



Working together
for a better future

Mid Sussex Partnership Board meeting, 21st October 2021

1. Key Decisions

It was agreed that:

- 1.1 Add representative of Community Transport Sussex (CTS) to MSP Board membership.

2. Welcome and introductions

2.1 Attendees:

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| Cllr Jonathan Ash-Edwards | Leader of MSDC - Chair |
| Helen Blanche | Temporary Commissioning and Partnerships Advisor, MSDC |
| Michelle Davies | Performance & Community Support Officer, MSDC – Minute Taker |
| Mandy Cunningham | Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager, MSDC |
| Paul Turner | Community Services Manager, MSDC |
| Neal Barton | Policy, Performance & Partnerships Manager, MSDC |
| Emma Sheridan | Business Unit Leader, Community Services, Policy & Performance, MSDC |
| Cllr Norman Webster | Cabinet Member for Community at MSDC |
| James Smith | Sussex Police |
| Jon Attfield | Sussex Police |
| Darren Taylor | Inspector, Sussex Police |
| Cllr Dick Sweatman | Mid Sussex Association of Town Councils |
| Cllr Jacquie Russell | Cabinet Member for Children and Families, WSCC |
| Lauren Lloyd | Manager, Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) |
| Nicola Walker | PCC |
| Matt Roberts | Community Transport Sussex |
| Kevin Bottrell | Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS) |

2.2 Apologies:

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| Emily King | Director of Communities, WSCC |
| Dr Laura Hill | NHS |
| John Willett | PCC |
| Nicky Dodds | Neighbourhood Investment Manager Clarion HG |
| Kate Birrell | WS Public Health |
| Adrian Carter | Fire & Rescue, WSCC |

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| James McGrath | Fire & Rescue, WSCC |
| Gordon Ackroyd | AiRS |
| Daniel MacIntyre | Public Health Consultant, WSCC |
| Ian Lynch | Community Transport Sussex |

3. Minutes of the MSP Board Meeting 15th July 2021

3.1 The minutes were deemed true and accurate and agreed.

4. Round table introductions and hot topics

- 4.1 Cllr Jacquie Russell (JR) – reported that mental health issues for young people are on the increase due to the impact of the pandemic and this is high on the agenda for West Sussex County Council. Covid cases are rising amongst the younger age groups and there has been disruptive behaviour from anti-vaxxers who have been prolific in East Grinstead and Burgess Hill. Police presence has been helpful.
- 4.2 Darren Taylor (DT) – updated on Police action in response to protesters from anti-vax groups outside schools. Engagement has taken place with groups such as Mid Sussex Assembly who are co-operative in talking through their plans, but there is another militant group, which has been active especially outside Imberhorne School, East Grinstead and in Burgess Hill. The Police are working with headteachers across Mid Sussex to be aware of dates when vaccination sites are planned and will have police officers and PCSOs at these sites monitoring, engaging and providing reassurance. This will continue throughout November and hopefully see a decrease in these protest groups being present once the programme has been fully rolled out.
- 4.3 DT updated on Operation Safety which is a Sussex Police response around reducing incidences of knife crime and serious violence within the county. Sussex was identified as being one of the 18 police forces affected by knife crime and received funding for this over a three year project. There are 14 hotspots across West Sussex, which are subject to high visibility foot patrols. Incidences of these crimes have reduced since the project has been running.
- 4.4 DT also updated on new offences under the Offensive Weapons Order Criminal Justice Act, which now makes it an offence to have certain weapons at home within a private dwelling. These include knuckledusters, ninja stars, telescopic truncheon, blowpipe, foot claw, hand claw, zombie knife etc and anything that has been adapted to look like a knife come under this law. Anyone who possesses any of these items in their home will be breaking the law and will be prosecuted.
- 4.5 Mandy Cunningham (MC) - added to DT's comments and updated that MSDC's Community Safety Team will be issuing communications around the change in legislation with partners and in the council.
- 4.6 Cllr Dick Sweatman (DS) – raised issues from the dangerous riding of e-scooters and recent incidents in East Grinstead, which he had reported to the Police. DT responded that there was a need for the government to discuss the issue of e-scooters and their legalisation, together with consideration of insurance, number plates and condition that they be ridden only on the road. He encouraged the reporting of such persistent incidents as anti-social behaviour via 101 or online to Sussex Police or the Sussex Safer Roads for Sussex websites.

5. Action in Rural Sussex (AiRS)

- 5.1 Kevin Bottrell (KB) – presented on the work of AiRS in supporting rural communities. They have teams of village agents who support development of community led initiatives such as: good neighbours schemes, volunteer driver schemes and lunch clubs. Current projects include Lost Woods where AiRS are working in partnership with the Woodland Trust and local landowners to conserve some of the ancient woodlands in Sussex and encourage local people to make use of these woodlands to improve their own physical and mental wellbeing. AiRS also have a housing team that supports the development of affordable housing in rural areas, including working with community land trusts.
- 5.2 KB's role focuses on AiRS support for village halls and community buildings. They currently support around 170 village halls in Sussex including 25 in Mid Sussex with governance issues, building regulations providing model documents and business templates. Village halls have been especially in need of support through the pandemic, including interpretation of guidance on Covid rules and advice on their financial survival given that most halls rely on hire charges for their income and have run down any reserves they had. AiRS has been supporting halls to find new ways of generating income. This has included helping halls write funding applications and looking at diversifying activities, becoming business and digital hubs, installing electric vehicle charging points and providing other services. AiRS are doing all they can to make sure halls can survive this crisis and thrive going forward.

Cllr Norman Webster (NW) was pleased to see Community Transport Sussex represented at the meeting by Matt Roberts (MR) and asked if AiRS is doing any work in respect of transport in rural areas as bus services contribute a great deal to preventing rural isolation and decline of villages. KB responded that AiRS has spoken to MR and will be working further with Community Transport Sussex going forward. AiRS village agents have been working with community transport schemes during the pandemic to arrange lifts to hospitals and getting people to their job appointments.

MR said that he would like to discuss more with KB about the prospect of electric vehicle charging points in village halls. He commented that AiRS has traditionally been stronger in East Sussex and it would be good to strengthen Community Transport schemes in West Sussex. KB responded that one of his priorities is for AiRS to do more in West Sussex at community level. Emma Sheridan (ES) echoed this and stated that MSDC is looking at the needs of rural communities and how they can be supported.

6. Rural Crime Policing in Mid Sussex

- 6.1 James Smith and Jon Attfield introduced themselves as the Rural Crime Team in Mid Sussex. The team has been running since June 2020 and is made up of 20 officers in total in East Sussex and Mid Sussex, Brighton & Hove. They specialise in countering agricultural crime, protecting wildlife heritage and dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB). Response teams also handle ASB that occurs in villages. The main focus of the team is on farms, livestock, dog control in the countryside and poaching. Many organised criminal gangs are involved in rural crimes. The team are currently encouraging the rural community to report crimes and building bridges with people who have had a negative experience reporting rural crimes in the past.

Cllr NW praised the rural policing team and mentioned the recent PCC report that committed to its further expansion. He emphasised the high proportion of the District's income that is generated from the rural economy and the need to promote the Team's work.

7. Community Transport in Mid Sussex

- 7.1 Matt Roberts (MR) provided a presentation on the work of Community Transport Sussex (CTS), which had been formed through a merger in October 2016 of three charities: Crawley Community Transport, Horsham District Community Transport and Bluebird Community Partnership. They provide some 110,000 community passenger journeys per year, including transport for day trips, medical appointments, shops, family and friend visits. This helps

vulnerable residents to keep their independence and not become isolated. CTS work with many partners including Voice for Disability, Parkinson's UK, Chailey Youth Group, Speak Out, Cross Roads Care South Central and the Stroke Association.

- 7.2 Current operations include Dial-A-Ride, which has been supplemented by vaccine transport and coordination; Age UK service into the day centres and trips out for members; and groups hire working to support groups such as Kangaroos. Recent developments for CTS include working with WSCC to replace vulnerable public bus routes that are unlikely to resume post Covid. Also Travel Buddies and zero emission community car schemes. They have direct funding arrangements via contracts with CCGs and local authorities, including a Thakeham pilot scheme with Horsham DC using s106 money. CTS now provides community transport delivery and infrastructure support across West Sussex. MR expressed a wish for CTS to work in partnership with the MSP Board to support more people across Mid Sussex.

Cllr NW asked if CTS are receiving support for moving to electric vehicles and the provision of charging points. ES commented that MSDC are expanding their provision of charging points and wished to link in with CTS.

8. Question time in respect of the Health Subgroup Quarter 2 Report

- 8.1 Paul Turner (PT) updated. The Lions had held a diabetes screening event in East Grinstead on 25th September, which had been well attended. This event resulted in 10% of those who attended being referred to the national programme. An exercise referral project is being run for young cancer recovery patients. Mid Sussex Older People's Council will be leading an event with living older people.

Cllr NW commented that currently in East Grinstead, one of the GP surgeries are only offering emergency appointments due to staff illness. Asked PT if work is being done by the CCGs to encourage recruitment of staff to cover GP work. PT responded that the CCGs are aligned to PCNs. Brighton Housing Trust is working with local PCN areas to have their staff working in GP practices.

9. Question time in respect of the Community Resilience Subgroup Quarter 2 Report

- 9.1 Emma Sheridan (ES) updated on the work of the group, which was prioritising recovery from the pandemic and rebuilding resilience in communities. The community and voluntary sectors are seeing increased demand as we come out of pandemic. Data gathering and intelligence is being used to establish emerging community needs. The Group is awaiting the outcome of a number of funding bids. MSVA have taken over the Cherry Tree Centre from Age UK, which will be providing a new home for the Escape youth club in Burgess Hill.

MR reported that the voluntary and community sectors are tired and that covid had led to the loss of many colleagues and families of volunteers. He asked if a resource for mental health in the workplace is available for the voluntary sector. PT responded that a workplace wellbeing service is currently in place. This includes talks on food, sleep, mood and the menopause. MSDC are willing to put more resources in place.

10. Question time in respect of the Community Safety Subgroup Quarter 2 Report

- 10.1 Mandy Cunningham (MC) updated and echoed Sussex Police's comments regarding the importance of reporting issues to 101 or 999 as if issues are not reported, they will not feature as priorities. MSDC in conjunction with Sussex Police and Clarion Housing recently held a public engagement event to mark ASB Awareness week. The event made the public aware of how they can report ASB. 'Your Life You Choose' days are held in schools and feature people from the legal profession and ex-offenders. They aim for prevention and ensuring that young people make the right decisions and do not engage in bad behaviour. A session was held at Imberhorne School in the Summer and three other schools are keen to press ahead with these events. MC reported that a fraud project is currently running

involving MSVA and WSCC fraud team working with Operation Signature to promote fraud awareness to older people in November.

11. MSP Projects and Budget for Quarter Two 2021-22

- 11.1 Helen Blanche updated. The YMCA positive placements NEETS mentoring project is being looked at again and talks have been held with the job centre on the demand for the service. A meeting is scheduled for late in October. Health subgroup have delivered their projects. Brighton Housing Trust have got an additional funding of £2,000 that was unspent, so this has been put back into Health subgroup budget. The Community Resilience Sub-Group has been working on projects looking at digital inclusion and the voluntary sector with £10,000 carried over from last year.

12. Emerging issues and future topics for Board

- 12.1 Digital inclusion was suggested as the theme for the next MSP meeting, but it was agreed that, given the feedback received at this meeting, the focus of the January meeting should be mental health issues. The Board agreed to continue with virtual meetings and to look to hold a once-a-year face-to-face meeting. MR commented that transport issues cut across all three subgroups and his suggestion that Sussex Community Transport should be invited to join the MSPB Board was agreed.

13. Proposed dates for future meetings:

- 13.1 The next MSPB meetings are scheduled for:
- Thursday 20th January 2022.
 - Thursday 21st April 2022.

These are all currently scheduled to be online meetings.