

Report to: East Sussex Strategic Partnership (ESSP)  
Date: October 2013  
Title: SPACES Programme Update  
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Purpose: To provide an update on the SPACES Programme

**Recommendation:**

That the East Sussex Strategic Partnership note

1. the report; and
2. the current programme activity taking place

**1. Introduction/Background**

- 1.1. This report is intended to give an update on the status of the SPACES Programme to date specifically regarding identified aims and objectives as well as barriers to achieving these. The report includes progress on the implementation of the June Programme Review recommendations.

**2. June Programme Review Recommendation Progress**

- 2.1. The SPACES Board has an agreed vision for the programme:

‘Effective delivery of public service in East Sussex through efficient use of estate via partnership working and co-location.’

- 2.2. There is an agreed set of desired outcomes for the Programme as follows:

- a. Appropriate retained presence of partners for service delivery in key locations for customers
- b. Cost effective estate for all partners leading to capital receipts and revenue savings
- c. Enabling partners services to respond to environmental and legislative change through effective partner co-location
- d. Strategic asset disposal between partners to optimise opportunities for disposal or re-use of surplus assets
- e. Improved sharing of information leading to more informed decision making
- f. Shared initiatives to effectively respond to customer and area needs
- g. Strong relationship being established between partners, strengthening engagement and aligning strategic direction

- 2.3. Benefits expected from SPACES have been identified and targets set against them as appropriate. The targets are for a 10 year programme which commenced in 2011:

- a. Capital receipts of £30 million
- b. Annual revenue cost reduction of approximately 20% equating to between £10 and £12 million

- c. CO2 reduction of 20% per annum
  - d. Community grant realisation, revenue receipts, land swap deals enabled, outreach services enabled and cost avoidance are also being measured but do not have targets associated with them
  - e. Partner experience and satisfaction with SPACES is to be measured on six monthly intervals to identify if the programme is broadly satisfying the needs of the partners and to enable adjustments in approach to be made as necessary
- 2.4. A strategy for opportunity identification and approach to programme development has been identified and agreed. Priorities for work streams have been agreed and the following are currently being undertaken:
- a. Focus groups per town are being held to identify immediate needs and opportunities for customer facing activity where partners can co-locate
  - b. Storage starting with paper based storage is being considered
  - c. Emergency response services are identifying their opportunities recognising the different needs these have
  - d. Although it has not yet commenced, a review of the use of community buildings such as Community Centres, Fire Station Community Rooms, Youth Centres and other facilities available for community use will be undertaken. This will be managed on a geographical basis, recognising the specific needs of each community with a view to identifying where premises used is not fit for purpose and where opportunities for alternate provision can be found.
- 2.5. A monthly status report for the programme is generated and a version of this is provided to Chief Executive or equivalent of all SPACES partner organisations to assist in the alignment of direction and generation of support to opportunities from partner organisations.

### **3. Projects and Opportunity Identification Progress**

- 3.1. There are four projects currently underway as follows:
- a. Newhaven Fire Station – Negotiation with partners ongoing to agree the business case and who will be part of this. Currently, ESFRS, Lewes District Council, Sussex Police and SECAMB
  - b. Newhaven Library – Discussion with potential partners as to who could inhabit the first floor and how synergies of service would work between the organisations sharing the building
  - c. Eastbourne - Borough Council to share premises in Grove Road Eastbourne with Sussex Police from October/November 2013
  - d. Bexhill Town Hall – Job Centre Plus to co-locate with Rother District Council by the end of 2013/14
  - e. Lewes Land Swap – The Maltings and Southover Grange to be exchanged by ESCC and Lewes District Council
  - f. Pine Grove Crowhurst – A joint disposal between Wealden District Council and ESCC. The site has now been advertised for sale
- 3.2. As well as these many other potential opportunities have been identified and are being prioritised by the board to identify what can currently be progressed. This includes the Eastbourne Town Hall and Agile Hub.

#### **4. Barriers to Success**

- 4.1. SPACES has one dedicated resource to manage the Programme for 12 months. Options are being considered for the post funding and a lead is being identified from the partners involved to manage each specific project. Once the programme has been full developed and the activity is better understood this should become less of an issue.
- 4.2. There is no direct funding for SPACES. Each project is managed on a business case between partners to progress. The partners have agreed in principle to hold a joint fund for SPACES, the detail of how this will work has yet to be worked up and it is agreed that this is a longer term aim.
- 4.3. There is a lack of agreed principles of working to cover aspects such as cost and benefit sharing, communication to ensure communications from partners are aligned and technical principles to enable co-location. This has meant that there have been some issues in early projects in these areas. The cost and benefit principles have been agreed and the technical and communications principles are to follow.
- 4.4. While a level of local knowledge and intelligence is held by officers, a full understanding of the community wishes and needs will be critical to the success of activity such as the community asset use review when it commences.
- 4.5. The partners need to agree the priorities to focus on and which opportunities merit further activity. Work is currently underway to identify what these priorities should be and this is expected to lead to a higher number of projects within the programme.



## Appendix A

### SPACES Programme Review

#### 1. Background

- 1.1 In January 2011 The Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex Partnership (SPACES) was formed with the intention of carrying out a countywide asset management planning exercise for public sector organisations.
- 1.2 It was recognised that for the most part property ownership within the public sector was a means to provide services not an end in itself. It was also apparent that the properties owned and rented for provision of service, were not as well utilised as they could be, and with budget cut backs impacting all partners, property usage could be reviewed to realise efficiencies.
- 1.3 The initial SPACES meeting was held in May 2011 and chaired by C/Supt Robin Smith of Sussex Police. Other partners included East Sussex County Council, District and Borough Councils, Emergency Services and third sector representation.

#### 2. Progress to date

- 2.1 A Programme Board was set up with representation from each partner. C/Supt Smith chaired this initially, with an agreement that the chair would change on an annual basis. The Board set up a number of district Sub Groups, namely Eastbourne, Rother, Lewes, Wealden and Hastings, to focus on each area and how the SPACES aims could be progressed. These Sub Groups report to the central board and are intended to enable a geographical focus on assets and a regional approach to the identification of opportunities. Rother and Hastings groups have since merged.
- 2.2 The initial focus of SPACES was to collect and collate information regarding the estate both owned and used by partners to enable the scale of the issue to be understood. Significant progress has been made with this, although the level of detail hoped for has not been possible due to challenges with resources and differing levels of commitment to the task between organisations. This work that has been undertaken has enabled a good view to be gained of the estate held and used in the region with maps provided to illustrate this further which will act as an enabler to all future activity.
- 2.3 A 10-year implementation plan was developed and approved by all partners to identify what SPACES could achieve both in the short and long term. Within this some specific projects were identified as well as measurable objectives to be achieved collectively across the partners through partner activity as follows:

£30m Capital receipts over the 10-year plan

£10m Revenue cost reduction per year

CO2 reduction by 20% of current levels per year by 2020

- 2.4 While the plan brought together all initiatives identified for further exploration, it was not clear how the objectives related to the initiatives identified or the timeframe within which the projects would be delivered.
- 2.5 Historically there has been excellent engagement with a wide range of partners. However despite initial enthusiasm for the aims of SPACES, over recent months this appears to have waned and it is likely that this is due to a lack of delivery and measureable outcomes to date. The engagement has been mainly with the estates departments of each partner, which has been necessary for the information gathering activities, which have been the main focus of the Programme Board to date.
- 2.6 There are a number of projects that were identified prior to Programme Manager appointment, including but not limited to:

1a Grove Road – Eastbourne

Agile Hub – Eastbourne

Aquila House - Hastings

Pine Grove – Crowborough

ESFR development – Newhaven

These projects are mainly in feasibility stages and work is being undertaken to identify who the partners are for each and how the property could be shared from a cost and benefit perspective. None have currently reached a consensus between partners who are participating as to how they will move forward and barriers remain around funding, doubt over the right partnerships and management of the integration of services and culture.

### 3. Observations

- 3.1 The ability for partners to discuss issues together in a collaborative environment has had significant positive impact on the relationships between organisations. This has led to a breaking down of some barriers to working together and some real success outside of the programme in collaborative working. This building of relationships, trust and openness sets the stage for SPACES to achieve significant success going forward.
- 3.2 It appears that while SPACES initially had significant enthusiasm and strong engagement with partners, the momentum has reduced. There is a level of frustration in those partners who still do attend the meetings that little has happened, attendance has declined and they are not seeing significant progress. This is likely to be for a number of reasons:

Unclear future vision and strategy to achieve it

Unclear programme structure

Ad hoc approach to project identification

Insufficient time to commit to the programme

Lack of progress in delivery of tangible benefits

Lack of political awareness of SPACES potential

#### 4. Challenges Faced

- 4.1 It appears to have proven difficult to translate ideas into delivery. While the board has a certain level of decision-making authority, all decisions would need to be ratified by the governance structure within those organisations it impacted. This adds a level of complexity in decision-making that can be difficult to manage. This has been compounded in some instances by each organisation looking to achieve different benefits from an identified project and having differing requirements. There are currently no standard principles of design or working within the programme so each project is managed from the bottom up.
- 4.2 The Sub Groups have in some instances identified a project that they believed would be beneficial to partners and have focused on that to the exclusion of other activity. This is mainly due to the lack of resource to be able to run and manage multiple projects with the work being undertaken by the Sub Group members directly.
- 4.3 Overall it would appear that partners agree the huge potential to consolidate and share the held by all across the regions, but what is needed and how it should be approached is less apparent. Many of the organisations have their own insular programme of work to reduce their estate and there is the possibility that the aims of these programmes may not align well with the aims of SPACES without clear vision and direction of travel being communicated to senior members of all organisations via the SPACES Programme Board. Communication to leaders of partner organisations has not been coordinated by Board members to facilitate overt sign up to the SPACES objectives and activities in all instances.
- 4.4 Projects have been identified in an ad hoc fashion. That is not to say they will not be beneficial or successful, but that they are being handled as stand alone one off activities rather than a more integrated strategic programme of work. This may mean that the greatest possible benefits are not achieved, regarding co-locating related services to enable future proofing the delivery of them and simplifying the process for customers, especially with the changes which are coming in around aspects such as universal credits and complex families.
- 4.5 While the work to date has been piece meal, it should be remembered that this is a normal progression of a new group working together and the more strategic activity cannot commence until the foundations of the group have been laid. The work undertaken to date has enabled this to occur meaning that the SPACES group are now ready to develop a programme of work to achieve more strategic aims.

#### 5. Recommended activity:

- 5.1 The recommendations that follow will not all happen immediately. They will follow a natural progression as the programme is developed and agreed and the direction of travel becomes clearer.
- 5.2 A documented vision for SPACES that states what is to be achieved is identified and agreed between partners. This will enable the strategy to achieve the vision to be developed and gaps in the programme to be identified as the design is worked through.
- 5.3 A strategy is adopted to look at the services being delivered in tranches to build an overall programme design across partners. These should include customer-facing services by location, operational activity such as blue light response services, back office functions, depots and storage as a minimum. It is likely that other tranches would be identified as the programme and design progress.

- 5.4 KPIs are agreed and used to measure the benefits against projects, partners and overall for the Programme. Reporting at every board to be against these to track progress and identify where further activity is needed.
- 5.5 Lessons are shared and documented to enable active learning throughout the programme and between the partners. Experiences are shared and show cased to highlight best practice and where improvements can be made.
- 5.6 Standards for working including design principles, project principles, cost and benefit allocation, communications strategy and ICT approach are developed and agreed to provide a benchmark for approving concept progression and an initial start point for any future projects. These standards are worked through with the initial projects identified to refine and review them enabling the development of a tool kit that can be easily utilised for all SPACES activities.
- 5.7 Reporting from projects, to sub groups, to the SPACES Board and into the senior members of each organisation is coordinated and standardised to provide clear messages on progress and issues and enable management by exception at every level.
- 5.8 Pipeline and disposal of estate assets are identified, mapped and shared between partners to enable informed decision-making and a structured approach to this alongside any assets identified for disposal as an outcome of SPACES.
- 5.9 Consideration to be given by partners to the possibility of identifying the potential Capital Investment budget they could make available for SPACES Projects against the benefits expected to be achieved by each. The need for this and the likely scale required will become clearer as the design activity progresses.