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| ESSP new without graphic | **Meeting Notes**  **Monday 5 July 2021**  **Virtual via Microsoft Teams** |

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| **IN ATTENDANCE** |

**ESSP Members present:**

Steve Manwaring HVA/Speakup

Becky Shaw East Sussex County Council

Dawn Whittaker Chair/East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Ashley Scarff Sussex NHS Commissioners

Keith Stevens ES Association of Local Councils

Graham Peters South East Local Enterprise Partnership

Cllr Keith Glazer East Sussex County Council

Michael Turner Environment Agency

Cllr Kim Forward Hastings Borough Council

Chris Bending Wealden District Council

Gordon Ackroyd Action in Rural Sussex

Cllr Susan Prochak Rother District Council

**Also in attendance (official observers):**

Nicola Mitchell Rother District Council

Lewis Williams East Sussex County Council

Jane Hartnell Hastings Borough Council

Atiya Gourlay East Sussex County Council

Harriett Judson East Sussex County Council

**Apologies for absence**:

Mark Matthews East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service

Jo Harper Lewes District Council

Cllr Helen Burton Eastbourne Borough Council

Cllr Johnny Denis Lewes District Council

Cllr Bob Standley Wealden District Council

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| **NOTES** |

1. **Welcome, introductions and Apologies**

Dawn Whittaker welcomed ESSP members, delegates, guests and speakers to the meeting and apologies were given.

1. **Urgent items of business**

There were no urgent items of business.

**3) Minutes of the meeting on 8 February 2021 and matters arising not on the agenda**

The minutes of the meeting on 8 February 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

**4) Introduction – Gordon Ackroyd**

Gordon Ackroyd introduced himself as the new CEO of Action in Rural Sussex (AirS), and outlined their priorities to assist rural communities, including with, amongst other things, housing and woodland restoration. Gordon described the key ethos of AirS as focusing on value for money and lasting impact and highlighted the need for rural incomes to increase and for more housing in rural areas, especially affordable housing.

**5) Overview of East Sussex**

Becky described the East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Focus on East Sussex report, which forms part of the wider State of the County Report and provided information both at a county level as well as broken down by districts and boroughs. Becky described the short-term impacts on East Sussex in recent years, primarily of COVID-19, but also Brexit and other factors. Becky also highlighted the excellent work done in the community by organisations including community hubs and foodbanks. There were long-term health challenges in the county including: excess weight; low levels of physical activity; rates of high blood pressure; and the mental health of young people; and some of these had been exacerbated by COVID-19. The county had done well in maintaining high levels of school attendance during the pandemic, with no schools ever fully closed, and very good participation levels; however, attainment was hard to measure. The pandemic had impacted severely on the economy, with large increases in youth unemployment, but many of the economic challenges predated the pandemic and were long-term; Becky drew attention to the Economic Recovery Plan which had very strong measures to revitalise the county’s economy. Becky highlighted the work being done to assess the impact of COVID-19 on residents, such as the Team East Sussex (TES) and University of Sussex research into new work patterns, and the opportunities increased home working might present to a county which previously had a large number of commuters. Long-term demographic challenges of an aging population and older people moving into the county remained. Admissions to Adult Social Care had fallen, both for older and working age people, and the county had a strong record on reablement. Care homes had experienced a very difficult time during COVID-19, however, the integrated care system was supporting the sector. Becky also highlighted the challenges of domestic abuse and substance misuse. Amongst children and young people, there had been an increase in the number of Education Health and Care Plans, particularly for children with autism. The number of Looked After Children was stable, however neighbouring counties were experiencing significant challenges with the number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children, and ESCC were supporting them as much as possible. Housing affordability was a significant challenge in the county, and organisations across East Sussex were supporting people affected by the benefits cap and those at risk of eviction. The county had made significant strides to reduce its CO2 emissions, however, transport was a problematic sector for East Sussex, and there were significant threats to the county from climate change, such as flooding and heat related deaths. The report described the natural characteristics of East Sussex, however, Becky drew attention to the potential challenges presented by proposed new legislation.

Dawn thanked Becky for her presentation and asked Members for any questions.

Cllr Prochak drew Members’ attention to the Healthy Aging through Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) project, which had conducted research in East Sussex and Europe to investigate what services older people thought they needed in their communities as opposed to services being dictated from above; more information and useful links can be found via: [Healthy Ageing through Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) | East Sussex County Council](https://new.eastsussex.gov.uk/social-care/health-advice/haire-project). Graham Peters highlighted the £24m+ Hastings had secured through the Government’s Towns Fund and the infrastructure benefits this would bring to the town. Graham also said the TES survey had highlighted the need for improved broadband across East Sussex, and partners would need to consider how they could all work to implement this. Graham also highlighted the projected increase in change of use planning applications and suggested partners should work to progress these applications as quickly as possible and that healthy aging should be incorporated into future developments. Graham agreed to provide some information on promoting Modern Sussex which could be shared with Members. Chris Bending drew attention to the impact the demand for higher housing numbers in East Sussex from Government was already having on communities. Steve Manwaring highlighted underemployment and zero hours contracts as factors in deprivation beyond just unemployment, and how these led to toxic lending in certain parts of the county. Steve also discussed the need to consider how long-term health conditions affected people’s ability to work, and how housing shortages and affordability affected people’s ability to provide informal care as young people often had to move away from family. Dawn said the East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service had issues engaging with vulnerable people in the community, with some people reluctant to engage since COVID-19. Dawn also said the costs of rectifying safety defects in high rise buildings might become an issue. Cllr Glazier asked Members to let ESCC know if there was anything they thought was missing from the Focus on East Sussex report. Keith Stevens asked when the report could be shared? Becky said once it was published on the ESCC website it was fine to share and asked that it be sent to Members when published.

**ACTIONS:**

**i) Graham Peters to provide information promoting Modern Sussex which Lewis Williams will share with Members**

**ii) Lewis Williams to share full Focus on East Sussex Report once it’s published on the ESCC website**

**6) Youth Cabinet Annual Report**

Atiya Gourlay outlined how ESCC Children’s Services worked in partnership with the Youth Cabinet and the Children and Young People’s Trust. Atiya outlined the findings of the Youth Cabinet Annual Report, which reiterated the Youth Cabinet’s vision and mission for young people in East Sussex to exercise their right to have their voices heard, valued, and acted upon. The Youth Cabinet had managed to keep holding meetings virtually during the pandemic, and this was a good example of partnership working, as it was done with support from partners in the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. The Youth Cabinet also worked with Make (Good) Trouble to work with schools on how to support young people to return to school. They had also continued to work on their two key campaigns during the pandemic, domestic violence, and the environment. Work on domestic violence had included contributing to a national consultation and developing a school’s seminar on protecting young people from harmful sexual behaviours. Work on the environment had included creating a school’s energy audit and engaging with a consultation with Lewes District Council and Eastbourne Borough Council on local climate action work.

Atiya also discussed the Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021, which was a Department for Education funded scheme for children eligible for Free School Meals. The programme offered positive activities and meals, for four hours a day, four days a week, for six weeks a year. During Easter 34 providers had engaged with the scheme, with 1,380 children taking part in activities including art, dance, music, and physical activities. Atiya then showed a film detailing the work of the programme, the video can be viewed [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-P6fpkohXsc&list=PLHp8vwKUL3bi8UPenvMTtTGwp4Fmz_44s&index=4). Atiya confirmed that the programme would run again during summer 2021, and asked Members to spread the word and signpost eligible young children where possible.

Dawn thanked Atiya and asked Members if there were any questions on her presentation.

Graham Peters said he had been involved in the project and it was a great benefit to children and in some instances life changing. Chris Bending asked how the service operated in rural parts of the county and whether there were any transport issues, and if there were, how organisations could help? Chris also pointed out that planning committees often hear from adults, but rarely hear from any youth organisations or voices. Atiya confirmed that the programme provided funding for transport and said that her team could help people engage with youth groups on things like planning. Dawn pointed out that the East Sussex Assembly 2021 would focus on skills and it would be great for young people to be involved. Cllr Prochak asked whether the Youth Cabinet would be feeding into the Youth COP. Atiya said they were considering how to get their voices heard in that forum. Atiya agreed to provide some advice on how to engage with young people for circulation to Members.

**ACTIONS:**

**i) Atiya Gourlay to provide advice on how to engage with young people which Lewis Williams will then circulate to Members**

**7) Institute for Voluntary Action Research report**

Steve Manwaring introduced the Institute for Voluntary Action Research (IVAR) report into the VCSE sector in East Sussex. The last year had shown the resourcefulness of the county, and what could be done in challenging situations. However, there was a need for a different type of cross sector conversation. Work across the last year had brought about the VCSE alliance and Partnership Plus. The IVAR report had shown that the VCSE sector produced at least £76m in value for the county, provided services to vulnerable people, and was a major employer. The COVID-19 response had been formalised into highly effective hubs and had brought out the best in different sectors, including businesses, and work was being done on how to maintain these benefits in the longer term. With regards to the financial health of the sector, the report showed that VCSE organisations were lean, with low reserves, many of which were spent during austerity, and longer-term funding was unclear. The key strengths of the sector were its person-centred approach and its focus on preventative work. The report recommended the sector ‘learn by doing’, celebrate cross sector collaboration, keep the benefits of new ways of working brought about by COVID-19, and fund projects with a proven impact over longer periods. The sector was in a challenging place in relation to its buildings and estates, with most groups situated in buildings not designed for their needs. Future workplaces were predicted to operate on a hybrid model, which presented both challenges and opportunities.

Dawn thanked Steve for his presentation and asked Members for any questions. Cllr Prochak raised the issue of people not necessarily knowing where to go to get help; despite there being an enormous amount of help available. Cllr Prochak also asked whether data protection laws were preventing people from sharing information on vulnerable people in need of help. Steve emphasised the need to work collaboratively and share data, whilst also protecting people’s data privacy.

**8) Election of ESSP Chair**

Dawn asked Cllr Glazier to Chair this item of the agenda in his role as Vice-Chair of the ESSP.

Cllr Glazier advised Members that Keith Stevens had nominated Dawn for a second term as Chair of the ESSP and this had been seconded by Graham Peters. Members then unanimously voted for Dawn to be elected for a second term. Cllr Glazier thanked Dawn for her work Chairing the ESSP.

**9) Any other business**

Dawn said she had taken over as the Chair of the National Water Safety Forum, which looks at how to reduce drowning both in the UK and around the world, and highlighted that 25 July was World Drowning Prevention Day. Dawn said she would circulate some information on water safety to Members.

**ACTIONS:**

**i) Dawn Whittaker to send information on water safety to Lewis Williams to circulate to Members**

**9) Dates of future meetings**

Friday 26th November 2021 9.00am – 12.00pm – East Sussex Assembly TBC

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| **SUMMARY OF AGREED ACTIONS –** | |
| **Item** | **Action** |
| **5** | **i) Graham Peters to provide information promoting Modern Sussex which Lewis Williams will share with Members**  **ii) Lewis Williams to share full Focus on East Sussex Report once it’s published on the ESCC website** |
| **6** | **i) Atiya Gourlay to provide advice on how to engage with young people which Lewis Williams will then circulate to Members** |
| **9** | **i) Dawn Whittaker to send information on water safety to Lewis Williams to circulate to Members** |

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](http://www.essp.org.uk/Meeting-papers-and-reports/ESSP/2016)).