

Mid Sussex Sustainable Communities Strategy



Working together
for a better future

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Statement of Intent

The following organisations have agreed to actively support the delivery of this Sustainable Communities Strategy. Together, they form the Board of the Mid Sussex Partnership.

Mid Sussex District Council
Sussex Police
West Sussex County Council
West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
NHS Sussex
Horsham and Mid Sussex GP Locality Group
Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils
Mid Sussex Association of Town Councils
Mid Sussex Councils for Voluntary Services
Affinity Sutton
Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust
Local business representatives
Chair of the Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership



Foreword by the Chair of the Mid Sussex Partnership

“Mid Sussex is a popular place to live with a high standard of living, attractive towns and villages, areas of outstanding natural beauty and easy access to the south coast, Gatwick airport and London.

However there are a number of challenges facing our communities which require public, voluntary and commercial organisations from across the District to work together to meet them.

As Chairman of the Mid Sussex Partnership, I am privileged to bring together the agencies, organisations and communities of the District to face these challenges and ensure Mid Sussex continues to be a great place to live, work and visit.



Councillor Garry Wall
Chairman of the Mid Sussex Partnership



Introduction

This Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) acts as an overarching vision for our District. The strategy and key themes were originally developed in 2008. This refreshed document was agreed in December 2012 by the partner agencies who work together as the Mid Sussex Partnership.

What is the Mid Sussex Partnership?

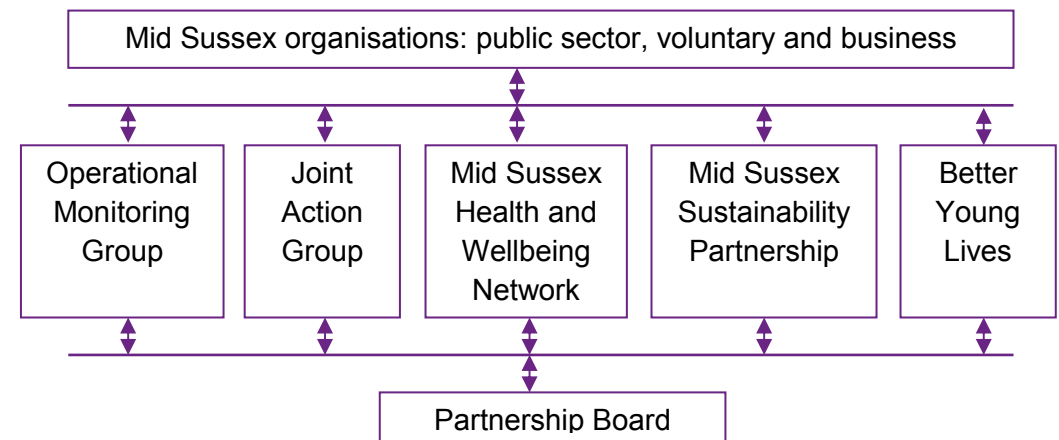
The Mid Sussex Partnership is a 'local strategic partnership (LSP)' covering the area served by Mid Sussex District Council. Such LSPs were set up in 2001 across the Country to ensure that public agencies worked with partners in business and the voluntary sector to tackle local issues that no one organisation could solve working alone.

LSPs do not have their own staff or budget, but bring together the resources of all the Partners they represent to shape the future of the District according to local needs and concerns.

In 2008, the Mid Sussex LSP was renamed the **Mid Sussex Partnership (MSP)** and was restructured to enable it to be more inclusive and effective. Membership is free and open to any organisation with an interest in improving the District. Alongside the wider membership, there is a small Partnership Board made up of the following organisations:

Mid Sussex District Council	Sussex Police
West Sussex County Council	West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
NHS Sussex	Horsham and Mid Sussex GP Locality Group
Mid Sussex Association of Local Councils	Mid Sussex Association of Town Councils
Mid Sussex Councils for Voluntary Services	Affinity Sutton
Surrey and Sussex Probation Trust	Local Business Representatives
Chair of the Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership	

Alongside the Partnership Board there are four sub-groups that focus on specific areas of work, and an operational monitoring group which monitors the MSP's priorities and funded project work. The structure is set out in the diagram below.



The West Sussex Sustainable Community Strategy

The West Sussex Sustainable Community Strategy produced in 2008 sets out a framework for tackling issues that matter across the County as a whole.

The District Plan

A complementary document to this Strategy is the District Plan which must be produced by Mid Sussex District Council as the local planning authority. Its purpose is to set out how the District is expected to evolve over the coming years, including identifying where strategic development is expected to take place.

The District Plan will provide a vision for the District to 2031, identifying where future growth will be permitted in Mid Sussex and where it may be restricted. This will be supported by policies on key matters such as affordable housing, employment, open spaces, transport and leisure facilities. It is key that the District Plan's vision for the District is aligned with the aims of the Sustainable Communities Strategy, so that the social, economic, environmental and community issues identified in this Strategy have influence on and are reflected in planning policies. To aid this, the two documents have drawn on a shared evidence base and have the same vision statement.

Neighbourhood plans drawn up by the Town and Parish Councils will sit alongside the District Plan. These set out how local communities would like their neighbourhoods to evolve.

A Vision for Mid Sussex

The vision shared by the members of the Mid Sussex Partnership is of a thriving and attractive District, a desirable place to live, work and visit. Our aim is to maintain, and where possible, improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our District and the quality of life for all, now and in the future.

A Sustainable Community

The UN Brundtland Report (1987) states that: "Sustainability is the ability of the current generation to meet its needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs". To ensure a better quality of life now and for generations to come we need to create a sustainable community. A place where people will want to live needs to be well run, with well-connected and accessible services, a thriving economy, and an active, inclusive and safe community. We need to ensure that this is done in a way that will not have an adverse impact on the environment.

By including sustainability criteria in our decision-making we can ensure that we do not compromise the future wellbeing of our and other communities.

Theme 1: Protecting and Enhancing the Environment

Mid Sussex is an outstandingly beautiful area, much of whose landscape is recognised at local and national level as being worthy of protection from inappropriate development. It includes the South Downs National Park. The local landscapes are important resources that provide a number of benefits to the local community. It will be essential for the identity and character of the District that the local environment is protected and enhanced, where that is possible. To be truly sustainable, however, requires more than protection of our green spaces. It means looking at our use of resources such as energy and water and how we can reduce the amount of waste we produce. Recycling rates continue to be good, averaging around 45% of waste collected.

Challenges

Local people are proud of the District's clean streets, well-presented parks and open spaces, and characterful settlements. This must continue.

There is a need to promote more sustainable forms of development that are energy and resource efficient and increase the 'self-sufficiency' of communities within Mid Sussex, and its ability to adapt to climate change. There is also a need to ensure that further development is accompanied by the necessary improvements in infrastructure.

The ecological footprint of our District is nearly 6.5 hectares per person, significantly above the UK average of 5.4. The South

East will also experience the greatest climate change in the UK, meaning as well as reducing our use of resources, we must begin to make provisions for changes in our natural environment. We will also need to consider the challenges raised by 'Peak Oil' and the inevitable decline in the fossil fuels our communities have become dependent on. In the face of these challenges our communities will not only have to become more sustainable, they will also have to become more resilient to deal with factors outside our control. Resilience in a community is built from co-operation, communication, creativity and coming together to support each other, something this Sustainable Communities Strategy is here to support and encourage.

Reducing our ecological footprint

We will encourage our communities to use resources more sustainably, promoting energy and water efficiency and improving waste management and recycling. Development of improved sustainable transport infrastructure is necessary to encourage a reduction in unnecessary car journeys and more use of public transport. The rural nature of much of the District places an emphasis on the interconnectivity of transport services, such as improved railway stations and bus services and cycle routes. We will continue to encourage local businesses to improve their environmental performance.

Managing the causes and impacts of climate change

We will encourage organisations and projects in the district to reduce CO2 emissions, raise awareness of the causes and

impacts of climate change and plan to adapt to the impacts of a change in our climate.

Ensuring development is well planned and sustainable

We will work to ensure new development is planned with appropriate infrastructure and public facilities that are accessible to all, including disabled or economically disadvantaged residents. New development should not compromise the vision of an attractive environment for the District, so high quality design will be important. We will encourage the use of sustainable materials and techniques in new developments so that we reduce its ecological footprint and ensure that development can continue for generations to come. It should also make full use of the advances in technology for energy and water efficiency and renewable energy generation to ensure the carbon footprint of new development is minimised.

Promoting biodiversity and enhancing our green spaces and the local environment

We will continue to ensure our public spaces and parks are clean, safe and accessible to all residents with fly tips, abandoned cars, graffiti and litter swiftly removed. We will work to ensure that the environmental harm to local ecosystems is minimised as much as possible and will promote green infrastructure programmes and biodiversity protection and enhancement. In promoting biodiversity there must be special regard to species and habitats that are vulnerable in a changing climate.

Planning for our needs

We will support the implementation of the West Sussex Environment Strategy 2008, Waste Local Plan, District Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. We will also support the Mid Sussex Sustainability Partnership's Action Plan.



Theme 2: Ensuring Cohesive and Safe Communities

Our District is among the safest in the country and the relevant agencies work well together to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour. This strong partnership working is helping to ensure that crime levels remain one of the lowest in the country. There is a vibrant voluntary sector, with high levels of volunteering in the area. According to national figures, Mid Sussex is one of the least deprived areas of the country, ranked 315 of 326 local authority areas in 2010.

Challenges

Despite the general level of prosperity, there are pockets of relative deprivation in the District. Not all residents enjoy the same access to facilities and opportunities due to physical, social or economic barriers. Local organisations need to ensure their services can be accessed, especially by vulnerable people and those caring for them.

The needs of an ageing population need to be given particular consideration. Between 2011 and 2021 the proportion of the local population who are over 65 is predicted to rise from 18.2% to 21.2%, or 32,000 people. It is also important to meet the needs and aspirations of younger people to keep them safe and allow them to participate positively in communities.

While Mid Sussex is a safe place to live, the fear of crime and antisocial behaviour remain key concerns of local people.

Encouraging thriving, cohesive communities with a strong sense of identity and civic pride

We will work to provide better access to public services and facilities to allow all sections of our communities to participate in the life of the District. We will support initiatives that boost pride in the local area, volunteering and good neighbourliness.

Providing support to vulnerable people so they can fully participate in their communities

We will work to reduce homelessness, particularly among young people. We will improve support and assistance to people with mental or physical disabilities and their carers. We will improve protection of children and vulnerable adults in the District.

Reducing crime, antisocial behaviour and fear of crime

We will focus on providing early interventions targeted at families and individuals most in need of support to help reduce antisocial behaviour and crime. We will continue to work to reassure the public by addressing the most prevalent offending behaviours, victim patterns, crime locations and incidents. We will ensure that there is support for victims of crime.

Encouraging young people to participate in their community in a positive way

We will provide safe, high quality facilities and events for young people, including encouraging and facilitating inter-generational projects to foster understanding and acceptance of younger people. We will work to improve representation of young people

in the media and raise the profile of young people locally. We will encourage the use of youth councils and other forums to ensure that young people's views are represented at all levels of decision making and will work to increase participation.

Planning for our needs

We will support the implementation of the Community Safety Plan and the Better Young Lives Action Plan. We will also support Mid Sussex District Council's Housing Strategy and West Sussex County Council's Children and Young People's Plan 2010-2015. We will work with the Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner in the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan.



Theme 3: Promoting Economic Vitality

The local economy has performed relatively well in recent years, with low unemployment and good business growth. It is proving resilient to the current economic downturn with a continued increase in the number of new enterprises since 2008. The survival rates of businesses have stayed above the national average during this time. However, a significant proportion of local people commute to work outside of the District. We are part of the 'Gatwick Diamond', an area of business activity benefiting from close proximity to the airport which has a combined economy worth £13.3bn, 8% of the area's total. Educational standards are high with nearly two-thirds of pupils currently achieving 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE including English and Mathematics, higher than the national average.

Challenges

Mid Sussex has relatively high levels of in and out commuting and it is important that appropriate employment opportunities are promoted within the district to ensure people who live locally can work locally.

There are already infrastructure deficits in sewerage and water supply as well as open space and sports/play provision and there are public concerns that further development will exacerbate these problems. Transport infrastructure is under particular strain with high levels of car ownership and car usage combining with narrow, winding rural roads and congested towns and major junctions.

An important element of achieving sustainable communities is the regeneration and renewal of the three town centres so that they can be attractive and thriving retail, leisure and commercial hubs each with their own distinctive character.

Developing a strong, sustainable local economy

We will work with the Gatwick Diamond and Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership to support our local economy. We will support appropriate development within the Gatwick Diamond and target assistance to high growth and key employment sectors. We will provide support for new businesses and social enterprises to start up, grow and flourish. We will work to maximise local employment, meet the need for business floor space and support tourism in the District.

Providing housing and infrastructure to meet the range of local needs

We will work to improve the supply and affordability of housing to ensure the right mix, size, type and location of accommodation is available for local people. We aim to ensure that the provision of infrastructure, including transport infrastructure and open spaces, address current needs and are developed in line with housing growth.

Delivering vibrant town centres that meet economic, social and cultural aspirations of the community

We will work with other organisations and local businesses to secure investments in and improvements to our town centres to

ensure that they meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. We will encourage people to shop and use services locally.

Promoting learning and training opportunities to improve workforce skills

We will maintain high educational standards in our schools and colleges and encourage more young people to stay in education or training. We will support the provision of educational and training opportunities at all stages of people's lives and work with local business partners to identify their skills needs and tackle unemployment.

Planning for our needs

We will support the implementation of the District Plan and Neighbourhood Plans. We will work together to deliver Supporting Economic Growth in West Sussex – An Economic Strategy for West Sussex 2012-2020 and Mid Sussex District Council's Economic Development Strategy. We will support the Gatwick Diamond Local Strategic Statement and the Coast to Capital Strategy for Growth.



Theme 4: Supporting Healthy Lifestyles

The overall health of local people is good with a higher than average life expectancy of 80.8 years for men and 83 years for women; however life expectancy is lower in the most deprived areas of Mid Sussex compared to the least deprived – 5.9 years lower for men and 4.3 years lower for women. The great diversity of open spaces in the District as well as formal indoor leisure facilities gives residents an opportunity to be active. Despite this only 11.9% of the adult population is participating in the recommended amount of physical activity per week and 23.4% of the adult population are classified as obese. Over the last 10 years early death rates from cancer and from heart disease and strokes have fallen and are better than the England average.

Challenges

A number of public health issues will put additional strain on local services in the near future. These include an ageing population, increasing levels of obesity and unsafe levels of drinking among younger people and adults. It will be important to continue to encourage adults and children to be physically active. Smoking still remains the single greatest cause of preventable death. Social isolation, loneliness, and care and support for older people are key issues to be addressed.

Not all residents enjoy the same ability to access cultural, leisure and recreational opportunities and certain communities suffer disproportionate levels of ill health.

Providing health services responsive and accessible to local people

We will seek to maintain and develop high quality health and wellbeing services for the population of Mid Sussex and ensure improved equality of access to them. We will enable older people to live healthily and, where possible, independently with appropriate support from health and social care services, and with access to preventative services and quality residential care where needed. We will work with carers to support their needs and the needs of the people they care for. We will support the provision of services in GP surgeries and work with local clinical commissioners to respond to and help to prevent causes of ill health. We will ensure that there is an increased take up of immunisations and screening. We will work together to deliver coordinated services across the district, to ensure that services are accessible to all. We will have a coordinated approach to reducing inequalities and the resulting differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy.

Providing cultural, leisure and recreational opportunities accessible to all residents

We will ensure provision of a range of cultural, leisure and recreational facilities across the District and enable more people to take advantage of them, including by providing better transport links.

Promoting healthy lifestyle choices that appeal to all ages

We will support building the capacity of local people and communities in improving their health and wellbeing. We will support development of healthy environments and look to promote active living, sport and cultural activities, particularly among those who are not currently active. We will work to improve diet and nutrition by raising awareness, educating children about healthy food, improving access to healthy food and promoting and supporting locally grown food. We will work to reduce the number of people who smoke. We will develop services to promote mental and emotional well-being and will work to reduce the incidence of cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and strokes.

Reducing the impact of alcohol and drugs on our community

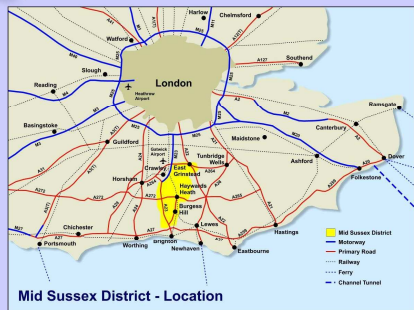
We will ensure there is an effective support system for people wishing to stop misusing drugs and alcohol including, improving advice and treatment options. We will educate young people and adults about substance misuse, informing them about safe drinking levels and the dangers of drug use. We will use enforcement powers to prevent sales of underage alcohol and continue to reduce alcohol and drug related incidents in our town centres.

Planning for our needs

We will support the implementation of the West Sussex Public Health Plan, West Sussex Health Inequalities Strategy and the West Sussex Health and Wellbeing Board's Health and

Wellbeing Strategy. We will ensure that we use the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment where appropriate when commissioning and procuring new services or projects.





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