

Report to: Place Scrutiny
Date of meeting: 12 March 2024
By: Chief Operating Officer
Title: Update on the SPACES Programme
Purpose: To provide and update on the work of the SPACES programme, including its successes and future focus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Place Scrutiny is recommended to:

- 1) Note the update report on the work of the SPACES programme, including its successes and future focus.**

1 Background

1.1 The Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex (SPACES) Programme was formed in 2011 by a number of public and third sector organisations with the aim to improve the customer journey, whilst creating efficiencies and more effective environments to deliver services. The original focus was largely on co-locations and collaboration around property assets and strategies. SPACES remit has since extended to become the One Public Estate (OPE) Partnership for East Sussex, now with a broader focus on regeneration, housing and sustainability priorities, based around continuing collaboration and utilisation of public sector assets. Further information about Partner organisations, OPE, and SPACES objectives are included in Appendix 1.

1.2 The SPACES Programme Team (1.6fte, hosted by ESCC) manages and drives the Programme activities on behalf of member organisations. As per the current funding model, the roles are funded through a combination of grant and annual financial contributions by partner organisations.

2 Supporting information

Strategy and Delivery

2.1 The most recent SPACES Strategy was developed for the period May 2021 – 2024, based around a set of Themes (following stakeholder engagement to identify priorities). An accompanying Implementation Plan set out the actions for each Theme, with 6-monthly progress reports provided to the SPACES Programme Board.

2.2 Appendix 2 sets out a snapshot of information relating to the delivery and progress of the SPACES Programme, including:

- Benefits Summary from SPACES Programme since 2012 across all partners of SPACES (p.2)
- Successful funding awards following bids by the SPACES Programme Team (p.3-4)
- ‘Heatmap’ showing geographical distribution of live SPACES projects (p.5)
- Key areas of progress against SPACES Strategy Themes 2021-2024 (p.6-11)

2.3 The SPACES Programme Team is proactive in engaging with other related teams or Programmes, such as the East Sussex Housing Partnership, Environment Board, Skills East Sussex, and the Sussex Integrated Care Board (ICB) including recently supporting the development of the Sussex Integrated Care System (ICS) Estates and Infrastructure Strategy. Understanding respective objectives and activities helps to maximise synergies and avoid duplication.

2.4 SPACES also actively engages with the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Alliance to raise awareness of the service offer and understand the sector requirements. This includes the 'Space Needs and Available' process whereby VCSE organisations can inform SPACES of their requirements, and the Programme Team facilitates exploration of whether solutions can be found through public sector collaboration. The VCSE Alliance also has Board member representation on SPACES and is an active partner.

Looking forward

2.5 As the current SPACES Strategy period draws to a close, the Programme Board are considering the key Themes looking forward for the future iteration of the Strategy. Engagement to date indicates that there will be minimal change to the overall Themes, and therefore will continue to include a focus on areas such as health and social care, net zero, regeneration and housing, alongside asset collaboration and utilisation.

2.6 In the context of the financial pressures facing the public sector, collaborative solutions identified and delivered through partnerships are a key mechanism for making best use of public sector resources.

2.7 For example, several planned SPACES activities support Local Authorities in the context of the housing crisis. Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) applications worth £2,830,000 were submitted through SPACES in February 2024. If successful, this would result in additional BLRF projects under the Programme Management, and ultimately deliver a total of 142 new housing units in the county (award outcome from DLUHC due Summer 2024). Further housing related activities are included on Appendix 2, slide 10.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 The SPACES Programme has achieved significant progress and delivered significant benefits (quantitative and qualitative) to partners since inception in 2011. There has been enhanced momentum on supporting wider outcomes such as regeneration and sustainability since the inception of the SPACES Strategy in 2021. Looking forward, the Programme will be a vital mechanism for partners to identify and deliver collaborative asset solutions to financial and other challenges facing the public sector partners.

3.2 Place Scrutiny is recommended to note the update report on the work of the SPACES Programme, including its successes and future focus.

ROS PARKER

Chief Operating Officer

Contact Officer: Nigel Brown, Assistant Director - Property

Tel. No: 07394 410630

Email: Nigel.Brown@eastsussex.gov.uk