

The Sussex Air Quality Partnership (Sussex-air)



Business Plan 2018/19

1. The Sussex Air Quality Partnership (Sussex-air)

Sussex-air is a partnership, set up in 2000, comprised of officers from all the Local Authorities in Sussex. The partnership has a set of terms of reference but is not a formally constituted body. All partners pay an annual subscription of £3,000 to Sussex-air, which is used to fund the services set out in section 5. The partnership is currently hosted by ESCC and chaired by Adur-Worthing District Council. The partners meet quarterly to discuss air quality policy and practice, decide on budget allocations, review existing contract performance and work on joint bids for funding.

2. Members of Sussex-air

All 14 of the Local Authorities in Sussex are members of Sussex-air, including representatives from Public Health at East Sussex, West Sussex and Brighton and Hove

Associated, non-contributing, members include:

- University of Brighton
- The Environment Agency.

3. Aim and objectives of the Partnership

The aims of the partnership are to assist partners to comply with their statutory LAQM duties and to contribute to improving health in Sussex.

The objectives of the partnership are to pool limited resources to provide:

- A co-ordinated and quality-assured air quality evidence base
- Information and advice to the public
- A means to co-ordinate work to improve air quality (e.g. joint initiatives and bids for funding).

4. Day to day running of the partnership

ESCC manages the partnership budget, and provides legal, procurement and IT expertise as required. A contractor is employed on a part-time basis to:

- 1) manage and promote the Sussex Air website and the Alert services, including meeting targets for subscriptions to the alert services (Air / Cold / Heat);
- 2) coordinate the air quality data management contract for partners;
- 3) respond to queries from the public, partners and stakeholders;
- 4) organise the quarterly partnership meetings and papers;
- 5) support delivery of the business plan actions (see section 5).

5. Sussex-air work programme for 2018/19

The main activities to be carried out during 2018/19 to meet the aim and objectives of the partnership include:

5.1 Evidence base

- a. Kings College Environmental Research Group (ERG) are contracted to deliver the data management contract for Sussex-air to 31 May 2018. The specification for the new contract has been substantially updated and a re-procurement exercise is being carried out. A new contractor is expected to be appointed in April 2018, with a handover in May to ensure a seamless continuation of the data and alert services.
- b. The successful contractor will manage the websites, air quality monitoring data collection and dissemination and issue airAlerts.

5.2 Information and advice to the public

- a. The Sussex Air website will be substantially updated and improved in 2018 through the new contract, to make it accessible on mobile devices and more user-friendly (for both the public and partners), and to give it greater reach.
- b. The airAlert service will operate all year round, providing information to vulnerable residents, frontline health professionals, third sector partners and carers who are working with vulnerable residents.
- c. The coldAlert service will operate every day during the winter months, from 1st November 2018 to 31st March 2019.
- d. The new heat Alert service, the set-up costs of which have been funded by ESCC, will operate from 1 June 2018 to 15 September 2018, providing information and support during heatwave temperatures.
- e. The Alert services will be promoted to the key audiences, with a target in 2018-19 to increase the number of subscribers as follows:

AirAlert – an increase of 10% across Sussex (current subscribers = 969).
ColdAlert - an increase of 5% across Sussex (current subscribers = 1,048).
HeatAlert - 200 subscribers.
- f. The planned communications and marketing activities for 2018/19 are summarised in Appendix 2.
- g. All websites will be modified to ensure that they are compliant with the new General Data Protection Regulations, which comes into force in May 2018.
- h. The Alert services will begin to use the government's 'notify.GOV' service in 2018, which enables free alerts to be issued to subscribers. This will reduce costs to Sussex Air by avoiding the need to pay for texts, which reduces one of the barriers to marketing higher levels of take up by vulnerable residents.

5.3 Co-ordination of air quality work

- a. Quarterly partnership meetings will be held, at different venues in Sussex, to agree on and arrange shared activities, such as the data contract and bids. These meetings provide a forum for officers to share policy updates, technical knowledge, good practice and engage collectively with Public Health and transport colleagues.
- b. Changes to the data contract specification are being agreed by the partnership (e.g. which monitoring stations to include and why.) The contract will be procured and managed by ESCC, on behalf of Sussex Air partners, and is funded by partner subs.
- c. Sussex Air is organising a conference on air quality and noise with the Sussex Pollution Working Group for 2 May, focussing on the public health impacts of poor air quality and excessive noise and the local practical actions that can be taken to reduce these impacts. The conference is being jointly funded by Sussex Air, the regional office of the CIEH and the Sussex CEHOs. The target audiences include Public Health, land use and transport planners, and local Members.
- d. A bid to Defra's Air Quality Grant fund was submitted by Sussex Air in December 2018. If successful, the targets are to deliver intensive interventions in 25 schools and 25 businesses within the AQMAs in Sussex to reduce local emissions.
- e. If the Defra bid is unsuccessful we will consider trialling a much smaller scale version of the programme across Sussex, funded by the partnership.
- e. Consultation responses will be coordinated on behalf of Sussex Air partners where partners provide comments to be included .
- f. Sussex-air will assist WSCC with the production and delivery of their emerging County-wide air quality strategy/plan.
- f. The chair and vice-chair of Sussex-air are representatives on Defra's national Local Authority Air Quality Group.
- g. Sussex-air will complete the co-ordination of the EnergiSE Network, which brings together the partners who own the 18 rapid chargers installed across the S.E. in 2015 with DfT (OLEV) funding. The Energise network contracts will end in September 2018, at which point the site owners will take ownership and responsibility for the service and maintenance of the eV units.
- h. The Sussex Air Quality and Emissions Mitigation Guidance will be reviewed and updated, in light of local and national practice.

6. Sussex-air budget 2018/19

Budget item	£
Income	
Balance from 2017-18 (estimated)	-40,600
Partner subs	-45,000
airAlert (franchise to other LAs)	-5,300
coldAlert (East Sussex Public Health grant)	-6,000
airAlert (West Sussex Public Health grant)	-4,000
Total income:	100,900
Expenditure	
Data contract (estimated, as subject to contract)	30,000
Partnership management, comms, delivery of Alerts (contractor)	15,000
Air Alert marketing	1,000
Cold Alert marketing	500
Heat Alert marketing	500
eV EnergiSE network	0
Sussex AQ and noise conference	1,000
ESCC hosting costs	5,000
Cost to host 3 rd party AirAlert sites	2,500
Rye Harbour ozone site maintenance contract	1,250
Miscellaneous	1,500
Total costs	58,250
TOTAL FORECAST AT YEAR END	-42,650

Key risks to the partnership are detailed in Appendix 1.

APPENDIX 1 – KEY RISKS

Risk	Impact	Risk assessment 1 = Low; 3 = High Impact x Likely = Result			Proposed Countermeasures
		Impact	Likely	Result	
Budget: reduction in future income	Unable to deliver part of the business plan	3	1	6	1) Commitment from partners to annual subs. 2) Avoid financial commitments beyond current available resources.
Policy & legislation: change to LAQM, either: 1) increasing the burden on LAs or 2) ending LA responsibility for local air quality	1) Increased pressure on Sussex-air. 2) Loss of rationale for Sussex-air.	3	1	3	1) Use current surplus to addressed pressures. 2) Close Sussex-air.
Staff: loss of key staff with knowledge of Sussex-air contracts & projects	Unable to deliver part of the business plan & meet partner needs and fulfil contract liabilities	3	2	6	1) Document all contracts & projects for ease of handover. 2) Procure staff capacity so that there is flexibility, and test the wider market.

APPENDIX 2. – COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

Marketing of the alert services

Sussex-air adopts a range of approaches to publicise and promote Sussex-air and the alert services. We use hard copy publications including Your County magazine in East Sussex and the Health and Community Guides in West Sussex (Crawley, Horsham and Haywards Heath) and Brighton & Hove. In addition we produce several thousand printed leaflets annually which are distributed to a wide range of services, including frontline staff (Carers, Adult Social Care, Home from Hospital etc), third sector partners, Children's Centres and Care Homes.

Campaigns

We promote the airAlert and coldAlert services throughout the year and there are two main marketing campaigns for the alert services, Breathe Easy week in June for airAlert and the launch of coldAlert in October/November. During these campaigns we raise the profile of the services through targeted social media and digital marketing, this includes paid Facebook advertisements and promotion of the services through Twitter. The alert services are also publicised through partner events and in in-house publications (In Brief magazine, PH Bulletin, e-newsletters.)

In 2018 East Sussex County Council comms team ran social media campaigns through the ESCC Facebook and Twitter accounts, which resulted in a noticeable increase in subscribers in East Sussex, particularly to the coldAlert service. We will continue to work with our colleagues in West Sussex and Brighton and Hove to share good practice and promote the services to increase subscriptions across the county.

A six week trial was carried out in Feb/March 2018 in East Sussex (funded by PH) to promote the coldAlert service on prescription bags in 30 independent pharmacies. A review of the success of the pilot (increase in subscriptions) will be carried out at the end of the trial period.

In addition to the marketing campaigns we continue to promote Sussex-air and the alert services through partnership working with Sussex-air officers, partners in Public Health and meetings with health colleagues throughout the year.

Actions

1. Promote the alert services more widely across Sussex, exploring opportunities and using the full range of communication/marketing options available, to work with WSCC and B&HCC comms teams. Low/no cost options. - JB
2. Explore opportunities to work with Breathe Easy and other respiratory groups across Sussex to raise awareness of the alert services. JB
3. All partners to promote Sussex-air and the alert services within their district/borough and share information/contacts and best practice. All
4. Work closely with Public Health to promote alert services with PH partners and frontline staff. JB
5. Keep track of the comms/marketing activities and review the effectiveness of campaigns. JB

Full details of the Sussex-air marketing activities can be provided, on request.