

**East Sussex Assembly Conference 2012  
5 July 2012, Winter Garden, Eastbourne**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**BACKGROUND:**

The East Sussex Assembly meets once a year to receive a report on the East Sussex Strategic Partnership's (ESSP) activities and achievements during the previous year and to be involved in identifying and agreeing future priorities that ESSP and wider partners should focus on. Over 40 delegates attended from partner organisations across the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

The Assembly 2012 was about 1) updating Assembly members on the progress of the priorities identified at the Assembly in 2010; 2) providing The Picture in East Sussex (with a focus on the challenges faced across East Sussex by the community and voluntary sector from both a rural and urban perspective, and what we can expect for the future; and 3) there was a focus on changes to welfare and benefits policy, describing the impact on residents and services in the county and looking at how all organisations can be involved in mitigating impacts where possible.

**ASSEMBLY ITEMS:**

**1) Priorities**

Speakers provided updates on the two priority areas that were identified as key issues that would benefit from focus from the ESSP at the Assembly 2010. Further updates on these activities will be provided throughout the year at ESSP.

Families with Multiple Problems – (now Family Keywork)

Celia Wilson (East Sussex County Council) spoke about the Families with Multiple Problems Project which aims to use public resources more cost effectively to address problems experienced and caused by those families currently involved with a number of agencies.

Alongside this local project, Government has set up a 'Troubled Families Programme', a payment-by-results scheme to help areas turn around families who are engaging with crime and anti-social behaviour, unemployed and/or missing education.

In East Sussex, approximately 1000 families can be supported by the grant, meaning up to £2 million can be claimed over three years in upfront attachment fees and a further £1.5

million if success criteria is achieved with those families. An 'embedded keyworker' model is to be delivered with partner organisations. Keyworkers will be trained and supported centrally and provide 1:1 support for members of families experiencing multiple problems.

The presentation outlines further information (including detail of the embedded keyworker model) and is available online:

<http://www.essp.org.uk/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Media/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Document-Library/meeting%20papers%20and%20reports/East%20Sussex%20Assembly/2012/Families-with-multiple-problems---Celia-Wilson.ppt>

### Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES)

Robin Smith (Sussex Police, Chair of ESSP and SPACES) provided the update on the SPACES project. The SPACES group is made up of organisations from across the public and voluntary and community sectors, many of which are Assembly members. So far, value of property ownership across the eight organisations exceeds £960 million with lease and other running costs totalling £56.35 million a year.

SPACES is part of the Department for Communities and Local Government's Capital and Asset Pathfinder Programme. Work has been carried out to review and seek opportunities to reduce the size and cost of public sector property estate throughout East Sussex. A 10 year plan and vision for collaborative asset management in East Sussex was approved by the SPACES Board in April 2012. This plan identified a range of short term opportunities and long term aspirations that would support this group's key targets to:

- achieve Capital Receipts in excess of £30 million through property disposal;
- reduce property revenue costs by £10 million per annum; and
- reduce CO2 production by 10,000 tonnes per annum by 2020.

The presentation highlights some key issues moving forward and is available online:

<http://www.essp.org.uk/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Media/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Document-Library/meeting%20papers%20and%20reports/East%20Sussex%20Assembly/2012/SPACES---Robin-Smith.ppt>

## **2) The Picture in East Sussex**

Jeremy Leggett (Action in Rural Sussex) and Steve Manwaring, (Hastings Voluntary Action) gave a joint presentation from the point of view of the community and voluntary sector. The presentation covered a number of key global and national issues and then focused on what these issues mean for East Sussex.

Implications from both a rural and urban perspective were covered and the presentation highlighted positive examples of creative thinking and innovative activity in response to the challenges faced. Investing in relationships with communities will be very important in building capacity for the future. The presentation is available online:

<http://www.essp.org.uk/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Media/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Document-Library/meeting%20papers%20and%20reports/East%20Sussex%20Assembly/2012/The-Picture-in-East-Sussex---Jeremy-Leggett-and-Steve-Manwaring.ppt>

### 3) Benefits and Welfare policy reform – what does this mean for East Sussex?

In light of changes to benefits and welfare policy, the ESSP Board agreed that the Assembly was an ideal forum to inform partners of the changes and encourage conversations about mitigating the impacts through partnership working. The item comprised of three updates.

Nick Hopkins (Nick Hopkins Consulting) has been working with partners to identify and understand the impact of the welfare reform changes. The presentation detailed the key issues in relation to the broad policy changes. The presentation is available online: <http://www.essp.org.uk/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Media/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Document-Library/meeting%20papers%20and%20reports/East%20Sussex%20Assembly/2012/What-Does-Welfare-Reform-Mean-for-East-Sussex---Nick-Hopkins.ppt>

Bill McCafferty and Ian Fitzpatrick (Eastbourne Borough Council) then focused on changes to housing benefits. An interactive quiz with voting buttons enabled attendees to understand what the impacts will mean for people in East Sussex by using case studies of what individuals/families receive before and after the changes.

The presentation is available online: <http://www.essp.org.uk/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Media/East-Sussex-Strategic-Partnership-Document-Library/meeting%20papers%20and%20reports/East%20Sussex%20Assembly/2012/Housing-Benefit---Universal-Credit---Bill-McCafferty-and-Ian-Fitzpatrick.ppt>

To conclude this item, Becky Shaw (East Sussex County Council) updated the Assembly on the work of the Financial Inclusion Group which aims to mitigate, where possible, the potential impacts of benefits and welfare reform through partnership working. Attendees were encouraged to find out whether their organisation is involved in the work and explore the potential merits of becoming involved in the group. The action plan of the Financial Inclusion Group can be found online at:

<http://www.essp.org.uk/What-we-do/Pride-of-Place/Economy/Financial-Inclusion>

#### **FEEDBACK:**

All delegates were provided with an event feedback form. The following results are based on the 15 forms returned. The results are set out in graphs as Appendix 1. The main points are summarised below.

The large majority of respondents found that the event met their expectations, with pre-event administration and the duration of the event appropriate.

Responses to the questions asking which part of the conference was most/least useful praised the presenters and gave encouraging feedback.

All presentations received positive feedback, in particular the Benefits and Welfare Policy Reform item (29.6% of respondents found it 'most useful'). Other positive comments include:

- Information was delivered in plain English;
- Facts and figures were helpful in providing a broad appreciation of the difficulties ahead;
- Progress of Assembly Priorities was clear;
- The use of rural and urban perspectives provided a richer picture of challenges; and

- The opportunity to network was very useful.

The majority of respondents felt that no part of the conference was 'least useful'. Some comments highlighted areas for improvement, and the following points will therefore be considered when planning future events:

- Dedicated Q&A time;
- Avoid updates on 'internal business processes'; and
- Ensure level of detail is appropriate for the audience.

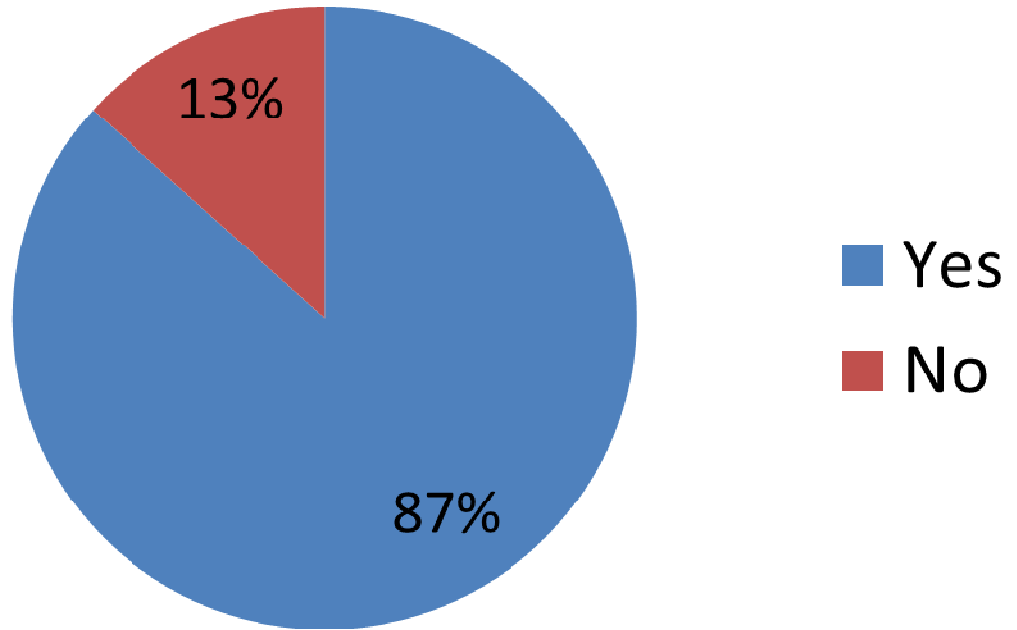
Overall, the content of the event was seen as appropriate and useful. We will continue to ensure that content is relevant to organisations invited to future events. Attendees' suggestions for next year's focus (listed in Appendix 1) will be considered when planning the Assembly 2013.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

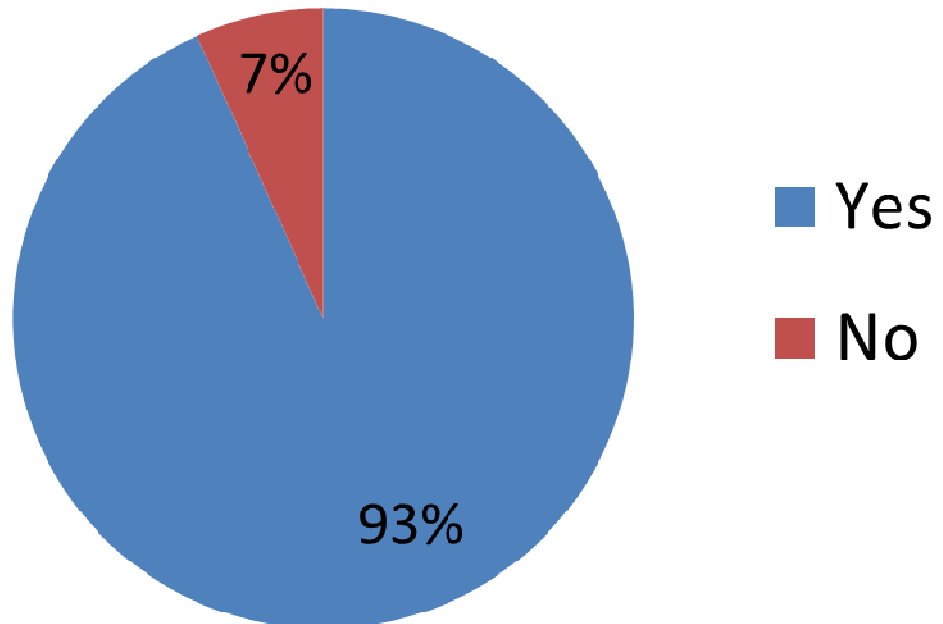
The ESSP is recommended to:

1. Note the presentations and progress reported to the Assembly;
2. Note the feedback and suggestions for next year's Assembly; and
3. Consider different ways of engaging with the Assembly.

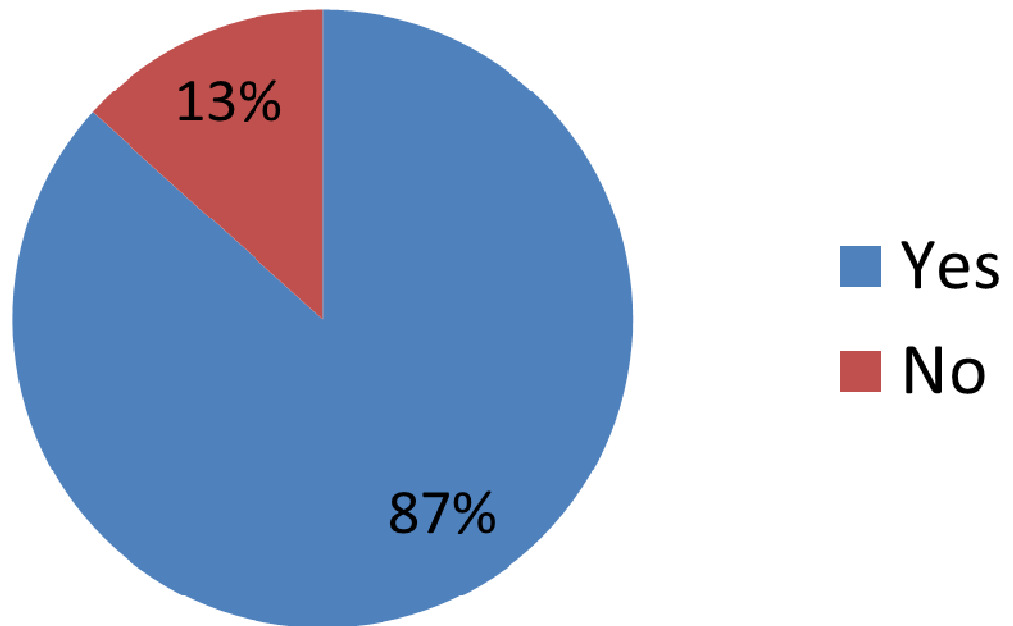
**Did the event meet your expectations?**



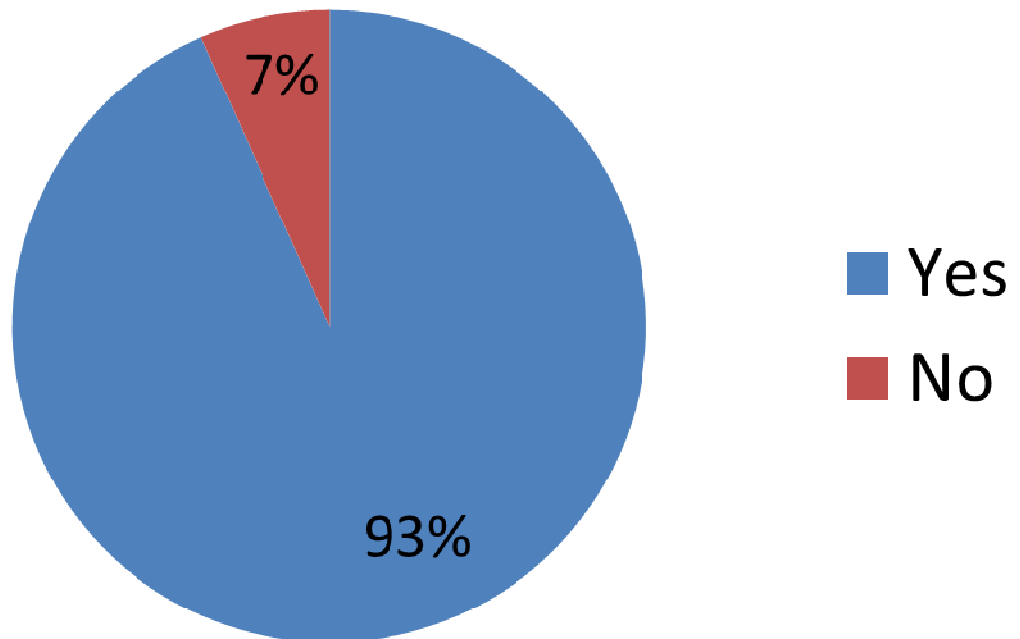
**Was the content appropriate?**

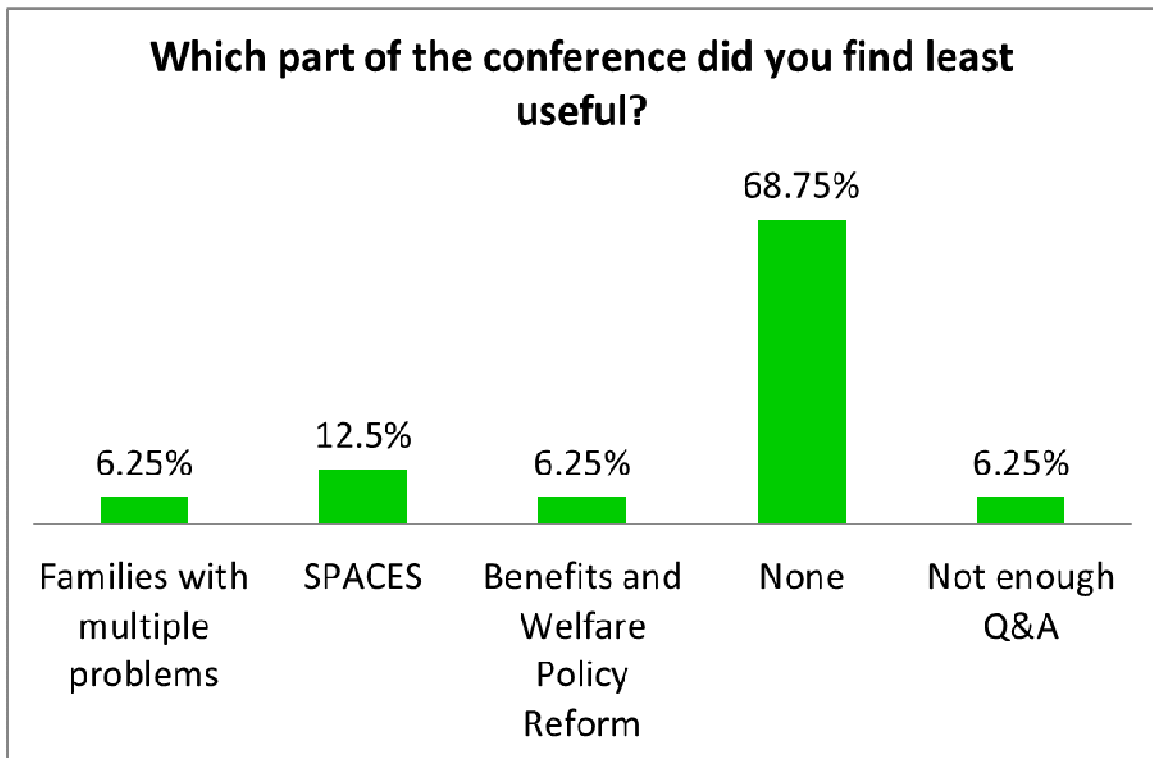
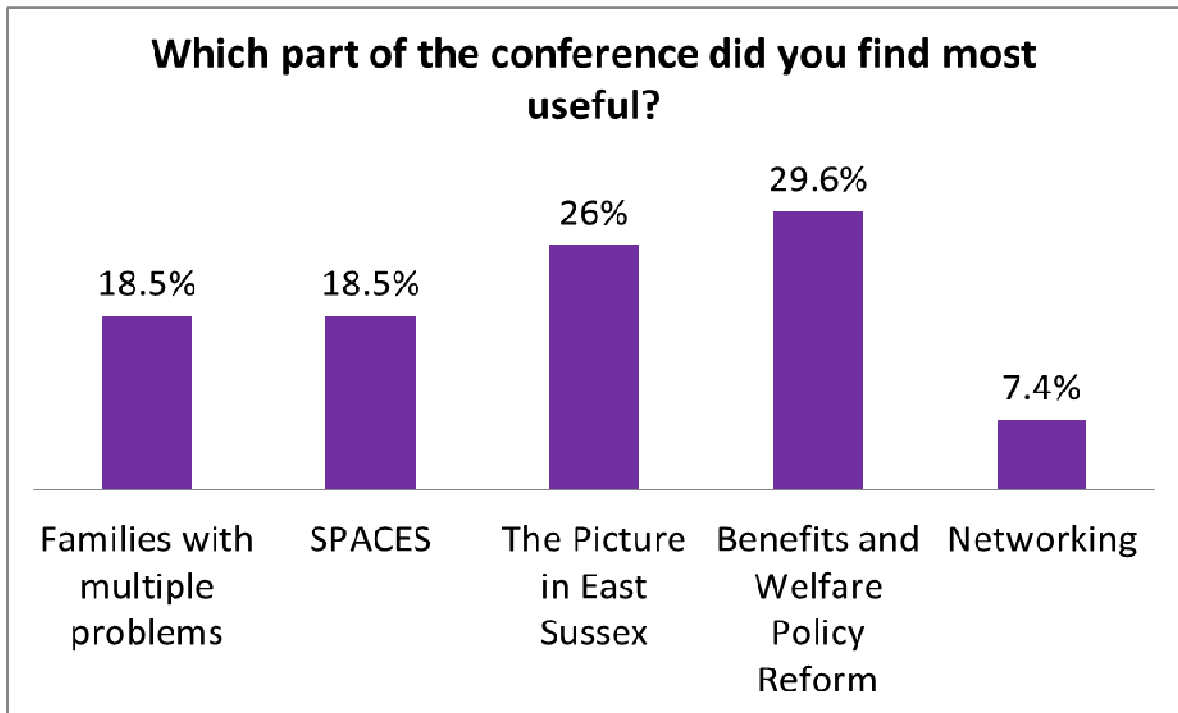


**Was the timing and duration of the event appropriate?**



**Was the pre-event administration sufficient?**





**Question - What topic or issue would you like the next Assembly event to focus on? Suggested topics/issues:**

- Health
- Dementia Strategy
- Economic Growth
- Follow up to welfare developments
- Rural focus
- Community banking partnership