESCC, explained that even the County Council feel the impact of homelessness and are supporting families to stay in homes where they would otherwise be considered to have made themselves 'intentionally homeless'.

Petrina Mayson, AiRS and Speak Up, thanked Councils for supporting the Community Land Trusts in identifying sites for building.

Questions were raised about the amount of former military personnel looking for accommodation and being given priority. Andrew was not aware this was a particular issue in East Sussex. Steve asked if more people living independently was becoming an issue and Andrew responded by saying that the disabled Facilities Grant is available to people but it was difficult to keep pace with demand. Steve also raised the issue about the increase in deposits and rent in advance for the private rented sector, and how this was pricing people out of the market. Andrew said that there are lots of good landlords and they were not actively discriminating but given the demand they didn't need to engage with people in receipt of welfare benefits. Andrew explained that East Sussex is piloting a 'guarantee scheme' which includes helping tenants to maintain the tenancy.

Mark Andrews, ESFRS, asked if there were any lessons to be learnt from Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC) on reducing rough sleeping numbers and Andrew explained that on speaking to BHCC there was nothing new that BHCC had tried but potentially the interventions implemented over a number of years were having an impact.

6 Transport update – Jon Wheeler

Steve introduced Jon Wheeler, ESCC, to provide this update. Jon began by providing an update on a range of strategic and local transport projects. Jon emphasised the link between transport and delivering the County Council's key priority, driving sustainable economic growth.

Jon then spoke about the last twelve months of work in the following areas:

- Strategic Roads and Major Road Network – Jon said that the Highways Agency were progressing work with smaller scale improvements for the A27 beginning in 2019/20. Jon said the work was expected to take around 2 years and although the improvements were welcome they did not address the issues between Polegate and Lewes. Jon spoke about a study into a new dual carriage way and a decision on this from the Department for Transport (DfT) could be published this autumn for works from 2020-2025. For the Highways Agency improving the economic connectivity of the A21 was a high priority. The DfT are offering funding between £20m-£50m for major A road projects that could include bypasses, road widening and smart technology. Funding would be available to those that could contribute 15% of the cost of the project.
- Rail – Jon told the Partnership that there would be physical changes at Ashford International into the marsh link. Design work is coming to a conclusion and there is a signalling assessment taking place, final costs and designs are expected in May 2019. Jon explained that the South Eastern Franchise would likely receive a 12 week extension while DfT evaluated proposals. Brighton mainline was undergoing work to improve its resilience and there is remodelling of East Croydon platforms is ongoing and there will be some re-signalling work between Lewes and Newhaven. Jon explained that this would result in more closures but the service would then be more reliable.
- Aviation – Jon explained that Gatwick was looking to increase capacity at the airport by using the emergency runway; a master plan would be published later this year. Funding is in the process of being signed off for a new station concourse. A Government Green Paper is expected on a new aviation strategy to take the UK into 2050 and beyond, with a final White Paper in mid-2019.
- Transport for the South East - Sub National Transport Body – Jon highlighted that Cllr Glazier, ESCC, chaired this Group and the transport strategy would be published by December this year. Jon pointed out there would be a formal consultation period on the strategy.
- Local Transport – Jon highlighted the following areas for work during 2019/20:
 - Infrastructure to unlock jobs and homes
 - Local Transport improvements and pipeline projects

- Regenerating town centres
- Local Cycling and Walking Investment Plan and Active Access for Growth programme

At the end of Jon's presentation Steve asked if the County's infrastructure was ready for electronic vehicles. Jon said that there was a close eye being kept on the demand for electric charging points, however, there was a challenge as to whether the County Council should be a facilitator or a provider. Given that this new technology was changing at pace it was best to 'wait and see' what developed so that the best technology could be supported.

7 Round table discussion

7a Spring Budget

Steve invited Becky to begin this discussion; Becky said that the Chancellor had confirmed that the government will hold a Spending Review which will conclude alongside the Budget. It will cover areas including social care, local government, schools, police, defence, and the environment. This will set departmental budgets, including 3 year budgets for resource spending, if an EU exit deal is agreed. Becky explained that successful lobbying had enabled the County Council to receive some 'one off' funding for this year. However, planning on a year to year basis was difficult to make plans for future years.

Becky also mentioned the extra funding to tackle serious violence and knife crime, with £100 million available to police forces in the worst affected areas in England and Wales. The cash is to be used for police overtime and to fund new 'Violent Crime Reduction Units' to help respond to the increase.

Finally, Becky said that the government has pledged to deliver 30,000 more affordable homes to tackle the UK's housing crisis. £717 million will be 'unlocked' from the Housing Infrastructure Fund - the 2017 grant introduced to invest in new build homes - to unlock up to 37,000 more affordable homes.

Jane Hartnell, Hastings Borough Council, agreed that the year on year planning was hard for Councils to make any concrete plans. Funding that was offered for 12 months leads to uncertainty about how long projects can continue.

Cllr Elkin said it was important to recognise the extra money that the County Council did receive and the successful lobbying work that took place to secure it. One off funding does not allow for planning but the money is welcome.

7b) Brexit

Steve began by saying that he had never known such a period of uncertainty and it was likely to continue for some time yet. Steve then introduced Becky to give an update on any preparations. Becky explained that the Sussex Local Resilience Forum was ready for any short term interventions and this was well rehearsed. Becky also mentioned the Local Authority Regional Information Hub that works with 74 authorities to pass information and feedback both into and out of the Government, she said it seemed that there were three options going forward:

- 1) Leaving the EU with no deal on 29 March
- 2) Short extension beyond the 29 March
- 3) Longer extension before anything is agreed

Becky also highlighted the EU settlement scheme will be open fully by 30 March 2019.

Mark Andrews explained that the Fire Service is training tactical staff to respond to any emergencies if needed, this includes a full time communications team. Mark also told the group that there is a strategic group of senior staff meeting every day to take the temperature of the current situation. This is linked to other Fire and Rescue Services such as Hampshire and Kent. Mark concluded that in terms of preparation the Fire Service is where it wants to be, however, that did not make managing the ambiguity any easier.

8) Review of the ESSP

Steve introduced this item by reminding the Partnership that the previous review carried out in 2015 highlighted that there was still merit in the Partnership. It was now time to test if that was still the case.

Steve reminded the Partnership of the questions that had been circulated in advance:

- 1) Given the changing landscape and the other countywide partnerships how does the ESSP ensure it adds most value and avoid duplication?
- 2) With the Assembly event attracting most interest and attendance, should we make this the only formal ESSP event and invest in its purpose and productivity?
- 3) How do we ensure we maintain a coherent overview of issues and partnerships so that gaps are spotted and addressed?
- 4) Is there value in offering ad hoc opportunities for partners' to engage, in a range of formats, about any relevant or topical issue? These events could be initiated by any partner and could be supported by the ESSP administration who will seek to provide a suitable format, location and invite appropriate partners. These events could replace the regular, formal ESSP meetings.

Steve explained that the Probation Service and Environment Agency had submitted their responses in advance of the meeting, as they were unable to attend today, and the NHS have asked for a conversation with Steve as they were also unable attend the meeting.

Gill Cameron-Waller, Wealden District Council, said that having the big picture view is important, as is exchanging views across organisations. Gill felt that the ESSP should continue in some way but agreed the shape of it needs to change.

Cllr Maynard, Rother District Council, felt that recently there had been less of a turnout of Council Members attending the ESSP. He agreed that there was value in partnerships but unsure if the ESSP was still fit for purpose in its current format. Cllr Maynard felt that the Assembly was a good opportunity to engage with Members but felt the Partnership could consider ways of working together without meeting up.

Cllr Elkin, ESCC, spoke about the Eastbourne Strategic Partnership that he attends on behalf of the County Council; he recognised the changes there that meant they focus on one theme for each year. Cllr Elkin also said it was important that people knew why they were attending the meeting and what its purpose was.

Graham Peters, Team East Sussex, also queried if the ESSP was the most effective way of sharing information, whilst recognising that engagement was important for all around the table. Graham felt that whether the dissemination of information was through a conference or meetings or other formats the most appropriate method might depend on the subject.

Jane Hartnell, Hastings Borough Council (HBC), explained that the Hastings and St Leonard's Local Strategic Partnership was also reviewing its purpose. Some of the information at the

ESSP was already known to some partners but there might still be value in focussing on a topic such as climate change to have a wider discussion and joined up actions.

Cllr Forward, HBC, thought that understanding what people take away from the meeting would help make its value clearer.

Becky, ESCC, said it was important the ESSP made the best use of people's time and that the Partnership had been good at spotting the issues that fall through the gaps. The ESSP had been able to raise a voice on behalf of the county. However, Becky said the Partnership needs to remain current and fit for purpose.

Petrina Mayson, Action in Rural Sussex and Speak Up, felt the ESSP added huge value and it enabled her to listen to a breadth of information that could be passed down into the voluntary sector and it would be a huge loss to the Voluntary Sector to not get that information.

Probation Service Response

There may be more specific areas which would benefit from greater focus on an ad hoc basis in response to emerging issues: a key maybe for example offender accommodation, homelessness and rough sleeping which requires in our view a multi-agency strategic and operational response?

It may therefore be better to no longer have a specific ESSP given the other effective working arrangements in place?

Environment Agency Response

The ESSP has provided some opportunity to network. It has been interesting to have a wider view of the matters that my partners are struggling with. It provided the opportunity to bang the drum for the environment and the ESSP have always seemed engaged.

There are other forums for the Environment Agency to engage (especially Team East Sussex and the new Environment sub group) and the Local Resilience Forum (Sussex-wide) so the EA is ambivalent about the ESSP continuing – but would be keen to see ad-hoc events and other opportunities to network with directors of ESCC and other councils.

ACTION:

- i) **Sarah to arrange conversation with Steve, Ashley Scarff and Jessica Britton to discuss to discuss the review.**
- ii) **Steve to meet with Sarah to work up a proposal to be circulated before the next meeting.**

9) Any other business

Assembly - Steve asked the Partnership to consider the theme of Inward Investment as the ESSP Assembly theme. It would cover things such as

- Opportunistic funding – whereby the Government may announce a fund to bid for a specific project such as knife crime etc.
- Pipeline approach – having bids in the 'pipeline' ready to submit when the right opportunity arises.
- Crowdfunding - a way of raising finance by asking a large number of people each for a small amount of money. Becky also mentioned that Crowdfunder have new partners Natwest Back Her Business - this supports women in business to raise money for their

businesses through crowdfunding, and Natwest will also provide free coaching, and mentoring.

The Partnership felt this would be a good topic and it was agreed that a draft programme would be circulated.

ACTION: Sarah and Steve to meet to work up a draft programme and circulate to the Partnership.

10) Dates of future meetings

Wednesday 10th July 2019 - 10.00am-12.00pm– International Tennis Centre, Eastbourne
Tuesday 5th November 2019-10.00am-12.00pm Court Room, Eastbourne Town Hall, Eastbourne
Thursday 16th January 2020 -10.00am-12.00pm TBC

SUMMARY OF AGREED ACTIONS –	
Item	Action
4	All Partners are invited to make nominations for the ESSP chair by Friday 3rd May 2019
8i	Sarah Feather to arrange conversation with Steve Manwaring, Ashley Scarff and Jessica Britton to discuss the review.
8ii	Steve Manwaring and Sarah Feather to work up a proposal for a revised way of working for the ESSP and share with the Group.
9	Steve Manwaring and Sarah Feather to meet to work up a draft programme and circulate to the Partnership.

A copy of all the presentations from the meeting can be found on the ESSP website (<http://www.essp.org.uk/Meeting-papers-and-reports>).