



# **Greater Brighton Economic Board**

**25 March 2026  
11.00am**

**Arun District Council Chamber, Arun Civic Centre, Maltravers Road,  
Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN17 5LF**

## **AGENDA**



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Contact:	<p><b>Francis Mitchell</b> Democratic Services Officer 01273 294183 Francis.Mitchell@brighton-hove.gov.uk</p>
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AGENDA

**1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS**

**(a) Declaration of Substitutes:** Where Members of the Board are unable to attend a meeting, a designated substitute for that Member may attend, speak and vote in their place for that meeting.

**(b) Declarations of Interest:**

- (a) Disclosable pecuniary interests not registered on the register of interests;
- (b) Any other interests required to be registered under the local code;
- (c) Any other general interest as a result of which a decision on the matter might reasonably be regarded as affecting you or a partner more than a majority of other people or businesses in the ward/s affected by the decision.

In each case, you need to declare

- (i) the item on the agenda the interest relates to;
- (ii) the nature of the interest; and
- (iii) whether it is a disclosable pecuniary interest or some other interest.

If unsure, Members should seek advice from the committee lawyer or administrator preferably before the meeting.

**(c) Exclusion of Press and Public:** To consider whether, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, or the nature of the proceedings, the press and public should be excluded from the meeting when any of the following items are under consideration.

***NOTE:*** Any item appearing in Part Two of the Agenda states in its heading the category under which the information disclosed in the report is exempt from disclosure and therefore not available to the public.

*A list and description of the exempt categories is available from the Secretary to the Board.*

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting held on XX X XXXX

**3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS**

## **GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD**

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Date of Publication - Wednesday, 18 March 2026

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Economic Opportunities Study</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>25 March 2026</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board</b>
<b>Contact Officer: Name:</b>	<b>Andy Hill</b>
<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:Andy.Hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk">Andy.Hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 In February 2025, Sussex and Brighton was one of six regions confirmed as being on the Devolution Priority Programme, meaning that this region has been moving rapidly towards establishing a Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA).
- 1.2 Sustainable economic prosperity is the main focus of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (the Board), and the Board has been able to add great value and demonstrate competence in the areas of economic development & regeneration and environment & climate change. Given that the Sussex and Brighton region is on the Devolution Priority Programme, it was agreed that the work of the Board through 2025/26 be framed within the context of devolution so that the Board remained an important, proactive and relevant governance structure through the transition period, and that key strands of work continue into the future.
- 1.3 The region is therefore entering a pivotal moment, offering the chance to build on the Board's achievements to date, and to use this as a launchpad for the establishment of SBCCA. To that end, the Board commissioned an independent Economic Opportunities Review for Greater Brighton, to consider current priorities for Greater Brighton in the context of devolution, and the enhanced powers and funding that will become available. There is an opportunity to reposition Sussex (i.e., through the lens of Greater Brighton) at the forefront of a rapidly evolving national context; one that is shaped by the National Industrial Strategy and the Government's wider growth ambitions.
- 1.4 An Integration Plan is currently under development to set out how the Board's priority programmes, partnerships and commissioned work could be transferred into the SBCCA. The Economic Opportunities Review identifies a number of opportunities that will help inform the proposal for integration. As an evidence-led assessment of regional opportunity in the context of devolution, it will be presented within the Integration Proposal alongside other Board initiatives, with clear alignment to SBCCA's Areas of Competence and to the strategic and statutory documents SBCCA will be required to prepare.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Board agrees with the seven key opportunity areas outlined in 3.11.
- 2.2 That the Board agrees that the Economic Opportunities Review be included within the Integration Proposal.

## **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In December 2025, it was confirmed that SBCCA will receive £38 million per year Investment Funds allocation for 30 years. The Fund will be split equally between capital and revenue, and will be ‘un-ringfenced’, giving local choice on which priorities are invested in. This funding will be in addition to devolved funding streams. The inaugural Mayoral election will take place in May 2028, and in the meantime, work would progress on establishing the new structures, with Sussex and Brighton receiving 40% of its allocated annual Investment Funds over the next two years (i.e., £15.2 million per annum).
- 3.2 SBCCA will have a defined list of ‘Areas of Competence’, set out in law including; transport & local infrastructure, skills & employment support, housing & strategic planning, economic development & regeneration and environment & climate change.
- 3.3 The Economic Opportunities Study explores a series of opportunities and initiatives that SBCCA, and eventually the Mayor, can prioritise as the region charts its course through the early stages of devolution. These span a range of themes, but cut across multiple policy areas, which creates scope for a more integrated growth, stronger investment cases and wider benefits for both businesses and communities alike. This approach reflects the reality of the region’s challenges and acknowledges that opportunities are best addressed through joined-up action, which devolution will provide a stronger platform for. The Review is intended to directly inform the Integration Proposal by:
  - a) providing a single, agreed evidence base that SBCCA can adopt without duplication;
  - b) setting out the initial set of cross-cutting priorities recommended for early SBCCA focus; and
  - c) providing the policy “line of sight” from devolved powers to practical actions that can be embedded within SBCCA’s emerging strategies and statutory plans.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- 3.4 Transport is one of the region’s most significant barriers to growth, constraining connectivity and productivity. Key challenges include bottlenecks and constraints on the road network, unreliable public transport services and limited alternatives to private car use. Devolution gives SBCCA the ability to convene national agencies, operators and local partners to align investment, champion shovel-ready schemes, and develop a coherent and long-term transport vision for the region. By embedding these opportunities within the Local Transport Plan, SBCCA can

develop an integrated, and future ready network that better connects people to opportunities, unlocks labour markets and which positions Sussex as a leader in sustainable mobility.

### **Skills and Employment**

- 3.5 The current skills system remains fragmented, leaving employers with persistent skills gaps, and residents without the training or support needed to progress. This is especially true in a labour market that is increasingly shaped by digital, green and knowledge-based demands. Devolution provides the opportunity to build a Sussex-wide future ready skills and employment ecosystem by aligning schools, further and higher education providers, employers and local authorities around shared priorities.

### **Housing & Strategic Planning**

- 3.6 The region faces long standing challenges in delivering enough affordable housing and employment land, with coastal and other natural constraints limiting space for growth, which contributes to higher business costs, raising housing pressures and affordability challenges. Devolution offers a chance to address these constraints strategically; through a new Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) that informs a comprehensive Local Growth Plan, SBCCA and the Mayor can coordinate land release to unlock sites for growth and innovation and drive the delivery of affordable housing. The SBCCA will have the leverage to proactively work with strategic partners to tackle some of the other issues like grid capacity and water neutrality.

### **Economic Development and Regeneration**

- 3.7 The region's economy combines long established industries with emerging specialisms. However, fragmented delivery has limited the ability to maximise these strengths. Devolution gives SBCCA the tools to align innovation, investment, housing, skills and infrastructure into a joined-up regional strategy.
- 3.8 The region has four international gateways, and the ports of Newhaven and Shoreham have the potential to be drivers of clean growth. The region has a diverse and globally-recognised visitor economy, but there is a need to reimagine the sector to unlock its full potential. There are strengths in emerging sectors (e.g. createch, quantum computing), but these need support to capitalise on the opportunity. By convening partners, embedding strengths and assets within the Local Growth Plan and leveraging devolved powers, SBCCA can elevate Sussex's economic profile, unlock high-quality employment and revitalise and renew the regions town centres.

### **Environment and climate change**

- 3.9 The region faces the combined pressures of tackling climate change, strengthening energy security and accommodating economic and housing growth. This makes coordination essential to avoiding fragmented delivery and ensuring that the environment is seen as a driver of prosperity, rather than a constraint. The Sussex Energy Mission is starting to address these challenges and is a major opportunity for the region. Devolution equips SBCCA with the tools to embed clean

energy and natural capital at the core of its growth strategy. By embedding environmental protection within the Local Growth Plan and supporting SDS, SBCCA can ensure that new housing, employment and infrastructure respect ecological limits while also maximising opportunities for sustainable and long-term growth.

### **Priority actions and next steps**

- 3.10 Drawing on the above, a series of priorities and potential next steps are identified. The proposed actions are designed to shape delivery across the short to medium term, while also laying firm foundations for long-term transformation. In doing so, the study translates the preceding opportunities into a clear set of proposals which can generate measurable benefits.
- 3.11 Taken together, the following actions highlight the importance of an integrated and cross cutting delivery, ensuring that transport, skills, housing, energy and natural capital are aligned so that individual opportunities reinforce one another. The ability to convene partners, supported by the scale of a Sussex-wide Local Growth Plan, with key housing and planning strategies (such as the SDS) underneath, and the potential for creating new delivery vehicles will be central to turning strategic ambition into tangible and inclusive outcomes that endure well into the long-term.

#### **(1) Embed the Sussex Energy Mission as a cornerstone to delivery**

This flagship programme offers a powerful opportunity to align clean energy deployment with economic growth, skills and spatial planning. Analysis suggests that achieving energy neutrality by 2040 could require capital investment in the order of £45-£50 billion. National evidence shows that every £1 billion in low carbon turnover supports around 4,600 jobs across the economy<sup>1</sup>.

By embedding the Mission within the Spatial Development Strategy and coordinating grid, infrastructure and supply chain activity, SBCCA can ensure that a far greater share of this investment is captured locally — driving green jobs, strengthening SMEs, building skills pathways and improving energy resilience.

#### **(2) Ensure the adequate provision of employment space to meet business needs**

The region requires a coordinated and Sussex-wide review of employment land to ensure that future supply keeps pace with the needs of modern businesses and high value sectors.

#### **(3) Raising productivity levels and supporting sectoral growth**

A step-change in productivity levels will require a focused, and evidence-led approach that defines and prioritises sectoral strengths, while at the same time aligning investment, skills and land provision around these. This dovetails with the ambition outlined by the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy; to "*seize the most significant opportunities and create the most favourable conditions in key UK*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/environmentalaccounts/bulletins/finalestimates/2023>

sectors". With world-leading institutions and a growing ecosystem of innovative firms, the region is well-placed to attract investment in R&D, while at the same time diversifying the region's economic base by expanding existing sectors to unlock productivity gains.

#### **(4) Develop an investment prospectus for Sussex**

An investment prospectus translates the region's strengths and development pipeline into a compelling and investor-ready offer, packaging shovel-ready projects along with potential employment sites, skills pathways and regional initiatives into a suite of clearly costed and de-risked propositions. The approach adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority evidences how successful delivery has made the West Midlands as the UK's most investible region outside London, with over 130 projects supporting an estimated 5,800 jobs during 2024 and 2025<sup>2</sup><sub>OBJ</sub>.

#### **(5) Deliver a long-term affordable and sustainable housing strategy**

A long-term, strategic approach to housing delivery is essential to meeting the region's unmet needs, and support genuinely inclusive economic growth. Through the SDS, SBCCA and the Mayor can plan at scale, while also prioritising well connected sites and removing barriers. The HACT Social Value Bank suggests that each household accessing affordable housing experiences in the region of £4,700 of annual social value benefit<sup>3</sup>. More broadly, the delivery of sufficient new homes will support labour market growth, underpinning the region's wider economic growth ambitions.

#### **(6) Develop a vision for Newhaven and Shoreham Ports to lead economic diversification**

The two ports are more than simple gateways for freight and passengers travelling to/from the region; they are strategic assets with potential to anchor a more diverse and resilient regional economy. Devolution gives SBCCA the platform to set a bold and unified vision that links port investment into regional priorities, positioning the ports as Sussex-wide economic and community anchors.

#### **(7) Leverage major projects to drive local economic value**

The region is experiencing a period of unprecedented capital investment, including Gatwick expansion, Rampion 2, coastal defence upgrades and major housing and infrastructure delivery. However, current evidence suggests that only a small proportion of total project value is captured by Sussex-based businesses (with early estimates for Rampion 2 indicating around 1% of total spend locally). Devolution creates an opportunity to treat major projects as strategic economic catalysts — rather than isolated infrastructure schemes. By coordinating procurement, strengthening local supply chain readiness, aligning skills provision with forthcoming demand and embedding local value

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/regional-investment-summit-delivers-almost-800m-boost-to-west-midlands-creating-hundreds-of-jobs>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hact.org.uk/tools-and-services/uk-social-value-bank/>

expectations into major schemes, SBCCA can maximise the economic return from this investment pipeline.

#### **4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.2 Through background research and engaging with stakeholders, the Consultants were presented with a large number of potential opportunities for consideration. These Consultants analysed and evaluated all of these options and based on their methodology have concluded that the seven identified in 3.11 should be prioritised at this stage.

#### **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 As part of the initial research the Consultants engaged with Greater Brighton Economic Board Members and wider stakeholders to understand the key challenges and opportunities facing local authority areas, sectors, and individual organisations.

#### **6 CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The Economic Opportunities Review provides an evidence-led framework for how devolved powers can translate into practical interventions for growth, inclusion and decarbonisation. Board endorsement of the seven priorities enables them to be incorporated into the Integration Proposal as a recommended package for SBCCA adoption, helping maintain momentum through the transition period and reducing duplication as SBCCA develops its Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan.

#### **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

##### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The SBCCA will be responsible for considering the financial implications of any proposal it takes forward from the Economic Opportunities Study.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Deputy CFO (BHCC) Haley Woollard  
Date: 17/03/2026*

##### Legal Implications:

- 7.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Should the SBCCA wish to take forward any of the proposals set out in the Economic Study, this will be for the SBCCA to consider under its own governance and decision-making processes.

*Lawyer Consulted: Head of Legal (Commercial) BHCC Siobhan Fry  
Date: 13/-3/2026*

##### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 There are no equalities implications arising directly from this report.

## Sustainability Implications

7.4 There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

Economic Opportunities Study: Executive Summary

Economic Opportunities Study: Final Report



# **Economic Opportunities Review for Greater Brighton**

## **Main Report**

Greater Brighton Economic Board

17 March 2026

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## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Greater Brighton is a dynamic functional economic area comprising the seven local authority areas of Brighton and Hove, Arun, Worthing, Adur, Mid Sussex, Crawley, and Lewes. The Greater Brighton Economic Board (‘GBEB’) brings together these local authorities with a range of other public and private sector partners to promote, and create the conditions for sustainable economic prosperity, working together since the Board was established in 2014 through the Greater Brighton City Deal.

1.2 Within the context of evolving devolution, GBEB’s flagship priority is to transition the region towards net zero, supported by a number of other opportunities, including conserving natural capital, unleashing the potential of the region’s creative industries and strengthening the local food economy.

## Background

1.3 The publication of the English Devolution White Paper<sup>1</sup> (henceforth ‘the Devolution White Paper’) in December 2024 marked a significant shift in the Government’s approach to local economic planning, whilst also reshaping the delivery of public services across England. Building on this (in February 2025), the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (‘MHCLG’) kickstarted a process to reconfigure the structure and responsibilities of local councils through local government reorganisation<sup>2</sup>. This process seeks to simplify local government, reduce service duplication, improve efficiency and save money and is separate from, albeit running in parallel to devolution.

1.4 However, prior to the Devolution White Paper, and in response to an invitation by the Deputy Prime Minister (i.e., in July 2024) Brighton and Hove City Council, acting on behalf of local authorities across both East and West Sussex, submitted in October 2024 an Expression of Interest (‘EoI’) to Government for a Sussex-wide devolution deal.

1.5 The EoI set out a shared commitment to collaboration across Councils and partners, recognising both the strengths and untapped potential of the region. As highlighted within the EoI, Sussex is home to a diverse range of assets which include a nationally significant coastline and national park forming the Brighton and Lewes Downs Biosphere<sup>3</sup>, three leading universities<sup>4</sup> and a strong further education (‘FE’) sector<sup>5</sup>, a Premier League football club with international acclaim, in addition to major gateways<sup>6</sup>. Yet, the EoI also acknowledges that the region has “*much more to offer*”, with persistent disparities and pockets of deprivation limiting its potential for achieving inclusive growth.

1.6 The aspiration underpinning the devolution bid is to unlock powers and funding that will drive economic growth, strengthen local decision-making, and ensure that communities and businesses benefit directly from investment into the region.

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2024), *English Devolution White Paper*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2025), *Local government reorganisation: Policy and programme updates*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>3</sup> See: [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>4</sup> i.e., the University of Brighton, University of Chichester and University of Sussex.

<sup>5</sup> Incl., the East Sussex College Group, the Greater Brighton Metropolitan College, Chichester College, and Plumpton College.

<sup>6</sup> Incl., Gatwick Airport, Shoreham Port, Newhaven Port and Brighton City Airport.

- 1.7 In February 2025, it was confirmed that Sussex (i.e., comprising East and West Sussex, as well as Brighton & Hove) has been accepted onto the Government’s Devolution Priority Programme, with the aim of establishing a Mayoral Combined County Authority (‘MCCA’) within 12 months – to be known as the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (‘SBCCA’) as shown below.

Figure 1.1 Sussex and Brighton



Source: MHCLG

- 1.8 This new body, ultimately led by an elected Mayor, will hold strategic powers across transport, housing, skills, economic growth, public safety, health and climate action, with discussions currently underway to agree the terms of devolution for the region.
- 1.9 Taken together, these reforms will mark a fundamental reorganisation of the local funding landscape – moving away from competitive bidding towards a model that recognises the centrality of Strategic Authorities (i.e., the SBCCA in the case of Sussex) in driving economic growth opportunities.
- 1.10 In December 2025, it was confirmed that the SBCCA will receive £38 million per year Investment Funds allocation for 30 years. These Funds will be split equally between capital and revenue, and will be ‘un-ringfenced’, giving local choice on which priorities are invested in. This funding will be additional to devolved funding streams from individual government departments, such as adult skills funding and transport funding. It was also confirmed that the inaugural Mayoral election will now take place in May 2028<sup>7</sup>, but that progress would continue in the meantime on establishing the new structures, with Sussex and Brighton receiving 40% of its allocated annual investment funds over the next two years (i.e., £15.2 million per annum)<sup>8</sup>.

## Purpose of the Study

- 1.11 The study arrives at a pivotal moment, offering the chance to build on GBEB’s achievements to date and use this as a launchpad for the establishment of the SBCCA. Its purpose is to reframe current priorities with the emerging narrative of devolution, and the

<sup>7</sup> Devolution Priority Programme, Written Ministerial Statement, 4 December 2025. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>8</sup> Sussex councils continue to create new Combined County Authority to unlock huge investment. [\[Link\]](#).

enhanced power and leverages now within reach. In doing so, it provides an opportunity to reposition Sussex (i.e., through the lens of Greater Brighton) at the forefront of a rapidly evolving national context; one that is shaped by a new Modern Industrial Strategy<sup>9</sup>, and the Government's wider growth ambitions<sup>10</sup>.

- 1.12 With several major projects and initiatives on the horizon (such as Gatwick Airport's Northern Runway which received consent in September 2025, and the Sussex Energy Mission established in 2024), in addition to a series of locally-significant regeneration schemes and proposed masterplan developments (such as the planned growth at Newhaven Port), the study seeks to identify key opportunities for the region over the short, medium and long-term.
- 1.13 Ultimately, this Economic Opportunities Review for Greater Brighton aims to inform a discussion locally on the approach to maximising the potential offered by the SBCCA's new capabilities, enabling the new Mayor (i.e., once elected in 2028) to focus on growth activity, prioritise investment and deliver long-term economic prosperity for the region.

## Our Approach and Method

- 1.14 As mentioned above, the purpose of this study is to reframe Greater Brighton's existing priorities to align with the emerging narrative around devolution, in addition to identifying further opportunities for economic growth in the region. This process will ensure that the region is well-paced to maximise the new powers and levers that will soon be available to SBCCA (and ultimately its elected Mayor). At the heart of this work is an assessment of how devolved responsibilities over funding, strategic planning and delivery can be translated into tangible economic opportunities for the region. The analysis has been explicitly shaped by the reforms set in motion by the Devolution White Paper, which provides the framework for understanding the expectations placed on SBCCA (and the Mayor), in addition to the powers that will be available over the short, medium and longer term (*see* Table 2.1).
- 1.15 The study commences with a detailed review of the Devolution White Paper to establish the scope of devolved powers and opportunities they create, both over the short-term, and the longer period (including the potential to ask for additional devolution powers). This is complemented by a review of local evidence (including Local Plans, economic strategies and research undertaken by constituent authorities), to build a picture of the social and economic context across Greater Brighton and the wider Sussex region. Where appropriate, this analysis is supplemented by statistical data from the Office for National Statistics ('ONS'), alongside desk-based research into the region's four international gateways (drawing on annual reports, published masterplans and Development Consent Order, or 'DCO' evidence for Gatwick's Northern Runway project).
- 1.16 Building on this evidence base, Lichfields engaged extensively with stakeholders from across the region, including local economic development officers ('EDOs'), GBEB representatives, FE and HE providers, and gateway operators. These discussions served to validate the analysis, test emerging themes and identify potential opportunities for action, whilst also highlighting areas of consensus and appetite for intervention. Further

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<sup>9</sup> HM Government (2025), *The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>10</sup> HM Government (2024), *Plan for Change, Milestones for mission-led government*. [\[Link\]](#).

engagement with GBEB at the end of October 2025 allowed the initial findings to be shared, priorities to be refined and feedback to be incorporated into the evolving framework.

- 1.17 The final stage of the study involved a more detailed review of each intervention, considering:
- a. Why the opportunity is necessary, and the risk of inaction;
  - b. The specific value that devolution can add (i.e., whether through scale, new powers or funding flexibility);
  - c. The likely impact(s) of each opportunity, recognising that many actions are at an early stage of development;
  - d. Potential actions championed by SBCCA over the short-term, and (once elected) the Mayor over the medium and longer term horizons. Where appropriate, the latter considers intermediate action needed to facilitate long-term success.
- 1.18 The study concludes by presenting a series of opportunities and actions for SBCCA (and ultimately the future Mayor) to consider, acknowledging that Greater Brighton forms part of the wider Sussex economy, and that action must deliver added value at the regional scale. Importantly, the recommendations have been developed without prejudice to political affiliation, while ensuring that the themes proposed resonate with the region's existing priorities.
- 1.19 A number of examples referenced in this study draw on similar actions being explored in other parts of the country, including emerging Local Growth Plans of other Strategic/ Combined Authorities, which in several cases are yet to be fully implemented and/or evaluated.
- 1.20 Given the wide-ranging nature of the opportunities explored in this study, and in many cases the limited delivery or project-specific information being available at the current time, it has not been possible to quantify benefits at this stage. However, where possible the study provides a qualitative indication of the potential impact.
- 1.21 As such, it is therefore recommended that GBEB and SBCCA (once established) monitor progress and seek to apply lessons learned from other location as further evidence emerges, and plans are further development.

## Structure of the Report

- 1.22 The remainder of this report is structured as follows:
- **Section 2.0** provides an outline of the emerging Devolution agenda (i.e., both nationally and within Sussex) and highlights key priorities for the region based on areas SBCCA can leverage its position/power for the benefit of the Greater Brighton and wider Sussex regions.
  - **Section 3.0** provides an overview of Greater Brighton within the wider Sussex context, in addition to the footprint and scale of opportunity (and wider national economy) provided by international gateways located within the region (i.e., comprising/primarily Gatwick Airport, Shoreham Port, Newhaven Port and Brighton City Airport).

- **Section 4.0** draws on a review of local evidence, as well as extensive engagement with stakeholders from across the region to identify opportunities, whilst also establishing short, medium and long-term priorities.
- **Section 5.0** sets out overall recommendations for the SBCCA to take forward.

## 2.0 **Unlocking the Devolution Dividend**

2.1 The publication of the Devolution White Paper has set the stage for a fundamental shift in how local growth and public services are delivered across England. Framed as a mechanism for unlocking untapped potential and aligning investment with the region's priorities, devolution will consolidate funding streams and devolve decision making closer to home. It will also enable SBCCA to design integrated strategies that connect infrastructure, housing and skills with economic growth and environmental protections.

2.2 This section undertakes a review of the Devolution White Paper to help establish a framework for identifying economic priorities over the short, medium and long-term. This review focusses on the following five thematic areas set out within the Devolution White Paper, and outlines how the SBCCA and the Mayor, once elected, can exert the greatest influence on economic development, and what powers and budgets may be available to support delivery.

- a. Transport and infrastructure planning;
- b. Skills and employment (including adult skills funding);
- c. Housing and strategic planning;
- d. Economic development and regeneration; and
- e. Environment and climate change.

### **a. Transport and infrastructure planning**

2.3 Devolution will mark a step-change in how transport is governed, planned, and delivered across the region. Under the Government's devolution framework, Strategic Authorities will be given a statutory role in shaping integrated transport systems, with powers spanning buses, rail, roads and other emerging modes of mobility (such as e-scooters and bike hire). For the region, this means that the SBCCA will be able to set a clear vision for connectivity that links communities, supports economic growth and drives the decarbonisation of transport.

2.4 One of the most significant changes will be the ability to bring buses back under public control through franchising, strengthened partnerships and/or even through publicly owned operators. The process for doing so is being simplified, which would enable SBCCA to deliver more reliable, affordable and better-integrated bus services.

2.5 Alongside this, SBCCA will also have a statutory role governing and planning the rail network, with the right to request (further) devolution of services, infrastructure and station management where this would support a more joined-up and inter-modal system. This will enable SBCCA to shape rail services around local priorities, whilst also unlocking regeneration and housing opportunities linked to station/railway land and surrounding development.

2.6 On roads, SBCCA will be empowered to coordinate the local road network. Whilst day-to-day responsibility for local roads will remain with constituent authorities, this new layer of oversight will allow for more consistent management across the region. SBCCA will also have powers to regulate micro-mobility schemes (such as e-scooters and bike hire),

ensuring these are integrated into wider transport plans and tailored to each area's local needs.

2.7 Crucially, these powers will be underpinned by funding consolidation, giving SBCCA, and ultimately the future Mayor greater autonomy and flexibility to allocate resources across the region, with the shift away from fragmented, competitive funding streams representing a major opportunity to plan for the long-term and investing strategically. Furthermore, SBCCA will also be expected to play a leading role in the decarbonisation of transport by developing plans to transition bus fleets, reduce air pollution and expand infrastructure that enables active travel across the region.

2.8 At the heart of this new settlement will be a requirement to prepare a Local Transport Plan that is aligned with the region's Spatial Development Strategy. This will provide a framework for integrating transport with housing, skills and economic development, ensuring that investment decisions are mutually reinforcing.

## **b. Skills and employment**

2.9 Devolution offers an opportunity to reshape the way skills and employment support are delivered, ensuring these are more closely aligned with the needs of local people, employers and the regional economy. Under the Government's devolution framework, adult skills and employment support will be devolved, giving SBCCA the ability to design integrated plans that reflect the realities of the Sussex labour market.

2.10 Building on the success of Local Skills Improvement Plans ('LSIPs'), devolution will see the SBCCA take joint ownership of the LSIP process alongside the Sussex Chamber of Commerce which is designated as the region's employer representative body ('ERB'). This partnership will continue to place employers at the heart of the skills agenda, ensuring that sector priorities are clearly defined and embedded within a wider framework that incorporates a Sussex-wide Local Growth Plan ('LGP'), and which aligns with priorities of the Modern Industrial Strategy and Skills England's national priority skills assessments<sup>11</sup>. In practice, this means SBCCA will be able to set out sector priorities that guide provision, strengthen pathways into employment, and ensure that training opportunities are relevant to the needs of local businesses.

2.11 SBCCA will also play a crucial role in shaping clear progression routes from education into FE and higher education ('HE'), as well as into local employment opportunities. By feeding into the Department for Education's ('DfE') annual strategic conversations with colleges, SBCCA will also help shape the FE offer across Sussex. The Mayor's convening powers will be central in securing industry placements and work experience with local employers, ensuring that 16-19 education provision is closely tied to real world pathways.

2.12 However, SBCCA's role will extend beyond skills, and into employment support. As set out in the Get Britain Working White Paper<sup>12</sup>, SBCCA will be responsible for implementing the local Get Sussex Working Plan<sup>13</sup>. Funding for supported employment provision will be

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<sup>11</sup> Skills England (2025), *Research and analysis, Assessment of priority skills to 2030*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>12</sup> HM Government (2024), *Get Britain Working*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>13</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council and West Sussex County Council (2025), *Get Sussex Working Plan*. [\[Link\]](#).

devolved, enabling SBCCA to design tailored actions that reflect local priorities, and which reflect the needs of Sussex communities.

- 2.13 Looking ahead, SBCCA will also be a key partner in the development of the new National Jobs and Careers Service, helping to create a holistic and joined-up offer that integrates employment, skills and health support. Within this framework, SBCCA will take on a central role in ensuring that young people across the region have access to consistent, high-quality advice and opportunities.

### **c. Housing and strategic planning**

- 2.14 Devolution will also give SBCCA a stronger role in shaping housing delivery and strategic planning across the region. Under devolution, SBCCA will be tasked with ensuring that more homes are built in locations that are well connected to essential infrastructure, whilst also increasing the supply of social and affordable housing. Until now, Strategic Authorities have lacked the powers to significantly influence these outcomes, particularly in relation to affordable housing and long-term planning. As such, devolution will mark a step-change in strategic planning, both within Sussex and nationally.
- 2.15 A central responsibility of SBCCA will be the preparation of a LGP, setting out a long-term vision for growth in their region over the next decade and a roadmap for how this can be achieved. This will galvanise and guide work across partners to deliver growth. Building on this, SBCCA and the Mayor will be empowered to develop and propose a Spatial Development Strategy ('SDS') for the wider region. This Strategy will provide strategic development management powers across Sussex (i.e., such as defining regionally-significant development sites, infrastructure requirements, and the distribution of housing, including affordable housing provision).
- 2.16 Individual local authorities will be required to ensure their Local Plans are in general conformity with the established SDS, embedding a more consistent and coordinated approach to planning across wider Sussex. In December 2025, the government confirmed the requirements for SDS as part of consultation on a new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).<sup>14</sup> Amongst other requirements, it is intended that SDS will "*give spatial expression to strategic elements of Local Growth Plans and the National Industrial Strategy.*"
- 2.17 Once the SDS is in place, the Mayor will gain access to a range of development management powers, including the ability to intervene in planning applications of strategic importance, applying compulsory purchase orders ('CPOs') and establishing Mayoral Development Corporations ('MDCs') and/or issue Mayor Development Orders ('MDOs') to accelerate regeneration. To support the delivery of major infrastructure projects, the Mayor will also be able to raise a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy ('MCIL'), creating a dedicated funding stream for strategic investment.
- 2.18 As devolution becomes more embedded, it is anticipated that SBCCA will take on an increasingly central role in housing delivery, including gaining control over grant funding to support regeneration initiatives, and delivery of affordable housing. Statutory consultation<sup>15</sup> (i.e., undertaken between February and April 2025), has also highlighted the potential for

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<sup>14</sup> See link to consultation document here: [\[Link\]](#)

<sup>15</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

SBCCA to push for new models of affordable housing delivery, including social housing, first-time buyer schemes and affordable developments, including within rural areas. Similarly, SBCCA can work with Homes England to explore the potential for, and establish a Strategic Place Partnership which provides a framework for it to work closely with local leaders, supporting locally-driven housing and regeneration efforts. Over time, Government intends to move towards the full devolution of funds and delivery responsibilities, positioning SBCCA as the key driver of housing growth and renewal.

- 2.19 These new arrangements will however, require high levels of collaboration between SBCCA, and local planning authorities.

#### **d. Economic development and regeneration**

- 2.20 Devolution will also provide SBCCA with the opportunity to secure greater investment and shape a more dynamic, and locally responsive approach to economic development. SBCCA will be in a position to attract international investment, support businesses to thrive, and create vibrant places where people want to live, work and visit. By aligning devolved power with the vision and ambitions set out in the LGP, SBCCA will be able to drive forward a coherent strategy, and create vibrant places where people want to live, work and visit. The LGP will act as the “guiding star for investment”, and provide the long-term vision and roadmap to guide this, ensuring that devolved powers are deployed in a way that accelerates delivery.

- 2.21 A central role for SBCCA will be to work in partnership with the Department for Business and Trade (‘DBT’) to coordinate national, local and devolved business support schemes, driving productivity and helping small firms to scale. This is especially pertinent as 78.9% of businesses across Greater Brighton employ fewer than five people; a proportion that is slightly higher than the national average (i.e., of 78.2%)<sup>16</sup>. Building on successful pilots elsewhere, SBCCA will also have the opportunity to roll out a data-led export growth programme, helping small firms to scale-up in line with the long-term priorities identified within the LGP.

- 2.22 The integration of the Growth Hub into devolved funding will give SBCCA a key role in the provision of business support across the region. By focusing local provision, SBCCA will help deliver a core suite of growth products as part of the England-wide Growth Hubs network, ensuring that businesses in Sussex can access consistent, high-quality support. At the same time, joint working with the Office for Investment will allow SBCCA to develop, and market investible propositions (e.g., through the development of an investment prospectus) that are grounded in the long-term priorities and ambitions articulated by the LGP.

- 2.23 Beyond attracting investment and providing business support, SBCCA will also play a pivotal role in unlocking the region’s innovation potential. By working with universities, businesses and government partners, SBCCA will be empowered to influence decisions on regional innovation, with direct connections to UK Research and Innovation (‘UKRI’) and opportunities to collaborate with Innovate UK on long-term strategies, while ensuring that

<sup>16</sup> Based on data published by the Office for National Statistics (‘ONS’) in UK Business Counts – enterprise by industry and employment size band.

investments are aligned with the region’s long-term vision., embedding research and development as a driver for inclusive economic growth.

- 2.24 Finally, devolution will also provide SBCCA with a role to play in supporting the growth of key sectors locally, including the creative, cultural heritage and tourism sectors. By working with Government to devolve levers to growth, and addressing skills challenges, SBCCA can help ensure that funding decisions are locally informed and aligned with the LGP’s long-term vision for sector growth and diversification. This will strengthen the region’s offer, whilst at the same time also creating new opportunities for employment, innovation and regeneration.

### **e. Environment and climate change**

- 2.25 Devolution will also provide a powerful platform for driving forward the region’s decarbonisation agenda, ensuring that efforts to protect the natural environment and biodiversity are embedded within wider economic and social priorities. By aligning local leadership with national ambitions, SBCCA will be central to delivering the Government’s mission for a transition to a clean energy system, whilst at the same time also ensuring that communities across Sussex benefit from the social, economic and wellbeing gains this shift will bring.
- 2.26 Once established, SBCCA will be required to engage with the National Energy System Operator (‘NESO’) to develop a Regional Energy Strategic Plan which will create a transparent route for local insights to shape the future energy system and ensuring that planning reflects the realities of Sussex’s functional economic area. In doing so, SBCCA will help balance national priorities with local needs, whilst at the same time positioning Sussex and its initiatives (such as the Sussex Energy Mission<sup>17</sup>) as a leader in clean energy innovation and delivery.
- 2.27 Beyond energy, SBCCA will also play a crucial role in tackling climate change and nature emergencies at both local and wider national levels. By taking on enhanced responsibilities for Local Nature Recovery Strategies, SBCCA will be empowered to convene partnerships, coordinate investment, monitor and report the delivery of environmental initiatives. In doing so, this will ensure that nature recovery remains rooted in community engagement, and is considered as an integral part of regeneration, housing and infrastructure planning.
- 2.28 Looking ahead, the Government has signalled its intention to explore further opportunities for devolution in this space. This could see greater devolution to respond to the impacts of climate change, in particular ensuring that rural and coastal communities are better represented in local policy decision-making. By combining strategic oversight with local engagement, SBCCA will be well placed to champion a holistic approach which integrates clean energy, biodiversity and climate resilience into the region’s long-term growth strategy.

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<sup>17</sup> See here [\[Link\]](#).

## A New Era of Local Leadership

- 2.29 Devolution represents a transformative moment in local government, with the Devolution White Paper signalling a decisive shift of powers from Whitehall to local leaders. For Sussex, this means that SBCCA and the Mayor will hold responsibilities across transport, housing, skills, economic development, regeneration and climate action, and will have the tools needed to align investment with the region's unique assets (i.e., natural, economic and social) and its challenges.
- 2.30 Through the consolidation of funding streams and devolved decision-making, SBCCA will be able to design integrated strategies that connect infrastructure, housing and skills with economic growth and environmental protection. In doing so, it will be well positioned to attract inward investment, foster innovation and strengthen the role of international gateways, ensuring that growth is both inclusive and sustainable. The challenge, as highlighted by consultees to the Government's statutory consultation<sup>18</sup> is for SBCCA to reflect the varied identities across the region, and ensuring it does not disproportionately benefit Brighton or larger towns and settlements at the expense of smaller and/or rural settlements.
- 2.31 Table 2.1 overleaf provides an overview of the key powers and levers available to SBCCA (and ultimately the Mayor) over the short, medium and long-term. The analysis shows that over time, the power and levers available will expand. A key benefit of devolution is that it provides a platform to make the case for further devolution over time. By demonstrating effective delivery and strong governance, the region can build credibility with government, strengthening the argument for additional fiscal levers, expanded responsibilities and longer-term funding settlements.

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<sup>18</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (2025), *Sussex and Brighton devolution consultation response*. [\[Link\]](#).

Table 2.1 Overview of key powers and levers available to SBCCA and the Mayor (once elected) over the short, medium and long-term.

Devolution Thematic Area	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Transport and infrastructure planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shaping the development of integrated transport systems.</li> <li>Power to franchise buses, strengthen partnerships and/or establish public operators.</li> <li>Regulation of micromobility schemes (incl. e-scooters and bike hire).</li> <li>Development of Local Transport Plan (to be aligned with Spatial Development Strategy).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Right to request further devolution of rail services, infrastructure and station management.</li> <li>Development and management of strategic road network.</li> <li>Potential for consolidated transport funding providing greater flexibility to allocate resources.</li> <li>Co-ordinate investment in active travel initiatives and decarbonisation of bus fleet.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expanded influence over rail planning and integration with wider network / services.</li> <li>Potential to control local stations and surrounding land (to support delivery of integrated regeneration schemes).</li> <li>Greater integration with housing and economic growth strategies (incl. ability to raise additional funding through MCIL).</li> </ul>
Skills and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint ownership of LSIP with the Sussex Chamber of Commerce.</li> <li>Convening powers to secure industry placements for learners aged 16-19.</li> <li>Delivery of, and updated production of Get Sussex Working Plan, aimed at reducing economic inequality.</li> <li>Play a key role shaping local FE provision through DfE's annual strategic conversations with colleges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developed funding for supported employment provision.</li> <li>Integration of skills, employment and health support through the National Jobs and Careers Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Greater influence over 16-19 pathways, ensuring greater alignment with local labour market needs.</li> <li>Greater devolution of skills budgets.</li> <li>Strategic role in shaping innovation-led skills pipelines in partnerships with universities and industry.</li> </ul>
Housing and strategic planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Duty to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy for Sussex.</li> <li>Initial development management powers (incl. the potential to 'call-in' strategic planning applications).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Powers to apply Compulsory Purchase Orders.</li> <li>Ability to establish Mayoral Development Corporations and issue Mayoral Development Orders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Devolution of affordable housing funds and delivery responsibilities.</li> <li>Expanded control over regeneration and housing grant funding.</li> </ul>

Devolution Thematic Area	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise MCIL to fund strategic infrastructure.</li> <li>• Explore opportunities to establish a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England, to support locally-driven housing and regeneration efforts.</li> </ul>	
Economic development and regeneration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Produce LGP to hardwire local growth priorities, set out a long-term vision for growth in Sussex over the next decade, and a roadmap for how this can be achieved.</li> <li>• Build strategic partnership with the Department for Business and Trade.</li> <li>• Greater control on how Growth Hub funding is deployed.</li> <li>• Greater influence on innovation funding through partnerships with businesses and universities to access funding opportunities (such as the £500 million UKRI-led Local Innovation Partnerships Fund).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support growth of export potential, targeting high-potential SMEs at first.</li> <li>• Joint working with the Office for Investment to make the case for investment for Sussex as a whole.</li> <li>• More levers to support the creative, cultural, heritage and tourism sectors.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fuller integration of innovation partnerships into regional economy (and strategy going forward).</li> <li>• Expanded role shaping national innovation and investment programmes.</li> </ul>
Environment and climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engagement with NESO to develop Regional Energy Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Ability to convene partnerships, coordinate investment and monitor delivery to support delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential to coordinate local heat networks.</li> <li>• Expanded decarbonisation responsibilities, influencing transport, housing retrofit and clean energy projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greater powers to respond to climate change impacts (especially for rural and coastal communities).</li> <li>• Integration of climate resilience into growth strategies.</li> <li>• Bigger leadership role support Net Zero delivery through investment and innovation.</li> </ul>

## 3.0 The Greater Brighton Economic Context

- 3.1 The Greater Brighton economy sits within a broad and varied Sussex economy that is polycentric in nature and encompasses a mix of urban, coastal and rural settlements.
- 3.2 In total, Sussex supports over 750,000 jobs; a figure which is slightly above pre-pandemic levels. Within this, Greater Brighton accounts for around 459,000 jobs, representing approximately 61% of the region's economy. Despite this scale, employment in Greater Brighton remains marginally below 2019 levels, with its share of the wider economy having declined slightly compared with pre-pandemic proportions (i.e., by 1.0 percentage point). Employment in Greater Brighton is concentrated in human health and social care, wholesale and retail, hospitality (i.e., accommodation and food) and education; and is broadly consistent with Sussex's wider employment profile.
- 3.3 Greater Brighton has distinctive sector specialisms in line with the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy eight sectors<sup>19</sup> (also referred to as IS-8). The dominance of transport and logistics is underpinned by the presence of Gatwick Airport and other international gateways, which whilst not one of the government's eight sectors with strongest growth potential (i.e., Is-8) is an important driver for all. Meanwhile, clean energy is underpinned by large-scale renewable energy projects (such as Rampion and Rampion 2 offshore wind farms) and the ambitious Sussex Energy Mission which seeks to increase the amount of zero carbon energy produced, while at the same time also reducing demand achieving energy neutrality by 2040. The creative industries, particularly in Brighton and Hove add further strength, and complement innovation in advanced manufacturing, automotive, vacuum technologies and the digital and technology sector, including university spin-offs in quantum computing. Together, these clusters highlight Greater Brighton's role as an emerging knowledge economy, and potential to play a key global role in the development of new technology and securing productivity gains for the UK's economy.
- 3.4 Alongside these sectoral strengths, Sussex has a significant visitor economy that is rooted in centuries of heritage, the area's natural environment, as well as creative expression and cultural assets. This is also supported by the international profile of Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club ('BHAFC').
- 3.5 Structurally, the Greater Brighton economy is dominated by micro businesses, with nearly four-in-five employing fewer than five people. Whilst this highlights strong entrepreneurial levels and business resilience, it also signals greater risks as micro businesses are most exposed during economic downturns and periods of economic uncertainty. Productivity levels remain below national levels, particularly in East Sussex (where productivity is 73% of the national average) and salaries lag behind national benchmarks. Skills levels are variable, and the economy is often characterised as being too reliant on lower-value sectors, limiting earnings potential for working-age residents, and creating a significant challenge given housing costs across the Greater Brighton region.
- 3.6 The natural environment is a major asset, but the region continues to experience pockets of higher levels of relative deprivation, including areas amongst the 10% most deprived in

<sup>19</sup> Comprising – advanced manufacturing, defence, clean energy industries, digital and technology, the creative industries, financial services, life sciences, and professional and business services.

England. The pandemic and subsequent cost-of-living crisis have exacerbated inequalities in Greater Brighton, with higher rates of Universal Credit claimants living along the Sussex coast (incl., Newhaven, Littlehampton, East Brighton and Worthing), in Crawley and parts of Lewes. Even previously less disadvantaged rural areas have seen significant rises in low incomes and unemployment.

- 3.7 In addition, challenges with employment land provision are acute, and significantly impact areas along the coast where environmental constraints limit the supply of developable land for employment uses, leading to fragmentation and higher business costs. Commercial space pressures are intensifying, with evidence prepared in the lead-up of the Brighton & Hove Economic Plan<sup>20</sup> suggesting that 41% of the city's commercial stock will not meet Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards ('MEES'). Whilst implementation of MEES legislation has been delayed to at least 2030, the direction of travel and scale of the challenge means this remains an important consideration. This, combined with labour market constraints and an ageing population, is restricting business growth and placing additional strain on local health and wellbeing services.
- 3.8 Greater Brighton is a diverse and dynamic economy with international gateways, sectoral strengths and key innovation assets. Yet it also faces significant structural challenges around productivity, skills, land supply and deprivation.

## International Gateways

- 3.9 In addition to its domestic strengths, Greater Brighton is home to four international gateways that connect Sussex with the wider world. Of these, Gatwick Airport is by far the largest, serving not only as a critical global hub for London, but also as a major economic player for the region, with significant potential to drive business growth and investment. The ports of Shoreham and Newhaven provide vital links for trade, and increasingly act as green hubs for the region, reinforcing its role as an outward-facing economy. Brighton city Airport offers a more modest contribution to connectivity, operating primarily as a general-aviation airfield that supports niche flying and training activity.
- 3.10 This section provides a high-level overview of these gateways and examines their direct and wider economic footprint. It also highlights the opportunities they offer to underpin future growth and prosperity across the region.

## Gatwick Airport

- 3.11 With over 43 million passengers in 2024<sup>21</sup>, Gatwick Airport is the second largest airport in the UK. Located near Crawley and c. 30 miles south of Central London, the airport serves Greater London, Sussex and Surrey. Whilst seeing growth year-on-year (i.e., of +5.7% during 2023-24), passenger numbers at Gatwick Airport are still below the pre-pandemic high of almost 47 million passengers (i.e., in 2019). During 2024, Gatwick Airport handled approximately 104,000 tonnes of freight, having recovered from a pandemic-induced low of around 11,600 tonnes in 2021. However, the quantum of freight going through the airport in 2024 remains below pre-pandemic levels (i.e., of 112,600 tonnes in 2018).

<sup>20</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council, *Fairer, greener, more productive. An economic plan to build on our strengths and adapt to a better future 2024 to 2027*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>21</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

- 3.12 Routes serviced by the airport include a variety of domestic destinations, in addition to international destinations in Europe, North America and the Middle East. The busiest international routes from Gatwick in 2024 included Barcelona and Malaga, Dublin, Rome and Dubai.
- 3.13 Drawing on analysis by Oxera<sup>22</sup>, it is estimated that during 2023 Gatwick Airport directly employed in the region of 2,500 people, generating an annual economic impact of approximately £734 million gross value added ('GVA'). In addition, a further 20,200 workers were employed on-site, through ancillary activities at the airport (including hotel and Duty Free), generating a further £941 million GVA each year. Once accounting for the airport's wider employment effects (i.e., indirect and induced effects), it is estimated that Gatwick supports further 41,100 jobs, which together contribute just under £3.0 billion GVA more widely.
- 3.14 In aggregate, this means that Gatwick Airport supports an estimated 63,800 jobs, and generates an annual economic contribution of more than £4.5 billion GVA each year.
- 3.15 A significant share of this employment is rooted locally. Passholder data indicates that around 10,000 on-site employees live within the Greater Brighton area, including approximately 6,800 Crawley residents, and 1,500 Mid Sussex residents. The proportion of employed residents working at the airport varies across the region, from 0.4% in Arun to 1.6% in Adur and 3.6% in Mid Sussex, with the Greater Brighton average standing at 3.7%. In Crawley, the airport's influence is particularly pronounced, with around one in five employed residents working at Gatwick. When indirect and induced employment is aggregated at the Greater Brighton level, the airport is estimated to support around 8,000 jobs, generating £570 million in GVA for the local economy, underlining Gatwick's role as a major driver of prosperity for communities across the region.
- 3.16 In 2021, Gatwick Airport published its Decade of Change<sup>23</sup> policy which outlined its commitment to a sustainable Gatwick by 2030. The strategy outlines the airport's plans related to net zero emissions, people and communities, in addition to the local environment. Key initiatives include reducing its environmental footprint through improved water and waste management, enhancing biodiversity, investing in sustainable transport infrastructure, and engaging with communities through initiatives such as the Gatwick Airport Consultative Committee.
- 3.17 The existing northern runway at Gatwick Airport is limited to acting as a taxiway and is operational only when the main runway is out of use. A Development Consent Order to bring the northern runway into routine use was approved by the Secretary of State for Transport in September 2025. The project will reposition the centre line of the northern runway 12 metres north to allow dual runway operations. The £2.2 billion privately financed plan is one of the largest capital investment projects in the region, and it will help the airport meet future passenger demand by serving up to 80 million passengers a year.
- 3.18 As outlined above, the airport already supports significant employment and generates considerable economic output to the economy. Growth at Gatwick Airport has potential to supercharge this, with potential to almost double its total footprint (i.e., to around £9

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<sup>22</sup> Oxera (2024), *Local economic impact of London Gatwick: 2023*. [[Link](#)].

<sup>23</sup> See here: [[Link](#)].

billion GVA per annum), as well as supporting growth across a range of related industries, including tourism and leisure, manufacturing and the service sector.

- 3.19 Beyond its direct economic contribution, Gatwick also sits at the heart of the Airport Economic Zone ('AEZ'), a partnership designed to leverage the airport's role as a regional anchor to drive long-term, sustainable growth. Amongst other things, the AEZ is focused on attracting inward investment (including foreign investment) through strong links with DBT, presenting a unified voice to national government and global investors (e.g., at key for a such as the UK's Real Estate Investment and Infrastructure Forum, or 'UKREiiF'). Its remit extends to strengthening collaboration across the wider region, promoting the visitor economy, and enhancing international trade. Groups such as Gateway Gatwick, a network of local businesses supported by the Airport to help firms access new opportunities, raise their profile and build commercial connections demonstrate how the Airport's ability to galvanise partners can be harnessed to stimulate enterprise, supply chain development and wider regional prosperity.

### Shoreham Port

- 3.20 Shoreham Port is the largest commercial port in the region and a major economic anchor for Greater Brighton, and the wider Sussex coast. Each year, the port handles close to 2 million tonnes of cargo and facilitates around 500 cargo shipping movements, reflecting its strong role supporting construction, manufacturing, retail and other key sectors across the UK. The port's financial performance has continued to strengthen, with annual turnover rising to more than £20 million in 2024<sup>24</sup>, underpinned by its long-term strategy of diversification and investment.
- 3.21 A defining strength of Shoreham Port is the diversity of activity across its 110-acre estate, which accommodates cargo operations, fishing, leisure marine uses, and a wide range of industrial and commercial businesses. The port handles a broad mix of goods, including timber, steel, aggregates, bulks and glass, as well as petroleum, woodchip and cereals, and is well positioned for short-sea shipping with strong connections across Europe/ This diversity has been central to the port's resilience and its continued growth.
- 3.22 The port has capacity to handle around 2 million tonnes of cargo each year, and can accommodate vessels up to 103 metres in length. Alongside its cargo-handling capabilities, Shoreham Port is also designated a fish landing port, welcoming over 430 nomadic commercial fishing vessels during 2024. Furthermore, the port provides extensive facilities for storage, marine services and leisure craft, with more than 12,500 vessel movements recorded during 2024. The estate includes around 48,000 sq.m of covered storage space, large-scale warehouses, smaller industrial units and modern serviced offices, all creating a flexible environment for businesses of all sizes.
- 3.23 Shoreham Port is also home to a thriving industrial cluster, comprising around 200 business tenants and supporting more than 1,600 jobs across the site, in addition to the port's own directly employed workforce. While some tenants rely on port-side access, an increasing number choose Shoreham Port for its strategic location, high-quality facilities and collaborative business environment. Over the past decade, a strong diversification strategy, through a continually evolving portfolio of serviced office space and light

<sup>24</sup> Shoreham Port, 2024 Annual Review. [\[Link\]](#).

industrial units, the port’s cluster has now grown to become a hub for small and medium-sized enterprises (‘SMEs’) reinforcing its role as a dynamic hub for employment and innovation.

- 3.24 As a Trust Port, Shoreham operates for the benefit of its community and maintains strong relationships with residents, businesses and educational institutions, both locally and across the wider region. In 2024, the port contributed both directly and in-kind to its community, and undertook extensive engagement with schools, colleges and universities in the region, to promote maritime careers, and drive awareness of the opportunities across the sector. Through visits, talks and careers fairs, the Port is helping young people from across Sussex access opportunities in marine and related industries.
- 3.25 Looking ahead, Shoreham Port’s growth is guided by its long-term plans for regeneration, as outlined by its Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan<sup>25</sup> (‘AAP’) and its Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan<sup>26</sup> (‘LIDP’). The vision focuses on creating a vibrant waterfront, enhancing leisure and commercial opportunities, while at the same time delivering a more integrated and sustainable port environment. Central to this is the port’s ambition to achieve net zero carbon emissions, supported by major planned investments in renewable energy generation, including 4.8 MW of solar PV, 6 to 8 MW of onshore wind, and 18.4 MWh of battery storage.
- 3.26 These investments build on a series of ongoing decarbonisation initiatives, including the development of shore power to reduce emissions from berthed vessels, collaboration with innovators of electric propulsion, and the installation of a marine source heat pump to replace traditional oil-fired heating. The port has also explored potential partnerships for hydrogen production, however to date none have yet reached final investment decisions. These initiatives will also make an important contribution to the Sussex Energy Mission, reducing dependence on national infrastructure and strengthening local energy resilience.
- 3.27 The LIDP further demonstrates the Port’s commitment to sustainability. Funded by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (‘DESNZ’) and delivered in partnership with Innovate UK, part of UK Research and Innovation (‘UKRI’), the LIDP sets out how the industrial cluster can build on the port’s long history and core strengths to evolve into a zero carbon centre for trade, employment and inclusive community engagement. It highlights opportunities to create new jobs as industry transitions to low-carbon technologies, with emerging systems requiring new skills and ways of working.
- 3.28 The LIDP assesses four decarbonisation scenarios ranging from ‘do nothing’ to full electrification. Each scenario would deliver an overall reduction in emissions, primarily due to committed investments. However, the analysis presented within the LIDP shows that gradual electrification of plant equipment, a shift to electric vehicles, and wider adoption of low carbon technologies offers the greatest potential for long-term emissions reduction.
- 3.29 The cluster is strategically positioned to harness renewable energy, and ongoing research is helping to better understand the port’s reduced carbon footprint, air-quality impacts on the environment and its community, and opportunities for further mitigation. Together, these initiatives support the port’s aspiration to become a leading green hub for business, and an exemplar of sustainable industrial growth, not only in Sussex but more widely. However,

<sup>25</sup> Shoreham Harbour Regeneration (2019), *Shoreham Harbour Joint Area Action Plan*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>26</sup> Shoreham Port Industrial Cluster (2025), *Shoreham Port Industrial Cluster Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan*. [\[Link\]](#).

the evidence makes clear that progressing from planning to deployment will require the right policy environment, investment conditions and mechanisms to be in place.

## Newhaven Port

- 3.30 Newhaven Port is a long-established port and associated docks complex located at the mouth of the River Ouse in East Sussex. It handles around 1 million tonnes of cargo each year, and remains an important hub of maritime activity along the Sussex coast. In addition to commercial freight, the port operates a year-round passenger ferry services to Dieppe, with increased frequency during the summer months. The port has potential to accommodate vessels of up to 145 metres in length, supporting a mix of freight, ferry and marine operations.
- 3.31 The port is served by Newhaven Harbour rail station, enabling the efficient movement of goods and people to and from the site. The port is also home to a rail head with potential for future expansion, strengthening its role as a strategic rail-freight hub for the South coast. Newhaven handles a diverse range of cargo, including timber, steel, cement and aggregates, fertiliser, waste and scrap metal, reflecting its roles in supporting construction, manufacturing and other key sectors in the region.
- 3.32 Situated at the heart of the town, Newhaven Port plays a central role in the area's economic vitality. Its footprint overlaps significantly with the Newhaven Enterprise Zone ('EZ'), creating opportunities to align port-related growth with wider regeneration, inward investment opportunities and employment creation. As such, the port has a significant corporate and social role to play, including striving to achieve net zero emissions by 2040, through the decarbonisation of port operations and promoting renewable energy initiatives on-site, in addition to community-focused campaigns such as supporting local business growth and developing green spaces to improve resident wellbeing.
- 3.33 Newhaven Port contributes to a wide range of regional and national industries and is a key asset to the Sussex Energy Mission. It is home to the operations base for the Rampion Offshore Wind Farm, reinforcing its role in the UK's clean energy transition. The port's strategic location also positions it well to support future growth in offshore wind, as well as other marine energy technologies.
- 3.34 In 2024, the port produced a new masterplan setting out opportunities for sustainable growth and long-term resilience. Key opportunities identified include expanding its role in offshore wind, as well as developing renewable energy clusters, enhancing tourism and cruise activity, and supporting the commercial fishing sector. A continuing operational challenge for the port is the maintenance of nearly 1 km of breakwater facilities, which is essential not only for port activities but also for protecting low lying land upstream along the River Ouse, and into East Sussex.
- 3.35 Building on the vision of the 2024 masterplan, Newhaven Port alongside the University of Brighton, University College London and Moda Energy Ltd were awarded around £339,600 to deliver the GREENPORTSIDE research project. This project considers how renewable electricity can be used at the port to support ships and port operations in ways that are technically feasible and economically viable. These findings could help shape the UK's transition to zero carbon shipping, reducing pollution while also supporting regional

growth and innovation, putting the port at the forefront of innovation in clean maritime technologies.

- 3.36 The project (funded by Innovate UK and the Department for Transport) investigates practical ways for ports to supply vessels with sustainable energy, including renewable shore power, enabling ships to plug into clean electricity when docked, and more ambitious options such as generating sufficient renewable electricity on-site to power port operations, and provide fast-charging for battery-powered vessels. Researchers are assessing both the technical feasibility and economic viability of these solutions, with the aim of creating models that could be replicated across other UK ports.

### **Brighton City Airport**

- 3.37 Brighton City Airport, located near Shoreham-by-Sea, operates primarily as a general-aviation airfield. While it has historical significance, its contemporary role is modest and primarily focused on light aviation activity.
- 3.38 The airport does not provide commercial passenger services or handle commercial cargo, and therefore plays only a limited role in the region's transport or economic infrastructure. Activity is largely confined to private flying, pilot training and small-scale business aviation.
- 3.39 Brighton City Airport is served by the Shoreham-by-Sea rail station located along the West Coastway Line. The airport comprises one terminal building and restricts use to smaller planes with a maximum take-off weight of around 5,700 kg. The site hosts Northbrook College's engineering department (i.e., a Centre of Vocational Excellence, or 'CoVE' in aerospace and aviation), in addition to a number of small businesses. These activities are generally local in nature and do not constitute a significant cluster, however the presence of nearby logistics and employment sites creates opportunities for complementary growth.

## 4.0 Economic Opportunities for Greater Brighton

4.1 Drawing on the fundamentals established by the Devolution White Paper, alongside our review of local evidence and stakeholder engagement from across Greater Brighton, this section sets out a series of opportunities SBCCA can prioritise as the region charts its course through the early phases of devolution.

4.2 The opportunities considered span a range of thematic areas (incl., transport, housing, regeneration, skills and the environment). Whilst presented below under the separate themes – as set out in section 2.0 – it should be recognised many of the following opportunities cut across multiple policy areas, creating scope for more integrated growth, stronger investment cases, and wider benefits for both businesses and communities across the region. This approach reflects the reality that the region’s challenges, and acknowledges that opportunities are best addressed through joined-up action, which devolution can provide a stronger platform for. Accordingly, for each theme, we tabulate opportunities and actions considering:

- Why is this opportunity necessary?
- What is the net additionality / added value?
- What is the proposed timeline (i.e. short, medium or long-term)?
- What is the expected impact?
- Which themes would delivery support?

4.3 It is recognised that once elected in May 2028, the Mayor will define their own (political) agenda, and set priorities accordingly. The following opportunities are therefore presented as politically neutral and are designed to provide the widest-possible range of opportunities for securing a prosperous and sustainable future for the region.

### a. Transport and infrastructure planning

4.4 Transport is one of the region’s most pressing challenges, with congestion and variable public transport provision undermining connectivity and holding back economic growth. The proposed opportunities for action are all part of the same narrative which seeks to address existing pinch-points while at the same time also providing genuine alternatives that improve reliability and reduce dependence on private mobility. The scale of investment required is significant, with Transport for the South East’s (‘TfSE’) Strategic Investment Plan (‘SIP’) estimating £3.6 billion (in 2020 prices) of collective action across Sussex, including around £1.6 billion specifically targeted at tackling bottlenecks on the road network, illustrating the depth of the challenge.

4.5 The added value of intervention lies in weaving these strands together into a coherent system. By bringing together national agencies, local authorities, operators and employers, SBCCA and the Mayor can align investment decisions with plans outlined in the SDS, ensuring that upgrades to transport and infrastructure benefits not only support the economy, but also promote inclusive growth. In the short-term, this means championing ‘shovel-ready’ projects and piloting new approaches. Over the long-term, the Mayor’s convening powers can help leverage additional funding, strengthen the case for further devolved powers, and explore new funding mechanisms (such as MCIL) as part of a broader suite of funding levers to support delivery.

### Case Study – East Midlands Transport Plan

The Mayor of the East Midlands, Claire Ward, is planning to invest over £2 billion in transport funding to create an integrated transport system that enables healthy, inclusive and sustainable options which reduce car dependency, and link communities through better public transport and mass transit as part of new developments. This fund will be transformative, and aims to improve how residents, visitors and businesses experience travel in the region.

4.6 In doing so, SBCCA can harness the scale provided by devolution to transform fragmented interventions into a single, integrated vision; one that connects people to opportunity, drives regeneration and which positions the region as a leader in sustainable growth. Central to this will be the preparation of a Local Transport Plan (i.e., as required by the Devolution White Paper), ensuring that intervention is fully aligned with aspirations in the LGP, embedding investment within a joined-up framework and supporting the evolution of a future-ready transport network across Sussex.

## Unlocking bottlenecks and constraints on the road network

4.7 Congestion along the A27, the A259, and the region’s strategic road network continues to hold back connectivity and constrain Greater Brighton, and the wider Sussex region’s economic potential. Devolution provides the power to tackle these long-standing pinch-points by unlocking investment, easing movement across the region, improving air quality and linking people to jobs and services more efficiently.

4.8 The added value of devolution lies in the ability of SBCCA to convene national agencies and local partners to champion shovel-ready schemes, embed upgrades within the SDS, and align transport investment with housing and regeneration initiatives. Over time, greater devolved influence over the Strategic Road Network, and the ability to raise MCIL will ensure that these improvements remove barriers to economic growth and underpin wider ambitions for skills, housing and inclusive growth.

4.9 However, congestion on the roads can only be eased if genuine alternatives are provided. This means that upgrades to the road network must be conceived as part of an integrated package where improvements to road, rail, and wider transport systems are delivered together, rather than treating road upgrades in isolation.

## **Transforming Sussex rail to unlock labour markets**

- 4.10 Investment in improving rail infrastructure represents both a critical requirement and a major opportunity for addressing wider connectivity challenges throughout Sussex. Congestion on the roads can only be eased if rail becomes a genuine alternative, and devolution gives SBCCA the power to deliver reliable east-west and other internal services (such as the Arundel Chord scheme) within Sussex and further afield into Kent, the Solent and beyond. In addition, improved rail connectivity has the potential to open up labour markets and boost the visitor economy.
- 4.11 SBCCA and the Mayor can lobby for franchise reform and embed rail upgrades within the region's SDS so that transport investment can directly support housing delivery, economic growth and job creation. However, SBCCA and the Mayor also have a critical leadership role to play in championing further investment on parts of the rail network beyond the region (such as addressing the existing bottleneck at Croydon) which will require coordinated engagement with DfT, TfSE, Network Rail and the Mayor of London, but has the potential to significantly improve connectivity to Sussex.

## **Building Sussex mass transit**

- 4.12 Local bus services are critical to everyday mobility yet are too often unreliable and fragmented. With new franchising powers, SBCCA can deliver affordable, integrated routes and create Strategic Mobility Hubs that anchor regeneration. The ability to convene operators and local authorities, in addition to piloting franchised routes in priority areas, and embedding mass transit as part of a strategy that reduces car dependency and supports inclusive growth has potential to generate significant wider benefits to both economy and the environment. Illustrative industry evidence cited in the Industrial Strategy shows that every £1 investment in bus infrastructure and services generates £4.55 in wider economic returns. Few initiatives offer such a compelling payback, making this a strong and evidence-led case for SBCCA and the Mayor to champion and invest in a modern and integrated bus network as a driver of economic growth and wider societal inclusion.

## **An active travel revolution: embedding walking, cycling and micromobility**

- 4.13 SBCCA will also be well placed to accelerate and channel investment in walking, cycling and micromobility schemes that help shift travel behaviour and further ease pressures on the road network. Devolution allows for the regulation of local micromobility schemes, and encourages investment in active travel corridors as part of wider regeneration and health strategies. Devolution will also accelerate delivery by giving the ability to expand pilots to secure early funding, ensuring that active travel is built into all new developments, creating healthier communities while also cutting carbon emissions.

Table 4.1 Potential opportunities and actions identified as part of the transport and infrastructure planning theme

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>Unlocking bottlenecks and constraints on the road network</b>								
The A27 and A259 are two of the region’s most critical transport corridors, yet congestion and bottlenecks along these and other strategic corridors in the region undermines connectivity and constrains opportunities for economic growth.	Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the scale needed to tackle long-standing challenges and support the delivery of critical interventions. Over the short-term, the key opportunity lies in the ability to convene stakeholders from across the board (e.g. DfT, National Highways, TfSE and local authorities) to strengthen the case for investment, including through prioritisation in the LGP. Over the medium-to-long terms, the opportunity lies in embedding upgrades within the region’s SDS. Furthermore, over the longer-term there is potential for the Mayor to secure further (devolved) influence over the Strategic Road Network, embedding road network improvements as part of a coherent regional framework.	<b>ST</b> = Support and champion ‘shovel-ready’ projects. <b>MT</b> = Incorporate upgrades within SDS. <b>LT</b> = Secure greater devolved influence over the Strategic Road Network.	Implementation of all investments proposed in TfSE’s SIP for unlocking bottlenecks is estimated to generate £200m GVA uplift per annum and support the creation of 700 new jobs by 2050 (i.e., relative to a ‘do nothing’ approach). More broadly, the proposed investments have potential to lead to improved reliability, enhanced competitiveness and support further economic growth, while also improving air quality due to there being less congestion.	✓✓		✓	✓	✓
<b>Transforming Sussex rail to unlock labour markets</b>								
There is potential to improve capacity and reliability on shorter commuter journeys (e.g., between Worthing and Brighton), whilst at the same time also enabling faster inter-urban	Devolution provides the opportunity to transform rail services along the Sussex coast, in the process enabling high-quality and high-frequency connections that strengthen east-west links within the region and beyond (i.e., into Kent and the Solent). Devolution also gives the region the ability to lobby for rail devolution and franchise reform, ensuring investment in capacity and service reliability aligning these with wider ambitions.	<b>ST</b> = Incorporate improved rail connectivity as part of SDS. <b>MT-LT</b> = Potential for greater devolution of	The TfSE’s SIP estimates that enhanced coastal rail services could generate in the region of 10,000 extra trips each weekday, resulting in £80m GVA uplift each year by 2050.	✓✓		✓	✓	✓

services (i.e., between Brighton, Portsmouth and Southampton, or eastward from Eastbourne into Kent).	Over the short-to-medium term, SBCCA can champion east-west connectivity as a regional priority (in particular along the Sussex coast), and press for early action on key bottlenecks. Over the medium-to-long term, there is potential for the Mayor to bring together key stakeholders to ensure that improvements are fully embedded within the region’s SDS and economic growth ambitions.	local rail services and greater control through franchising of services.	Furthermore, this has potential to encourage modal shift, reducing congestions and improving air quality.					
<b>Building Sussex mass transit</b>								
Complementing the above, there is potential to drive forward mass transit initiatives that better connect both urban and rural areas with Strategic Mobility Hubs which act as focal points for interchange, in the process supporting wider regeneration and making services more responsive to local needs.	Devolution gives SBCCA and the Mayor the power to convene operators, local authorities and others to build stronger partnerships across the region. With new powers to franchise routes, and where necessary establish new operators, SBCCA can ensure that services are more reliable, affordable and better integrated with the region’s regeneration priorities. Over the short-to-medium term, there is potential to focus on piloting franchised routes and develop mobility hubs in key regeneration area. Analysis undertaken as part of TfSE’s SIP suggests that extending mass transit may be more feasible in East Sussex, although it is noted that further work may be required to establish feasibility in West Sussex.	<b>ST-MT =</b> Establish the feasibility of mass transit across West Sussex and electrification of mass transit fleet. <b>LT =</b> Greater control on mass transit.	TfSE’s modelling suggests that enhanced mass transit could support over 100,000 additional trips each workday, resulting in 65,000 fewer private car trips and boosting GVA by more than £100 million each year by 2050. Furthermore, this has potential to improve air quality.	✓✓			✓	✓
<b>An active travel revolution: Embedding walking, cycling and micromobility</b>								
This intervention continues to build on previous initiatives and seeks to provide better “first/last mile” connections to rail stations and bus hubs, making public transport more attractive and	Devolution provides the ability to regulate e-scooters and bike hire initiatives, alongside the power to direct investment into active travel corridors, resulting in wider health and wellbeing, in addition to improved environmental benefits. Devolution will enable delivery to embed active travel as part of wider regeneration and health strategies, allowing for greater integration with wider health and wellbeing outcomes and drive collaboration with the NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board	<b>MT =</b> Regulate scooters, bike hire and micromobility schemes to support greater and safer take-up.	Based on TfSE estimates included within its SIP, it is estimated that enhanced active travel measures could remove over 40,000 car trips each weekday and cut 5,000 tonnes of CO <sub>2</sub> each year.	✓✓				✓

<p>accessible to all. This initiative encourages seamless transfers between modes, boosting ridership and reducing car dependency, whilst also helping to strengthen the case for investment in rail and bus services.</p>		<p><b>LT</b> = Integrate active travel projects as part of wider SDS for the region.</p>						
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a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change

✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme

**ST** = Short-term, typically 1 to 2 years | **MT** = Medium-term, typically up to 5-years | **LT** = Longer-term

## b. Skills and employment

- 4.14 The Sussex economy is evolving rapidly, yet engagement with stakeholders suggests that the skills system remains fragmented and is not fully aligned or embedded with the region's economic growth ambitions. Whilst employers continue to face persistent skills gaps, many residents remain unable to access the training or support needed to progress. Opportunities for reskilling and upskilling across all stages of life are limited, meaning the demands for a digital, green and knowledge-driven economy are not being fully met. This creates a cycle where growth ambitions outpace the workforce's ability to meet them, resulting in suppressed productivity and constraints to the region's capacity to deliver the economic transformation it aspires to achieve.
- 4.15 Devolution creates the opportunity to reshape this landscape into a coherent and lifelong skills and employment ecosystem. By bringing together schools, colleges (i.e., FE providers), universities (i.e., HE providers), employers and local authorities, the region can align skills provision with wider economic priorities, embed employer insights into curriculum development, highlight career pathways, and integrate the Get Sussex Working Plan into mainstream delivery. Crucially, this approach must extend to embrace lifelong learning, ensuring residents can retain, reskill and adapt throughout their careers. Early action can mobilise partners, establish real-time employer engagement and secure quick wins for those farthest from the labour market, while also laying the foundations for a culture of continuous learning. In addition, this creates an opportunity for increasing the sector's contribution to driving economic and productivity growth.
- 4.16 As SBCCA and the Mayor assume greater responsibility for the Adult Skills Fund and Skills Bootcamps, the region will also need to secure more stable, and long-term funding to meet its employment and skills objectives. Over time, greater devolution in adult skills funding can enable a shift towards lifelong learning, the development of future-focused curriculum innovation and inclusive progression routes. Together, these activities can create a skills system that is agile, employer-led and capable of supporting both economic transformation and wider social inclusion across Sussex, underpinned by the ability to set a strategic direction of travel, whilst at the same time also aligning the system around shared priorities.

### Building a future-ready skills ecosystem

- 4.17 The region's long-term prosperity is held back by a fragmented skills system that does not equip people for non-linear career paths, or the demands of a digital, green and knowledge-driven economy. The region needs a coherent and lifelong approach to skills; one that supports people from school into early adulthood, through their working and beyond, and which aligns training with future labour-market needs and local priorities.
- 4.18 Devolution creates an opportunity to bring schools, colleges, universities and employers into a single, Sussex-wide skills forum, forging the partnerships and processes needed to support people. Employer engagement will be vital to ensure that careers information, training and employment support are aligned with wider economic priorities in the LGP. Early action can strengthen coordination and progression pathways, whilst over the long-term, devolved powers over adult skills funding have potential to enable a shift towards lifelong learning, curriculum innovation, and developing a future-ready workforce. The

result will be a skills ecosystem that supports inclusive growth, improves productivity and ensures that residents can access the jobs created by Sussex's evolving, and knowledge-driven economy.

### Driving employer engagement in the skills ecosystem

4.19 It is recognised that the strength of the skills ecosystem, and its future direction of travel will ultimately depend on the depth and quality of its relationship with employers from across the region. Inconsistent employer engagement risks creating a weakened system in which lags real labour market needs. On the other hand, strong engagement and employer engagement has potential to drive the sector's (particularly HE) contribution to national economic output, by driving economic productivity and growth (i.e., in line with the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, and the ambitions outlined within the Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper. While the Sussex LSIP provides a useful foundation, it does not yet guarantee the continuous, real-time employer engagement needed to keep curriculum design, careers advice and workforce development aligned with a fast-changing economy. This is further reinforced by the Get Sussex Working Plan<sup>27</sup> which highlights the need for a more integrated approach that brings together employers, education providers and other strategic stakeholders.

4.20 On this basis, devolution creates an opportunity to make employer engagement a permanent feature and embedded feature of a successful skills ecosystem. In the short-term, SBCCA working in collaboration with FE and HE partners can use convening powers to establish an employer partnership framework recognising university and college industry boards as well as skills advisory panels and other stakeholders to support the co-design of courses and implement alternative credential routes (incl., ones built on modular learning), whilst also articulating existing skills gaps, emerging priorities, and future workforce needs. This will ensure that provision is aligned with labour market demand and supports the ambition to raise the skill levels of residents across Sussex. Over time, there is potential to extend this further, enabling businesses to influence governance and decision-making on

### Case Study – South Yorkshire's Growth Plan, Skills Escalator

While South Yorkshire often ranks amongst the top three regions for producing talent, businesses in the region often struggle to fill higher-level vacancies. Meanwhile, the challenge of having significant levels of economic inactivity is treated as separate. The South Yorkshire's Growth Plan proposes the development of a 'skills escalator' and highlights the ambition of developing a skills and employment strategy that is fully aligned with the region's LSIP. The Growth Plan aims to tackle barriers to deliver more and better employment pathways for residents to benefit from economic opportunities in the region.

### Case Study – Hampshire & Solent Skills Channel

In the Solent, the LSIP established a Skills Channel that promotes employer engagement and supports businesses to better articulate their needs so that provision aligns better with future need. Ultimately, the Skills Channel seeks to be a one-stop-shop for both providers and employers in the region, driving long-term local economic growth.

<sup>27</sup> Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex County Council, West Sussex County Council, Department for Work & Pensions (2025), *Get Sussex Working Plan*. [\[Link\]](#).

skills funding and programme design. Embedding careers, employment and skills at the heart anchor institutions (including SBCCA, but also universities, large employers, and health care services) will help drive a system-wide approach and also support the delivery of the Get Sussex Working Plan's ambitions.

### **Promoting inclusive pathways by implementing the Get Sussex Working Plan**

- 4.21 Many residents in the region remain disengaged from the labour market, including adults with complex needs, young people not in education, employment or training ('NEETs'), older workers, and adults with disabilities and/or neurodivergence. These groups often face the most significant barriers to entering and sustaining work, and are therefore a central focus of the Get Sussex Working Plan. The Plan provides a clear framework for tackling the challenges, but its success relies on strong partnership working across employment, education, health and wider public services. Delivering genuinely inclusive pathways will require better alignment between skills provision, employment support and wider economic priorities, alongside practical delivery mechanisms that build people's confidence, resilience and readiness for work.
- 4.22 Building on the ambitions outlined within the Get Britain Working White Paper<sup>28</sup>, devolution creates the opportunity to embed the Get Sussex Working Plan within a coherent, inclusive skills and employment system. SBCCA and the Mayor have a key role in convening partners, supporting all six ambitions outlined within the Plan, and ensuring that careers, employment and skills are considered as part of core strategic decision making across the region. Early action can help mobilise partners and align delivery with devolved programmes to secure quick wins for the Plan's priority groups. Over time, as further powers over adult skills funding become available, longer-term commitments can be secured, embedding inclusive pathways into the region's growth model. This approach will ensure that regeneration, investment and new jobs can translate into real opportunities for everyone in the region, including those who face the greatest barriers to work.

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<sup>28</sup> HM Government (2024), *Get Britain Working*. [\[Link\]](#).

Table 4.2 Potential opportunities and actions identified as part of the skills and employment theme.

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>Building a future-ready skills ecosystem</b>								
<p>The long-term prosperity of the Sussex economy depends on a skills ecosystem that supports people at different stages of the lives, starting from primary school, into early adulthood and beyond. Ultimately, this intervention aims to prepare people for the jobs of tomorrow.</p>	<p>Devolution provides the opportunity to champion a whole-life approach to skills development, bringing together stakeholders from primary and secondary education, FE and HE, as well as lifelong learning, whilst ensuring this aligns with SBCCA's strategic growth ambitions. In addition, by taking joint-ownership of the LSIP (including the refresh of the Sussex LSIP), SBCCA can embed this within wider economic priorities, ensuring that skills provision is directly connected to the needs of the Sussex economy and its communities.</p> <p>This intervention recognises that career pathways are no longer linear, and that strength lies in enabling people to build transferable skills, access opportunities at different stages of their careers (i.e., post-16+) and adapt to a more digital, green and knowledge-driven economy.</p> <p>As such, devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the power to convene skills and training providers in a Sussex-wide skills forum which embeds modern careers, supports the development of progression pathways, and helps identify future skills needs.</p> <p>Whilst there is potential for early action to support publication of the refreshed Sussex LSIP, taking ownership and supporting delivery, devolution will also give SBCCA powers over adult skills funding to embed lifelong learning as a core part of the regional offer, in addition to developing a skills transition plan that helps define changing need in the economy, and</p>	<p><b>ST</b> = Take ownership of refreshed Sussex LSIP, ensuring it is shaped and led by SBCCA to reflect local priorities.</p> <p><b>LT</b> = Greater devolution over adult skills funding. Support the skills transition in green skills, digital literacy and transferable competencies.</p>	<p>This intervention seeks to future-proof the Sussex economy, by ensuring that future workers have the agility and resilience needed to adapt. In addition, it has potential to support inclusion by enabling older workers, those with complex needs and disadvantaged groups to re-enter and progress through the labour market.</p> <p>Finally, this action seeks to position Sussex to meet immediate growth priorities, while at the same time also building a workforce that is capable of adapting to structural changes, ensuring that economic transformation is both sustainable and socially equitable.</p>		✓✓		✓	

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes					
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.	
	championing innovation to ensure green skills, digital literacy and transferable competencies are embedded across all levels.								
<b>Driving employer engagement in the skills ecosystem</b>									
Building a future-ready skills ecosystem depends on skills providers' ability to understand direction of travel, and identify future need, which in turn depend on the depth and quality of relationships with employers from across the region. While frameworks such as the LSIP provide a useful starting point, SBCCA has a key role to play in ensuring that provision is continuously shaped by business needs.	Devolution provides a unique opportunity to embed meaningful employer engagement as a permanent feature of the region's skills ecosystem, ensuring that training and education are responsive to real-time labour market dynamics, in addition to continuously evolving workforce needs. Over the short-term, devolution gives SBCCA the powers to establish regular channels for employers to articulate local skills gaps, as well as emerging priorities, with this insight feeding directly into curriculum design, careers advice and other workforce development initiatives. Ultimately, this will ensure that provision is demand-led. However, over the long-term there is potential for the Mayor to further strengthen engagement, ensuring that business voices are central to decision-making on funding, programme design and sector growth ambitions.	<b>ST-MT</b> = Establish regular communication channels for employers to articulate local skills gaps. <b>LT</b> = Strengthen engagement, and ensure that business voices are central to decision-making.	Sustained engagement has potential to support the development of a demand-led system; one where training reflects real-time needs. This intervention has potential to support the development of a system that is agile, future-focused and inclusive, whilst also strengthening productivity (incl., to the UK's economy), build confidence among employers and investors of a robust skills pipeline.		✓✓		✓		
<b>Promoting inclusive pathways by implementing the Get Sussex Working Plan</b>									
The Get Sussex Working Plan provides a framework for supporting those farthest from the labour market by reducing economic inactivity and creating	The Get Sussex Working Plan, developed collaboratively by partners from across the region is now approved, and moving into delivery. As a partnership-led framework, its success depends on sustained collaboration across key stakeholders, particularly in supporting those groups who face the greatest barriers to work.	<b>MT</b> = Embed Get Sussex Working Plan within regional growth model. <b>LT</b> = Lower levels of economic	In principle, successful delivery of the Get Sussex Working Plan will see an increase in labour market participation and higher employment levels. Ultimately, the success of		✓✓		✓		

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
more opportunities for good work.	<p>Devolution provides SBCCA with a key role to play in ensuring that the Plan is implemented effectively, ensuring that delivery is fully aligned with devolved powers over skills and (adult) employment support, to maximise its impact and embed inclusion at the heart of the region’s growth model going forward.</p> <p>Over time, SBCCA and the Mayor will gain greater influence over adult skills funding, including the Adult Skills Fund and Skills Bootcamps, using this as an opportunity to secure longer term commitments (including for funding), and embedding the Get Sussex Working Plan as the foundation of an inclusive skills and employment ecosystem</p>	<p>inactivity, higher employment rate.</p> <p><b>LT</b> = Greater confidence levels and personal resilience.</p>	<p>the Get Sussex Working Plan will also be measured in terms of building residents’ confidence and resilience, whist also reducing overall reliance on welfare and public services as more people achieve sustainable employment. For younger people, successful delivery has potential to mean improved life chances, in addition to health and wellbeing gains.</p>					

a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change  
 ✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme  
 ST = Short-term, typically 1 to 2 years | MT = Medium-term, typically up to 5-years | LT = Longer-term

## c. Housing and strategic planning

- 4.23 Stakeholder engagement has highlighted long-standing, Sussex-wide challenges in both housing and employment land delivery. While the coast and natural environment (particularly the South Downs National Park, or ‘SDNP’) are key assets for the region, they also constrain individual authorities’ ability to deliver the housing and employment floorspace needed to support economic growth. As a result, businesses often face inefficient sites and higher operating costs, while residents experience rising housing pressures and affordability challenges. Meanwhile, infrastructure constraints (such as power capacity and water neutrality and transport network bottlenecks) also impact upon the region’s ability to deliver much needed housing at scale.
- 4.24 Devolution provides the opportunity to turn these constraints into drivers of change. Through the duty to prepare an SDS, SBCCA and the Mayor can set clear priorities that coordinate land release, and align housing, employment and infrastructure delivery at scale. For the first time, the region will be able to engage strategically with key partners such as the South Downs National Park Authority (‘SDNPA’) and Southern Water to explore opportunities for densification and urban extensions, while also addressing critical challenges such as grid capacity, flooding and water neutrality.
- 4.25 Devolution also equips the Mayor with a suite of development management powers, including the ability to intervene in strategically important planning applications, applying CPOs (or the prospect of CPOs where progress on strategic sites has stalled and requires collaboration between different landowners to be encouraged), establish MDCs and issue MDOs to accelerate regeneration. In addition, the ability to raise MCIL creates scale and a dedicated funding stream for strategic investment. Over time, these levers can help unlock stalled sites and deliver flagship regeneration projects that overcome viability barriers currently holding back development.
- 4.26 Together, these activities can create a more productive, inclusive and resilient region where investment is aligned with skills, transport and community needs, and growth translates into tangible improvements in prosperity and quality of life. By amplifying local priorities through regional leadership and connecting policy levers to scale-up delivery, intervention can transform piecemeal initiatives into a coherent growth model capable of tackling inequality, driving competitiveness and building long-term resilience.

### Case Study – Building Grid Capacity in the West of England and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough

In the West of England, challenges around grid capacity have been identified as a key constraint to potential high-growth clusters, where demand significantly outstrips existing supply. To this end, the West of England Growth Strategy set an action to work with GB Energy and regional partners to identify local solutions to grid capacity constraints, including investigation of smart grid technologies, that improve efficiency and resilience to climate change.

In Cambridgeshire & Peterborough, it is the CA’s ambition to work with the National Energy Systems Operator (‘NESO’), through the Central England Regional Energy Plan to ensure that the growth ambitions of the area are recognised.

## Employment land: Unlocking sites for growth and innovation

4.27 A high-level review of local evidence on employment land and premises suggests that the region’s economic potential is greatly constrained by fragmented employment land and ageing premises, with a significant proportion failing to comply with MEES legislation. As a result, many businesses, particularly in coastal districts, are often forced to operate across multiple sites, driving operational costs and reducing efficiency. While the implementation of MEES legislation has now been delayed to at least 2030 the overall direction of travel and scale of the challenge remains significant. Without coordinated intervention, these pressures risk deterring future national and international investment, and limiting the region’s long-term economic growth prospects.

4.28 Devolution provides the opportunity to embed employment land priorities within the SDS, particularly where they can be of strategic value to the economy of the area. Through this, SBCCA and the Mayor can play a central role in unlocking constrained sites, prioritising strategic employment land and aligning land use with infrastructure investment. By working closely with local authorities, especially in the context of local government reorganisation, the Mayor can coordinate local plans and enable a joined-up approach to release of older unsuitable sites, protect and prioritise strategic sites and make new provision, and align development with infrastructure investment, while navigating the unique constraints of the region, including the SDNP. Over the longer term, new powers such as CPOs can be used to unlock stalled sites (especially for large strategic sites requiring cooperation between different landowners), ensuring that employment land is fully integrated with housing, skills and transport strategies, and positioned as a driver of innovation and inclusive growth.

## Drive housing growth and affordability

4.29 Housing growth and affordability remain critical challenges for the region. A 2023 study<sup>29</sup> on the impact of the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis on Greater Brighton households, identified tens of thousands of residents experiencing hardship, with pressures particularly acute in parts of Brighton, Crawley and coastal towns (such as Newhaven, Littlehampton and Bognor Regis), with low-income households, disabled residents, larger families,

### Case Study – Increasing sustainable and high-quality commercial and housing development in York & North Yorkshire

The York & North Yorkshire Growth Plan identifies the increase in sustainable and high-quality commercial and housing development as a shared priority with central Government, and acknowledges that tackling this challenge will require strong collaboration to deliver innovative partnerships and models that could unlock sites, and work together to deliver increased sustainable housing, including potentially addressing planning capacity constraints, local site viability issues and the development of related infrastructure. The Growth Plan also acknowledges the need to boost digital connectivity and skills to enable greater digital innovation (in particular to improve the region’s broadband infrastructure in rural areas) to support businesses to invest in, and roll-out technological advancements in growth sectors and boosting productivity.

<sup>29</sup> Institute for Employment Studies (2023), *Costs of living impacts in Greater Brighton. Analysis of areas and groups most at risk from rising costs of living.*

students and private renters being most exposed. Without intervention, these inequalities risk deepening, undermining both community resilience and the region's ability to support economic growth. Crucially, there must be a marked shift in housing affordability to reflect the realities of the region's economy. Without this, parts of the region risk becoming a dormitory for London as prices there rise, with local residents increasingly priced out of their communities.

- 4.30 Devolution provides the opportunity to embed affordability and sustainability at the heart of housing delivery. Through the SDS, the region can secure the scale needed to align housing with transport investment, tackle long-standing constraints (such as power capacity, water neutrality, but also transport network constraints and the lack of land available for employment and housing) that limit individual authorities' ability to deliver and set clear priorities for affordable housing growth. Addressing entrenched challenges will require sustained effort, but new powers and regional scale will enable SBCCA and the Mayor to explore affordable housing programmes that can leverage existing funding streams, such as the Social and Affordable Homes Programme ('SAHP') to increase delivery. The result will be a housing system that reduces inequality, strengthen communities and underpins long-term prosperity across Sussex.

Table 4.3 Potential opportunities and actions identified as part of the strategic housing and planning theme.

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>Employment land: Unlocking sites for growth and innovation</b>								
Stakeholder engagement indicates that the region’s economic potential is often constrained by fragmented employment land and ageing premises, many of which fail to comply with MEES legislation (now delayed to 2030). Without intervention to unlock new sites that support economic growth and innovation there is a very real risk of deterring national and international investment, limiting long-term economic growth.	Devolution provides SBCCA with an opportunity to embed employment land priorities within the region’s LGP and ultimately SDS, by adopting a strategic approach to unlock constrained sites, prioritising strategic employment land, and aligning uses with infrastructure investment. By working closely with local authorities, SBCCA and the Mayor can coordinate local plans and enable a joined-up approach not previously possible. Over the longer term, new powers such as CPOs can be used to unlock stalled sites, improve project viability, whilst also ensuring that employment land is fully integrated with housing, skills and transport strategies.	<b>MT</b> = Embed employment land priorities in SDS, aligning land release with infrastructure investment. <b>LT</b> = Use CPOs to help unlock stalled sites <b>LT</b> = Fully integrate employment land with housing, skills and transport strategies, positioning employment land as a driver of innovation and inclusive growth.	The rationalisation and strategic release and development of employment land across the region has potential to reduce business operating costs, increase compliance and encourage greater levels of inward investment into the region.	✓		✓✓	✓	
<b>Drive housing growth and affordability</b>								
Housing growth and affordability are a critical challenge across Sussex,	Devolution provides the opportunity to embed affordability at the heart of housing delivery across the region, including throughout development of the LGP. Through the SDS, SBCCA	<b>MT</b> = Embed housing affordability	The key measure will be higher overall housing delivery with a growing	✓		✓✓	✓	

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<p>with tens of thousands facing hardships (i.e., related to housing affordability), especially in Crawley, parts of Brighton, and other coastal towns.</p> <p>Without intervention there is a risk for inequalities to deepen, undermining resilience and economic growth, with higher prices resulting in the displacement of local residents.</p>	<p>and the Mayor can achieve scale that aligns housing delivery with investment in transport, whilst at the same time also tackling long-term and strategic challenges (such as water neutrality).</p> <p>Over the long-term, there is potential for the region to develop an affordable housing programme that leverages existing funding streams to increase delivery.</p>	<p>priorities within the SDS, aligning this with region-wide transport and infrastructure strategies.</p> <p><b>MT</b> = Develop affordable housing delivery programme, leveraging funding streams to coordinate delivery across authorities</p> <p><b>LT</b> = Achieve a marked shift in affordability across the region, reducing inequalities and supporting long-term prosperity.</p>	<p>proportion of affordable homes being delivered, reducing costs on vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Over the long-term, this has potential to build stronger community resilience, reduce inequality and improve residents' quality of life.</p>					

a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change

✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme

ST = Short-term, typically 1 to 2 years | MT = Medium-term, typically up to 5-years | LT = Longer-term

## d. Economic development and regeneration

- 4.31 The Sussex economy is characterised by both long-standing industries and emerging specialisms; although fragmented delivery and infrastructure constraints have limited the ability to connect these strengths into a coherent growth narrative for the region. Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the tools to champion innovation, attract investment and align sectoral priorities with housing, skills and infrastructure delivery. The ‘golden thread’ is the ability to move from piecemeal initiatives to a joined-up regional strategy that positions Sussex as competitive, resilient and inclusive.
- 4.32 The ports of Newhaven and Shoreham, two of the region’s strongest economic assets exemplify this opportunity. These ports alongside smaller, more local ports (such as Littlehampton Harbour) have potential to evolve into modern maritime hubs that anchor renewable energy, sustainable logistics and low carbon innovation, with thriving industrial clusters and next-generation port operations. With devolved powers, SBCCA and the Mayor can help elevate these ports onto the national and international stage, accelerating investment, strengthening their contribution to the Sussex Energy Mission, and unlocking the next wave of inclusive economic growth. This creates significant opportunities for specialist skills development, high-quality employment (i.e., which in turn drives productivity) and wider regeneration which enables local communities to directly benefit from the ports’ continued success.
- 4.33 Alongside these sectoral strengths, Sussex’s visitor economy remains a defining feature, rooted in centuries of heritage but now diversified through its natural environment, creative expression and cultural assets. From Brighton’s world-renowned arts scene to the international profile of BHAF, Sussex has the ability to attract global audiences as well as investment. Devolution enables integration of the visitor economy into the region’s growth strategy, ensuring it is not only sustained, but leveraged as a driver of inclusive prosperity. This also creates the chance to reorient the economy seawards, capitalising on its coastal assets and maritime gateways, rather than defaulting to a London-facing model.
- 4.34 International gateways, including ports, airports and digital infrastructure, are critical enablers of this transformation. They provide the means to make the Sussex economy more international, by connecting world-leading innovation (e.g., in quantum computing), the creative industries and visitor attractions to global markets. The added value lies in the ability to convene partners, aligning investment and using devolved powers to embed these gateways within the SDS. By doing so, the region can position itself as a hub for clean energy, creative excellence and cultural vibrancy, while also ensuring that growth translates into tangible benefits for communities across the region.

### Ports as powerhouses: Newhaven and Shoreham as drivers of clean growth

- 4.35 Newhaven and Shoreham are two of the region’s most dynamic economic assets, and are already powering clean growth and the transition to net zero. Both ports are expanding their role in renewable energy, and their industrial clusters hold untapped potential to anchor a new phase of growth – supporting the deployment of additional clean energy, sustainable logistics, and a deepening pool of maritime skills (including the potential for a maritime skills hub and training centre at Shoreham Port). At Shoreham, this is reinforced

by the LIDP which sets out a clear pathway for the port’s industrial cluster to transition towards low carbon operations, including through electrification, alternative fuels and wider energy efficiency measures. At Newhaven, the GREENPORTSIDE project is exploring how renewable electricity can be deployed to support ships and port-side operations in ways that are both technically feasible and economically viable, offering insights that could accelerate the UK’s transition to zero carbon shipping.

4.36 Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the levers needed to elevate these assets, not simply as centres of trade and freight, but as drivers of innovation and clean growth. The LIDP identifies electrification as the scenario with the greatest potential to reduce emissions, while GREENPORTSIDE demonstrates how renewable power can be integrated to reduce pollution and stimulate regional innovation. Devolved powers will enable SBCCA and the Mayor to support delivery of these pathways by convening partners, providing long-term certainty in a period of economic and technological change, and helping to de-risk and reduce the financial barriers that inhibit SMEs’ ability to invest in both existing as well as emerging low carbon technologies. This leadership can support Newhaven and Shoreham ports’ ongoing evolution into green hubs for businesses, capable of attracting new investment and supporting growth of clean industry.

4.37 Both ports are ideally placed to support the transition to net zero by accommodating investment in offshore wind, hydrogen, solar and energy storage, and acting as testbeds for clean shipping technologies and the electrification of transport systems. Targeted infrastructure investment can unlock further growth and strengthen the ports’ role in sustainable logistics, and shifting goods from congested roads onto maritime and rail alternatives.

4.38 With devolved powers, the region can champion Newhaven and Shoreham ports as central pillars of its economic narrative, bringing together government, investors and industry to accelerate diversification, secure long-term investment and embed ports as drivers of local economic growth. The Shoreham LIDP and GREENPORTSIDE project together provide a strong evidence base for this collaboration, highlighting the region’s potential to become a leading green industrial hub for the South coast. Through sustained partnership building, strategic investment and a clear commitment to the electrification pathway, the Mayor can

### Case Study – Promoting offshore wind & energy transition in the North East

The North East region is home to the UK’s most advanced offshore wind industrial cluster, yet the North East Combined Authority’s (interim) Growth Plan recognises the ongoing scale of opportunity this presents, and outlines several priorities for developing this further. Proposed interventions include the development of flagship regional sites with investment in port and quayside infrastructure and connectivity to provide world-class facilities; working with skills providers and the new Energy Academy and Energy Central Campus to strengthen and diversify the skills pipeline; work in strategic partnership with the ports in the region to unlock growth opportunities, facilitate the development of other forms of renewable energy (e.g. geothermal, hydrogen and district heat networks) in conjunction with world-leading research expertise; and progress the Institute for Low Carbon Hydrogen in partnership with central Government and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

help ensure that both ports evolve into nationally recognised hubs for clean energy, innovation and maritime excellence, driving high-quality jobs, skills and regeneration across the region.

### Reimagining the Sussex visitor economy to unlock its full potential

- 4.39 The visitor economy is a defining feature of the region, but remains characterised by low-paid, lower-productivity employment and generally a transient workforce. However, the opportunity lies in diversifying and elevating the visitor offer to build on the region’s natural environment, strengths in the creative industries and cultural assets, while also harnessing the international profile of BHAFC. The football club’s plan for a new stadium to support its Women’s Super League (‘WSL’) team highlights how sport can broaden the visitor offer and create new avenues for growth. This sits alongside the ambitions of East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership<sup>30</sup> (‘LVEP’) which sets out a shared pan-Sussex vision for a “*thriving, vibrant and regenerative visitor destination*” which blends contemporary culture and local hospitality against a backdrop of outstanding natural and built heritage.
- 4.40 Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the levers to reposition the visitor economy as a driver of inclusive economic growth, and embed the LVEP’s strategic plan as the foundation for future interventions. By aligning investment in culture, sport, skills and the natural environment with the LVEP’s four priorities (i.e., incredible experiences; positive impact; developing innovation, productivity, accessibility and sustainability; and a collaborative, connected and pioneering sector), the region can raise the quality of jobs, strengthen productivity and support a more resilient and year-round visitor economy. In turn, this has potential to create wider supply chain and induced effects that ripple through the broader economy. The LVEP’s commitment to partnership, collaboration, inclusivity and sustainability provides a strong platform for SBCCA and the Mayor to build on.
- 4.41 As the LVEP board develops its role as a leadership voice for the visitor economy, the Mayor and SBCCA can amplify this work, acting as the region’s champion and promoting a joined-up, pan-Sussex narrative to national and international audiences. This includes supporting coordinated messaging, championing programmes that enhance the region’s appeal, driving event creation and showcasing Sussex’s destinations and venues. Collaboration with Gatwick Airport will be central to raising awareness of the Sussex offer and attracting new visitor markets. In doing so, SBCCA and the Mayor can ensure the visitor economy is recognised as a key opportunity to achieve wider objects for the region, as outlined within the LGP.

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<sup>30</sup> East Sussex, Brighton & Hove and West Sussex Local Visitor Economy Partnership (2024), *Visitor Economy Strategy for Growth 2024-2034*. [\[Link\]](#).

## Supporting innovation: From creative industries to quantum computing

4.42 The regional economy is characterised by a rich and diverse mix of nationally significant industrial clusters spanning Brighton’s world-renowned creative industries, West Sussex’s automotive specialisms, and East Sussex’s advanced engineering and vacuum technologies. Yet, these strengths are often seen in isolation, limiting their ability to drive productivity growth and wider diversification. Without stronger coordination, the region risks missing the chance to connect these assets (i.e., sectoral strengths and clusters) into a coherent and future-facing economy.

4.43 Devolution provides the opportunity to harness these sectoral strengths and embed them within a regional growth strategy. The creative industries’ vision ‘Unleashing the Potential’ produced to support and grow the sector in Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex offers a powerful exemplar, setting out ambitions for growth, routes into employment and support for individuals working in the sector. This model can be replicated across other priority industries, ensuring that innovation is not only celebrated but also strategically nurtured. Breakthroughs in quantum computing enabled (in part) through collaboration with regional strengths in vacuum technology, show how complementary strengths can be connected to deliver outcomes greater than the sum of their parts, underlining the importance of a joined-up approach, even in seemingly unconnected sectors. Recent breakthroughs in quantum technologies have empowered the University of Sussex and its spin-off Universal Quantum, to bid for the UKRI-led Local Innovation Partnerships Fund<sup>31</sup> (‘LIPF’) to create a new ‘Quantum Silicon Valley’ in the UK<sup>32</sup>.

4.44 SBCCA will be well placed to build on this by convening FE and HE providers and businesses to develop sector deals, aligning skills pipeline with emerging opportunities and embed emerging priorities within the LGP. Alongside the current bid for a ‘Quantum Silicon Valley’, SBCCA should explore further opportunities under the £500 million LIPF “Competed” strand which provides opportunities for regions with polycentric geographies,

### Case Study – Unlocking growth in rail innovation & security in York & North Yorkshire

The rail innovation & security sector has a long history in the region, and is at the forefront of technological specialisms (e.g. AI and quantum communications). The York & North Yorkshire Growth Plan seeks to accelerate the translation of this innovation into industry, stimulating further confidence, driving greater inward investment, as well as cluster growth. The Growth Plan’s ambition for unlocking growth in the sector seeks to build on existing relationship with Government to explore procurement flexibilities to accelerate innovation (as current contract and procurement regulations delay the process and discourage innovation), while at the same time also working with Great British Railways to develop innovation and skills. This will include the development of a Rail Innovation Hub at York Central, while at the same time working closely with sector training providers (e.g. National Skills Academy for Rail) to identify and develop career pathways to support talent pipelines and reskilling/upskilling the existing workforce.

<sup>31</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>32</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

such as Greater Brighton, to strengthen innovation capacity, increase their competitive advantage and deliver impact at scale.

- 4.45 By championing clusters as nationally and internationally competitive, and leveraging Sussex's international gateways, the region can attract investment, accelerate innovation and ensure local people benefit directly from new opportunities. Over time, this approach will position Sussex as a hub of excellence; one where creative industries, advanced technologies and foundational sectors combine to deliver a knowledge-driven economy, resilience and long-term economic transformation.

### **Revitalising town centres as pilots for inclusive renewal**

- 4.46 Urban centres remain the backbone of Sussex's economic and social life, yet many town centres are not realising their full potential, with vacant units, fragmented investment and limited flexibility influencing their ability to shape local priorities. Devolution provides the opportunity to change this, empowering town centres as vibrant engines of inclusive growth, where regeneration is integrated with housing, transport and skills delivery to create places that are resilient, attractive and accessible to all.

- 4.47 The added value lies in championing town and city centre renewal as part of a broader vision for inclusive economic and social prosperity by bringing vacant sites into productive use, diversifying centres to strengthen the evening and cultural economy, and improving connectivity so residents can access new opportunities (i.e., within the region and further afield). By aligning regeneration aspirations outlined in the LGP within the SDS, SBCCA and the Mayor can coordinate investment in housing, transport and employment land, ensuring that centres are commercially successful and socially inclusive. Visible progress will help build investor and community confidence, embedding urban centres as hubs of employment, culture and civic life, providing a replicable model for renewal across Sussex. Such initiatives will require SBCCA and the Mayor to provide the strategic leadership needed to bring forward these opportunities in a coherent and mutually reinforcing way.

- 4.48 The experience of the Newhaven EZ demonstrates what can be achieved when local partners have the tools to shape place-based intervention. The EZ has already helped reposition Newhaven as a hub for regeneration and innovation, delivering 2,900 sq.m of new employment floorspace, attracting more than £20 million in investment, supporting over 600 jobs and the refurbishment of more than 70,000 sq.m of commercial floorspace<sup>33</sup>. Crucially, it shows how locally defined priorities can drive momentum more effectively, than nationally prescribed programmes.

- 4.49 By championing place-based delivery vehicles such as the Newhaven EZ (noting that EZs are no longer a government policy), and exploring options such as MDCs or Industrial Strategy Zones ('ISZ') where appropriate, the region can create dedicated mechanisms to secure funding, embed sectoral priorities and drive regeneration at scale.

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<sup>33</sup> Newhaven Enterprise Zone, *Newhaven Unleashed. Newhaven Enterprise Zone Business Plan, April 2023 – March 2026.* [\[Link\]](#).

Table 4.4 Potential opportunities and actions identified as part of the economic development and regeneration theme.

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>Ports as powerhouses: Newhaven and Shoreham as drivers of clean growth</b>								
Newhaven and Shoreham Ports are two of the region’s most important assets and are driving clean-growth and innovation, albeit with potential to further support the transition to net zero, and strengthening the ports’ role in sustainable logistics, and as green growth hubs for the region.	Devolution has potential to enable SBCCA and the Mayor to coordinate infrastructure, skills and clean energy deployment at pace, turning strong momentum into transformational growth. Devolution has potential to super-charge growth through place-based leadership and elevate both ports from strong regional assets, to nationally recognised clean energy hubs, accelerating diversification, attracting long-term investment, expanding skills in maritime, and leading the shift to low carbon freight. The added value lies in strategic alignment, faster delivery and the ability to act as a testbed for clean maritime technologies.	<b>ST</b> = Champion both ports as regional powerhouses to become green growth hubs for the region. <b>MT</b> = Explore and identify opportunities for securing funding for targeted investment. <b>MT</b> = Explore viability for establishing a marine skills hub. <b>LT</b> = Ports are nationally recognised hubs for clean energy, maritime innovation and high-value employment.	By securing investment and diversifying activity, there is potential to maximise both ports’ ability to develop into clean-growth hubs delivering jobs, skills and regeneration. Over time, both ports have potential to become flagship centres of clean energy and innovation, driving regeneration across coastal communities and strengthening Sussex’s role in the UK’s transition to net zero.	✓	✓		✓✓	✓

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>Reimagining the Sussex visitor economy to unlock its full potential</b>								
The visitor economy is a defining feature of the regional economy, but is characterised by low-paid, low-productivity jobs. The sector’s workforce is generally transient, often young and inexperienced, limiting long-term prosperity. Without enhancements and diversification, there is a risk the sector remains low-value, representing a missed opportunity for regional growth and productivity gains.	Devolution provides the opportunity to reposition the visitor economy as a driver of inclusive growth, building on the powers to align investment in culture, sport and sectoral diversification, with skills and infrastructure development. By championing diversification through creative industries, promoting the region’s unique natural assets and sports (building on BHAFc’s presence in the English Premier League, and a new WSL stadium), SBCCA and the Mayor can embed visitor economy priorities within the SDS.	<b>ST</b> = Reaffirm and strengthen partnerships with creative industries, <b>MT</b> = Explore opportunities for driving investor confidence to deliver new WSL stadium. Align investment in culture, sport and the natural environment with skills priorities. <b>LT</b> = Establish the visitor economy as cornerstone of regional identity.	In addition to increasing total employment, diversification of the visitor economy also has potential to result in higher-quality employment, which leads to better wages and improved productivity. More broadly, this intervention also has potential to enhance regional identity, and build stronger community resilience.		✓		✓✓	
<b>Supporting innovation: From creative industries to quantum computing</b>								
The region has diverse, nationally significant clusters (e.g., in creative industries, automotive, advanced engineering, and vacuum technology); which primarily operate separately with	Devolution gives SBCCA and the Mayor powers to convene FE and HE providers alongside businesses, with a view to building sector deals and developing innovation partnerships, which in turn embed	<b>ST</b> = Build on the creative industries’ vision to embed the	Successful implementation will see increased investment flows and higher productivity (incl. per capita) driven by		✓		✓✓	

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
very little, if any inter-sector co-ordination. Without this, the region risks missing opportunities to connect assets into a coherent, future-facing, and knowledge-based economy.	sectoral priorities within the region’s LGP, which are then embedded within the SDS. The added value lies in the ability to champion clusters as nationally and international competitive, leveraging the region’s international gateways to maximise growth opportunities.	sector into the SDS. <b>ST</b> = Champion breakthroughs in priority sectors (e.g. quantum computing) to drive investor interest. <b>ST</b> = Explore opportunities and submit bids to LIPF. <b>MT</b> = Develop sector deals and innovation partnerships for priority sectors. <b>LT</b> = Position Sussex as a knowledge-driven economy with resilience and long-term transformation.	growth in high-value jobs and an expanded skills base. Over the long-term, the collaboration between FE and HE providers and the region’s business base has potential to lead to long-term transformation into a resilient inclusive and knowledge-driven economy.					
<b>Revitalising town centres as pilots for inclusive renewal</b>								
Urban centres are the backbone of the region’s economy and social life. However, many town centres experience high levels of vacancy, underperforming	Devolution provides the opportunity to champion the renewal of town and city centres as part of a broader vision for inclusive growth across the region. This can be achieved by tackling vacant sites, diversifying uses	<b>ST</b> = Identify priority centres to initiate regeneration	In the first instance, successful renewal will see increased footfall, higher occupancy rates and the				✓✓	

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
high streets and entrenched deprivation. Without intervention, urban centres (i.e., town and city centres) risk losing their roles as hubs of commerce, culture and community.	(including the promotion of a stronger night-time economy) and improving connectivity (outlined under Theme a.). The added value lies in aligning the town centre regeneration with the SDS, and integrating housing, transport and employment investment.	pilots, and tackle underperforming spaces. <b>MT</b> = Support diversification of town centre activity to strengthen the local economy, while also embedding renewal as part of the SDS. Align transport investment and skills strategies to support delivery. <b>LT</b> = Position town centres as hubs for inclusive employment, cultural vibrancy, and community inclusion.	creation of new employment opportunities. Moreover, there is potential for stronger community resilience, in addition to tackling persistent pockets of deprivation. Over the long-term, the successful renewal of urban centres has potential to see town centres into vibrant, sustainable engines of growth.					

a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change

✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme.

ST = Short-term, typically 1 to 2 years | MT = Medium-term, typically up to 5-years | LT = Longer-term

## e. Environment and climate change

- 4.50 The region stands at a pivotal moment; it faces the dual challenge of tackling climate change and addressing energy security, while also managing pressures to grow the economy, deliver new homes and unlock employment land. Without strong coordination, fragmented delivery risks making energy neutrality impossible to achieve, and environmental assets could be treated as constraints rather than drivers of prosperity. The task ahead is to embed clean energy and natural capital at the heart of Sussex’s growth strategy; ensuring that climate action, environmental stewardship and economic development are mutually reinforcing.
- 4.51 Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the levers to turn ambition into delivery. With strategic oversight of renewable energy schemes, SBCCA can align infrastructure investment with wider spatial priorities, help tackle constraints such as grid capacity and secure commitments from developers to invest in local supply chains. At the same time, SBCCA can embed environmental protection within the SDS, ensuring housing, employment and infrastructure respect ecological limits, whilst also maximising opportunity.

### The Sussex Energy Mission

- 4.52 The region faces the dual challenge of tackling climate change and addressing energy security, while ensuring its economy remains resilient and inclusive. Launched in 2024, the Sussex Energy Mission sets out GBEB’s ambition to achieve energy neutrality by 2040, scaling up zero carbon energy production and reducing demand. Yet, without strong coordination, fragmented delivery would make energy neutrality impossible to achieve, and the benefits of clean energy projects would be unevenly distributed across the region’s communities. The Sussex Energy Mission must therefore be seen not only as a response to climate change, but as a coordinated framework to improve energy security and create new pathways for regional prosperity.

#### Case Study – Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough CA’s LGP energy and clean tech as a priority growth sector, built around clean-tech, energy generation, energy management and energy storage (incl., carbon capture and storage). In addition to supporting growth within the sector, the LGP identifies this as an opportunity to invest in skills and workforce development, whilst at the same time also accelerating innovation in addition to research and development (‘R&D’) in energy and clean-tech areas.

- 4.53 Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the levers needed to ensure clean energy projects deliver maximum benefit for Sussex. With strategic oversight of major renewable schemes, the region can align infrastructure investment with wider spatial and economic priorities in the region’s LGP, embed initiatives within the SDS, and secure commitments from developers to invest in local supply chains. In addition, the strategic oversight and scale provided enables the region to tackle key constraints that may limit the deliverability of renewable energy projects, most notably grid capacity and connectivity. This will ensure

that clean energy investments can be delivered at scale, and embedded within region's long-term growth strategy.

- 4.54 By linking green skills provision to the needs of the energy transition, the region can ensure that local people benefit directly from the new jobs and opportunities created. Over the longer term, this coordinated approach has potential to position Sussex as a hub for clean energy and innovation; a place where the transition to net zero drives prosperity, resilience and inclusive growth.

### **Harnessing natural capital for long-term prosperity**

- 4.55 The region's natural environment is one of its greatest assets, yet pressures to grow the economy, deliver new homes and unlock employment land often create conflicts and constraints, limiting its ability to balance development with environmental protection and sustainable growth. This is particularly evident in sectors such as agriculture and horticulture, where land pressures, climate impact and a fragmented approach to planning threaten long-term food security and the viability of rural enterprise. In addition, piecemeal development further risk undermining the contribution that natural capital can make to long-term prosperity. Without a more strategic approach, environmental assets may be treated as barriers rather than drivers of resilience and innovation. The challenge is to strike the right balance; protecting and enhancing the environment, while also meeting the needs of a sustainable economy. Initiatives such as the UNESCO-designated Living Coast Biosphere and Sussex Bay already demonstrate how nature, people and the economy can thrive together. Going forward, it will be key for their 'spirit' and direction are sustained and embedded across the wider regional growth framework.
- 4.56 Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the levers needed to place environmental protection at the heart of regional growth. By integrating natural capital into the SDS, the region can ensure that housing, employment and infrastructure are planned in ways that respect ecological limits while maximising economic opportunity. This requires a serious debate about how Sussex grows; making better use of existing resources, settlement edges and urban strengths, alongside densification and rural diversification. Over time, this approach will position the region as a national exemplar of sustainable development, where initiatives such as the Biosphere and Sussex Bay are sustained as part of a broader narrative, and where environmental stewardship and economic growth are mutually reinforcing, delivering prosperity, resilience and quality of life for all communities across the region.

Table 4.5 Potential opportunities and actions identified as part of the environment and climate change theme.

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
<b>The Sussex Energy Mission</b>								
<p>The Sussex Energy Mission takes on the dual challenge of addressing climate change, whilst also working towards energy security for the region. However, without a coordinated approach (and centralised leadership) there continues to be the risk of fragmented delivery and uneven economic benefits. Furthermore, without a coordinated approach delivery risks being constrained by challenges outside individual projects' control (e.g., grid capacity and connectivity).</p>	<p>Devolution provides the opportunity to provide strategic oversight, convene partners from across the board (i.e., investors, developers, businesses and local government), and provide the scale needed to align infrastructure investments with the region's SDS. In addition, SBCCA and the Mayor will also have a role to play in securing and maximising developer commitments to invest in local supply chains and embed these projects as part of the local community. In addition, devolution provides the Mayor with the opportunity to draw on additional levers (incl., the ability to raise MCIL for infrastructure investments) to tackle constraints and (where possible) align investment sequencing with project pipelines.</p>	<p><b>ST-MT</b> = Embed the Sussex Energy Mission as central to the region's SDS, so that clean energy and grid upgrades are treated as spatial priorities linked to housing, employment land and transport.  <b>MT</b> = Play a bigger role to embed renewable energy projects in local supply chains, and the local economy.  <b>LT</b> = Promote the success of</p>	<p>Successful delivery of the Sussex Energy Mission will see both an increase in renewable energy generation, in addition to an overall decline in energy use. However, success for the Sussex Energy Mission will also mean that the benefits of clean energy are distributed across communities in Sussex, resulting in an overall reduction in regional inequality. Furthermore, by securing supply chain commitment by developers (in particular larger on larger projects), there is potential to champion, and develop green skills pathways across the region.</p>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓

Why is the opportunity necessary?	What is net additionality / added value	Proposed timeline	Expected impact of opportunity	Relevant Themes				
				a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
		the Sussex Energy Mission.						
<b>Harnessing natural capital for long-term prosperity</b>								
The natural environment is one of the region’s greatest assets; however, without a coordinated approach, fragmented planning and piecemeal development there is a very real risk that these assets are treated as barriers, rather than opportunities for growth. Stakeholders at the local level have highlighted the challenges of balancing requirements for growth, housing delivery and employment land release with environmental protection.	SBCCA and the Mayor (once elected) will have a key role to play in striking the right balance between protecting the environment, whilst also promoting sustainable economic growth. Devolution provides SBCCA and the Mayor with the scale needed to develop a strategic and coordinated approach to planning, ensuring that the region’s natural capital is integrated within the SDS. Convening powers can bring together different partners and stakeholders, to have a wider debate on how environmental priorities can be embedded as part of a sustainable economic strategy, by championing regional initiatives (such as the Sussex Energy Mission, Sussex Bay and the Living Coast Biosphere), whilst at the same time setting spatial priorities. Ultimately, SBCCA and the Mayor will have an important role to play in aligning investment decisions with natural capital, and securing commitments that not only protect, but also enhance the local environment.	<b>MT</b> = Embed natural capital within SDS, building on the visions set out within existing initiatives (e.g. Sussex Energy Mission, Living Coast Biosphere and Sussex Bay). <b>LT</b> = Position Sussex as a nature-positive economy (e.g. growing nature-based tourism, developing green supply chains).	Over the long-term, successful implementation of this initiative will see development planned within ecological limits, reducing any potential conflict between economic growth and environmental protection.			✓		✓✓

a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change

✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme

ST = Short-term, typically 1 to 2 years | MT = Medium-term, typically up to 5-years | LT = Longer-term

## 5.0 Future Priorities and Actions

- 5.1 This section translates the analysis from the preceding sections to provide a clear, action-focused framework that groups opportunities for action by **impact** and **timeframe**. The purpose is to show which actions can deliver positive outcomes for residents and the Sussex economy, and when those outcomes can realistically be secured. The framework is designed to help SBCCA and the Mayor decide where to deploy resources (such as convening powers, funding and delivery vehicles) so that short-term momentum is captured (particularly within the region's LGP), while medium and long-term system change is put on a credible path to delivery.
- 5.2 The framework in Figure 5.1 presents a simple conceptual tool for prioritising opportunities for action by impact (vertical axis) and timeframe (horizontal axis). The model supports three practical tasks: sequencing short-term 'wins', planning medium-term scaling and setting long-term change objectives, with potential actions being grouped into the following four quadrants:
- 1 **Short-term and high impact** – These actions deliver rapid, visible benefits, which can quickly shift regional outcomes. These are the most desirable as they build public confidence and unlock follow-on investment. In practice, genuine opportunities of this nature are uncommon and typically depend on pre-existing readiness, strong national and local partnership and rapid access to funding.
  - 2 **Short-term and low impact** – These actions are quick, low-risk and produce incremental gains. They are useful for demonstrating progress, testing approaches (i.e., that can be scaled further) and building momentum. While these can generate confidence, their impact is likely to be limited, and should therefore be treated as stepping stones rather than ends in themselves.
  - 3 **Medium-to-long-term and high impact** – These actions have potential to reshape systems and deliver the greatest, and most sustained benefit over the long-term; but require planning, investment and institutional change. In principle, these actions will represent the strategic focus over the short-to-medium term, whilst at the same time shaping the regional agenda over longer term.
  - 4 **Medium-to-long-term and low impact** – These actions take time, but deliver limited systemic benefit, and risk diverting capacity and funding from actions which can deliver significant change. They are the least desirable category and should therefore be deprioritised unless they serve as enablers for higher-impact opportunities or are required for statutory reasons.
- 5.3 Each opportunity considered in the previous section has been ranked based on the above definitions as shown in Figure 5.1. This exercise shows that the majority of proposed opportunities sit in the medium-to-long-term and high impact category. The immediate challenge for SBCCA (and the Mayor once elected), is therefore to put in place the enabling steps (such as institutional arrangements, delivery vehicles and partnership agreements) so that the region can mobilise those long-term benefits and begin to secure positive outcomes much sooner.

Figure 5.1 Overview of prioritisation framework



Source: Lichfields analysis

- 5.4 While each opportunity considered in the previous section is presented against a primary theme, most cut across multiple devolution themes, creating synergies when planned and delivered together. Sequencing interventions (such as linking transport, skills, energy, land and natural capital) will produce multiple effects that are greater than the sum of individual projects.
- 5.5 An overview of the opportunities' contribution to key devolution themes is presented in Table 5.1 below

Table 5.1 Overview of opportunities' contribution to key devolution themes

Initiative	Relevant (devolution) theme				
	a.	b.	c.	d.	e.
Unlocking bottlenecks and constraints on the road network	✓✓		✓	✓	✓
Transforming Sussex coast rail to unlock labour markets	✓✓		✓	✓	✓
Building Sussex mass transit	✓✓			✓	✓
An active travel revolution: Embedding walking, cycling and micromobility	✓✓				✓
Building a future-ready skills ecosystem		✓✓		✓	
Driving employer engagement in the skills ecosystem		✓✓		✓	
Get Sussex Working: Inclusive pathways to work		✓✓		✓	
Employment land: Unlocking sites for growth and innovation	✓		✓✓	✓	
Drive housing growth and affordability	✓		✓✓	✓	
Ports as powerhouses: Newhaven and Shoreham as drivers of clean growth	✓	✓		✓✓	✓
Reimagining the Sussex visitor economy to unlock its full potential		✓		✓✓	
Supporting innovation: From creative industries to quantum computing		✓		✓✓	
Revitalising town centres as pilots for inclusive renewal				✓✓	
The Sussex Energy Mission	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓✓
Harnessing natural capital for long-term prosperity			✓		✓✓

a. Transport & infrastructure planning | b. Skills & employment | c. Housing & strategic planning | d. Economic development & regeneration | e. Environment & climate change

✓✓ = Major contribution to theme | ✓ = Supporting contribution to theme

## Potential Opportunities and Actions

- 5.6 Drawing on the evidence review, stakeholder engagement and analysis undertaken, the final section sets out a series of priorities for SBCCA, and eventually the future Mayor, to explore and take forward. The proposed interventions are intended to shape delivery in the short to medium term, while laying firm foundations for long-term transformation, translating the preceding analysis into proposals that can generate measurable benefits for residents, businesses and the wider Sussex economy.
- 5.7 As SBCCA takes shape it will be important to build on the existing Greater Brighton agenda, in particular GBEB's flagship commitment to transitioning the region towards net zero, alongside its focus on conserving natural capital, unleashing the potential of the creative

industries and strengthening the local food economy. This will provide a strong and coherent platform that should be carried forward into the emerging Sussex-wide approach.

- 5.8 Taken together, the following priorities highlight the importance of an integrated and cross-cutting delivery, ensuring that transport, skills, housing, energy and natural capital are aligned so that individual opportunities reinforce one another. The ability to convene partners, supported by the scale of a Sussex-wide LGP and SDS, in addition to the potential for new delivery vehicles (such as MDCs), will be central to turning strategic ambition into tangible, inclusive outcomes that endure well into the long-term. Carrying forward GBEB's established priorities will help ensure continuity, coherence and momentum as the region transitions towards greater devolution.

### **Embed the Sussex Energy Mission as a cornerstone to delivery**

- 5.9 Positioning the Sussex Energy Mission as a flagship and cross-delivery programme for SBCCA offers a powerful opportunity to align clean energy deployment with job creation, skills and spatial planning across the region. With devolved oversight, SBCCA can coordinate developers, grid operators, local authorities and anchor institutions to accelerate delivery, reduce duplication and ensure that investment is targeted where it has the greatest economic and social impact.
- 5.10 The potential scale of this opportunity is significant, with ONS data<sup>34</sup> suggesting that every £1 billion turnover<sup>35</sup> in the low carbon and renewable energy economy ('LCREE') supports an estimated 4,600 full-time equivalent ('FTE') jobs directly and more widely through supply chain and induced effects. Around a third (i.e., 37.7%) of the total impact is supported by construction activity. Similarly, evidence submitted to support the DCO for Rampion 2 suggests that construction activity will support an average of 4,060 FTE jobs each year through direct and supply chain expenditure (i.e., excluding wider induced effects) nationally<sup>36</sup>.
- 5.11 Drawing on the above in addition to research highlighting the 'Grand Challenge', it is estimated that an investment 12-times the scale of Rampion 2 (i.e., of around £45-£50 billion, in 2025-pricing) is required across the region to ensure the success of the Sussex Energy Mission<sup>37</sup>. Key to maximising the opportunity will be the ability to secure local supply chain commitments for businesses in the region. This will ensure that the unprecedented wave of investment required translates into long-term and locally-embedded economic value for Sussex.
- 5.12 There is strong precedent for this type of intervention. The Net Zero Strategy for Tees Valley<sup>38</sup> has leveraged devolved powers to coordinate industrial decarbonisation, in the process unlocking £10 billion with potential to support over 30,000 new jobs in the region. Similarly, the West Midlands Combine Authority's Energy Capital initiative<sup>39</sup> has

<sup>34</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), *Low carbon and renewable energy economy, UK: 2023*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>35</sup> In 2023-pricing

<sup>36</sup> Based on c. 40% UK-based sourcing for Rampion 2; equivalent to £1.14 billion in 2019-pricing (or £1.47 billion in 2025 pricing) as per Appendix 18.4 [\[Link\]](#). However, only 2.5% (i.e., equivalent to £30 million in 2019-pricing) of UK-based expenditure is currently anticipated to be captured by businesses located in Sussex.

<sup>37</sup> i.e., a shortfall or 'net import of energy' of 24.9TWh per annum for Sussex, as evidenced in public records published by GBEB [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>38</sup> Tees Valley Combined Authority, *Net Zero Strategy for Tees Valley, Powering the UK's journey to Net Zero*. [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>39</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

demonstrated how regional coordination can unlock grid investment, and stimulate green-skills pathways through FE and HE partnerships.

### **Ensure the adequate provision of employment space to meet business needs**

- 5.13 A systematic review of employment land Sussex-wide is needed to ensure that future supply keeps pace with the evolving needs of growing firms and modern occupiers. Devolution gives SBCCA the ability to convene landowners and strategic stakeholders (such as the SDNPA, utilities providers and operators of strategic employment sites) to identify priority locations, unlock sites and bring underperforming premises back into productive use. This coordinated approach can secure high-quality employment space close to transport hubs and key labour markets, ensuring that businesses can expand locally, instead of being displaced to locations outside the region.
- 5.14 Provision of new employment land to facilitate commercial development will, not only support new employment, but may also increase business retention by providing opportunities for growing businesses to invest and expand. Furthermore, this has potential to support the formation of new clusters in priority sectors (incl. advanced manufacturing and digital services).
- 5.15 For Sussex, such an approach has potential to unlock a pipeline of modern, flexible employment space that supports high-value sectors (such as opportunities in LCREE, the creative industries, advanced manufacturing and digital technology), in the process raising productivity levels and wage levels for residents in the region.

### **Raising productivity levels and supporting sectoral growth**

- 5.16 A step-change in productivity levels will require a focused and evidence-led approach that defines and prioritises the region's distinctive sectoral strengths (such as quantum computing, vacuum technology, advanced manufacturing, the visitor economy and creative industries), and then aligns investment, skills development and land provision around those priorities. Devolution gives SBCCA the ability to set clear sectoral priorities, broker partnerships, and target infrastructure and business support to where it will raise output most effectively.
- 5.17 This is precisely the ambition outlined by the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy; to "*seize the most significant opportunities and create the most favourable conditions in key UK sectors*". According to the Industrial Strategy, the eight sectors with the highest potential (also referred to as 'IS-8' in the Industrial Strategy) are on average 27.1% more productive than the UK national average, with the current trajectory anticipated to add an extra £152 billion GVA each year and create 1.1 million new jobs by 2035.
- 5.18 The region is already well-positioned to capitalise on this approach. The region is home to a number of emerging specialisms (most notably quantum technologies, and vacuum engineering, in addition to advanced manufacturing) anchored by world-leading research institutions and a growing ecosystem of innovative firms. These strengths provide a strong foundation for attracting private investment in research and development ('R&D'), particularly in areas where demand for advanced technologies is accelerating. By coordinating land release, skills development and infrastructure provision, SBCCA can help

these clusters scale, deepen their supply chains and strengthen their international competitiveness.

- 5.19 There is also significant potential to support the diversification of the region's economic base. The visitor economy, for example, is greatly influenced by seasonal trends. By supporting diversification (e.g. by expanding the cultural and experiential offer, or linking tourism assets more closely with the region's natural capital and heritage) the region can unlock year-round employment, and unlock productivity gains. Similar opportunities existing the creative industries, where digital content and immersive technologies can add value and stimulate spillover benefits across the wider economy.
- 5.20 Taken together, these interventions can create new pathways for sustained productivity gains. Aligning sector priorities with investment in skills, infrastructure and the SDS will ensure that the region's existing strengths, alongside emerging ones are transformed into engines of long-term growth.

### **Develop an investment prospectus**

- 5.21 An investment prospectus translates regional strengths and development pipelines into a compelling offer for investors and funders, showcasing both the region's established capabilities and its emerging opportunities. It provides a platform to package 'shovel-ready' projects, strategic employment sites, skills pipelines and the Sussex Energy Mission into a suite of investible propositions, each backed by clear delivery plans and risk-mitigation measures.
- 5.22 A well-crafted prospectus can play a catalytic role, with evidence from elsewhere suggesting that a coordinated investment proposition can will accelerate inward investment, unlock private finance and make the case for further devolution powers and long-term funding. For instance, the approach adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority evidences how successful delivery has made the West Midlands as the UK's most investible region outside London, with over 130 projects supporting an estimated 5,800 jobs during 2024 and 2025<sup>40</sup>.
- 5.23 The region has a similar potential to articulate a clear, place-based investment story, rooted in its strengths (e.g., in quantum technology, vacuum engineering, clean energy, creative industries, advanced manufacturing and the visitor economy) to position itself as a destination for high-value, mission-aligned investment. The prospectus will also provide a mechanism to align investment with the region's wider strategic ambitions. By integrating spatial priorities, along with infrastructure investment, skills pathways and sectoral strengths into a single narrative, SBCCA can demonstrate how devolved powers can be used to de-risk investment, accelerate delivery and create long-term value.

### **Deliver a long-term, affordable and sustainable housing strategy**

- 5.24 A long-term, strategic approach to housing delivery is essential to meeting the region's identified housing needs and support genuinely inclusive economic growth. Development of the SDS will provide a mechanism to plan for this at scale, aligning new homes with transport investment, utilities capacity, employment land provision and environmental stewardship. The consultation draft NPPF also sets out that the SDS will include the

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<sup>40</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

apportionment to local planning authorities in the strategy area of objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses that are best considered at a strategic scale for the duration of the plan period (at least 20 years, with a review every 5 years).

- 5.25 Through the SDS, the Mayor and SBCCA can prioritise well-connected sites, sequence infrastructure upgrades and remove barriers that currently delay or constrain sustainable development. This coordinated approach will help unlock sites in the right places, reducing delivery risks for developers and ensuring that new communities are supported by the infrastructure they require.
- 5.26 Embedding ambitious, but deliverable affordable housing targets within the SDS will further strengthen this strategy. In doing so, this will create a clear mandate to scale the supply of social and affordable homes, protecting vulnerable residents from market pressures and helping retain people (including many key workers) in the region. The scale of need is significant; evidence<sup>41</sup> from Brighton and Hove alone suggests that there are around 4,600 households on the Housing Register, with similarly high levels of unmet demand expected across the wider region. Addressing this challenge is therefore central to building a fairer and more resilient Sussex.
- 5.27 Expanding affordable housing delivery will not only reduce waiting lists, but also tackle the wider pressures created by a lack of secure and affordable homes, such as rising use of temporary accommodation (including reliance on local B&Bs) and increasing levels of overcrowding. Housing insecurity has well-documented impacts on health, wellbeing and life chances. While many of the benefits of improved access to housing are not easily quantified, the HACT Social Value Bank<sup>42</sup> suggests that each household accessing affordable housing experiences in the region of £4,700 of annual social value benefit. More broadly, the delivery of sufficient new homes will support labour market growth, underpinning the region's wider economic growth ambitions.

### **Develop a vision for Newhaven and Shoreham Ports to lead economic diversification**

- 5.28 The two ports in Sussex are far more than gateways for freight and passengers travelling to and from the region. They are strategic assets with the potential to anchor a more diverse and resilient regional economy. By extending their role (including into clean energy generation, advanced manufacturing, logistics and supply chains, as well as skills development), Newhaven and Shoreham can both become hubs for innovation and opportunity.
- 5.29 This creates a major opportunity for SBCCA and the Mayor to articulate a bold and unified vision for Ports in Sussex; a place-based strategy that links investment directly into the Sussex Energy Mission, green skills pipelines and emerging low carbon cluster strategies. Done well, this will ensure that local people and businesses can capture the benefits of new jobs, new income streams and new forms of industrial activity.
- 5.30 Repositioned as multi-functional economic and community anchors (particularly in the case of the Shoreham Port's unique role as a Trust Port) the two ports in Sussex can drive regeneration, strengthen regional resilience and attract significant public and private sector

<sup>41</sup> i.e., from 2022: [\[Link\]](#).

<sup>42</sup> See here: [\[Link\]](#).

investment. They can also demonstrate how modern port infrastructure can serve both economic growth and the wider public good, acting as catalysts for clean energy, innovation, skills and inclusive prosperity.

### **Leverage major projects to drive local economic value**

- 5.31 The region is entering a period of unprecedented capital investment, from the expansion of Gatwick Airport and the development of Rampion 2 to major coastal defence upgrades, infrastructure improvements, the delivery of new employment land and large-scale housebuilding. These schemes represent far more than physical infrastructure; they have the potential to act as catalysts for economic activity, supply chain development and long-term business resilience. Therefore, SBCCA and the Mayor have the opportunity to position these investments as engines of local value creation by coordinating procurement, skills pipelines and business-readiness support across the region.
- 5.32 The scale of the opportunity is significant, yet engagement with stakeholders suggests that this opportunity is not currently being maximised. Early estimates suggest that only 1% of Rampion 2's total project value (i.e., equivalent to £30 million in 2019-prices) may accrue to Sussex-based businesses. While this proportion may rise as the project progresses, it underscores the need for a more proactive approach to securing local supply chain participation and ensuring that major investments deliver tangible benefits for the region.
- 5.33 By treating large-scale investments as strategic economic enablers (i.e., not just as infrastructure projects), SBCCA can embed local value into every stage of project delivery. This includes aligning procurement with skills programmes, supporting SMEs to scale and diversity, and ensuring that spatial planning and sector strategies anticipate, and respond to future demand. Done well, this approach has the potential to maximise the economic dividend for businesses and residents in Sussex, strengthening the region's resilience and competitiveness over the long term.



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**Subject:** GBEB to SBCCA Integration Proposal  
**Date of Meeting:** 25 March 2026  
**Report of:** Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA) represents a significant shift in the regional governance landscape. As SBCCA becomes the primary body for strategic growth, infrastructure, investment and skills across Sussex — setting the strategic direction for regional development and coordinating activity across partners — clarity is required on the future role of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (the Board).
- 1.2 The Board has previously agreed in principle to [develop an Integration Plan](#) to ensure that the Board’s priorities, programmes, partnerships and assets are transitioned in an orderly and structured manner as SBCCA arrangements mature.
- 1.3 This report presents a first draft Board to SBCCA Integration Proposal (Appendix 1). The purpose of this report is to seek Board review, comment and endorsement of the draft proposal as the basis for engagement with the SBCCA.
- 1.4 The proposal serves two purposes:
- **A transition plan for the Board** – setting out how the Board should manage continuity of programmes, transfer assets and relationships, and provide a clear pathway to orderly dissolution.
  - **A proposal to SBCCA** – explaining why specific Board initiatives should be adopted, scaled or utilised within the new Combined Authority.

The intended audience is therefore both the Board and emerging SBCCA leadership.

- 1.5 Without a deliberate and structured transition, there are material risks including:
- Loss of programme momentum.
  - Fragmentation of established partnerships.
  - Duplication of strategy and evidence work.
  - Unclear ownership of commissioned activity and digital assets.
  - Erosion of institutional knowledge built since 2014.

The Integration Proposal is designed to mitigate these risks while enabling SBCCA to demonstrate early added value, build on delivery-ready programmes, and make the most of stronger regional collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and wider partners during its formative period.

- 1.6 The Board is asked to review and comment on the draft Integration Proposal and subject to any agreed amendments, to endorse it as the basis for engagement with SBCCA.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Board notes and reviews the draft Board to SBCCA Integration Proposal (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That the Board endorses the draft Integration Proposal, subject to any agreed amendments arising from discussion.
- 2.3 That the Business Managers are authorised to incorporate any agreed amendments and to use the endorsed Integration Proposal as the basis for formal engagement with SBCCA officers.
- 2.4 That the Board nominates one Board Member to support senior engagement with SBCCA leadership during the transition period and to act as a Board-level link between GBEB and the emerging Combined Authority.

## **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **The Role of the Greater Brighton Economic Board**

- 3.1 Since its establishment through the Greater Brighton City Deal in 2014, the Board has acted as a cross-boundary partnership focused on sustainable economic prosperity within the Greater Brighton functional economic area.

The Board brings together:

- Seven local authorities.
- Business partnerships.
- Universities and further education providers.
- South Downs National Park Authority.
- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.

- 3.2 Over more than a decade, the Board has developed a reputation as a collaborative convenor capable of coordinating cross-boundary programmes, securing investment and shaping regional economic priorities.
- 3.3 Through the Greater Brighton Investment Programme alone, the Board has secured over £160m in Local Growth Funding, unlocking approximately £2bn in private investment and delivering significant employment, housing and infrastructure outcomes.

- 3.4 Alongside its investment track record, the Board has developed programme capability, collaboration platforms, strategic partnerships and economic analysis in areas including energy transition, infrastructure resilience, skills alignment, food system resilience, creative industries strategy and investment and growth coordination.

### **A Changing Governance Landscape**

- 3.5 The formation of SBCCA will introduce a Combined County Authority covering the wider Sussex geography, with statutory responsibilities across transport, housing, economic development, environment and skills.
- 3.6 As SBCCA structures develop, thematic areas currently convened by the Board will increasingly sit within SBCCA's formal remit. In this context, the Board's role is expected to evolve and, in due course, conclude.
- 3.7 It is therefore essential that transition is managed deliberately and strategically, protecting the value created by GBEB, enabling SBCCA to build on existing foundations rather than duplicating effort, and maximising new opportunities for collaboration across the wider Sussex and Brighton geography.

### **THE INTEGRATION PROPOSAL**

- 3.8 The draft proposal (Appendix 1) sets out, for Board consideration and endorsement:
- The initiatives recommended for adoption, scaling or structured evidence transfer, together with the wider strategic partnerships and collaboration platforms that can help SBCCA maximise delivery and regional impact.
  - How those initiatives align to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence and how they support the development of SBCCA's key strategies and statutory plans.
  - Proposed integration approaches per initiative.
- 3.9 It recognises that SBCCA structures are still emerging and therefore proposes a phased approach:
- Spring 2026 – Draft integration offer agreed
  - Summer 2026 – Engagement with SBCCA leadership
  - Summer 2026 – Agreement in principle on adoption of priority programmes
  - January 2027 – GBEB agrees dissolution
  - March 2027 – formal transfer and closure

### **Scope of Transition**

- 3.10 The proposal identifies five principal initiatives proposed for structured transition into the SBCCA:

### **Economic Opportunities Review – Strategic evidence base**

A politically neutral, evidence-led assessment translating devolved powers into priority economic opportunities aligned to transport, skills, housing, infrastructure and climate. The proposal recommends that SBCCA recognise the Review as a foundational evidence base to inform the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan — reducing duplication and accelerating strategic prioritisation.

#### **Sussex Energy – Live Regional Programme**

The most operationally advanced initiative, with governance structures, commissioned work in progress and an emerging investable pipeline. The proposal recommends structured adoption and scaling within SBCCA, including continuity of minimum viable programme capacity to avoid loss of momentum.

#### **Inward Investment Desk – Service Design Blueprint**

A developed service model for coordinated inward investment activity. The proposal recommends refreshing and using this as the foundation for a Sussex-wide inward investment capability within SBCCA. This would enable SBCCA to articulate the regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton, aligning partner activity and supporting coordinated engagement with initiatives such as the Gatwick Airport Economic Zone and wider inward investment activity across the region.

#### **Food Systems – Evidence & Investment Modelling**

A completed evidence base and costed intervention pipeline. The proposal recommends transfer of this work to SBCCA as part of the regional economic, environmental and health evidence base, and alignment with the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships and the Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan. This approach builds on existing place-based food partnerships and explores the potential for a Sussex Food Board or similar regional forum to support engagement with the Combined Authority.

#### **Creative Industries Vision – Regional Strategy**

An agreed regional strategy (“Putting Talent First”), published in 2025. The proposal recommends formal adoption as the basis for a focused 12–24 month action plan and investment development.

- 3.11 In addition, the proposal recognises a range of wider initiatives that align to the Board priorities and have Board support (e.g. Sussex Six, Local Skills Improvement Plan, Made Smarter, Sussex Bay, the Get Sussex Working Plan, Civic University Agreement). These initiatives also closely align with SBCCA’s Areas of Competence and should be recognised as important strategic partnerships and collaboration platforms that can support delivery of Combined Authority priorities. This includes, in particular, the Civic University Agreement, which provides a strong basis for deeper collaboration between universities, colleges, business and the public sector across Sussex.
- 3.12 Note: The Economic Opportunities Review is currently subject to final Board sign-off. Any amendments arising from that process will be incorporated into the Integration Proposal prior to formal engagement with SBCCA.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 One option would be to delay development of an integration plan until SBCCA structures are fully confirmed. This would risk reduced influence over programme transition and potential loss of momentum.
- 4.2 Alternatively, the Board could accelerate dissolution without a structured integration pathway. This would create significant risks around programme continuity, contractual arrangements, asset transfer and partnership confidence.
- 4.3 The proposed approach – endorsing a Board-led Integration Proposal and progressing structured engagement in parallel with SBCCA development – is considered the most prudent and strategically responsible course of action.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Integration Proposal recognises the importance of maintaining inclusive engagement across transition, particularly through established partnership structures (e.g. Sussex Energy forums and the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships). Further engagement with SBCCA leadership and partners will need to take place to ensure a smooth transition of key programmes and initiatives.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The creation of SBCCA marks a new phase in regional governance. The Board has a responsibility to ensure that its legacy of collaboration, programme development and investment coordination is transitioned in a structured and responsible manner.
- 6.2 The draft Integration Proposal provides a framework for:
  - Maintaining programme continuity.
  - Transferring programme assets, strategic evidence, knowledge and relationships.
  - Strengthening collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and wider partners under the Combined Authority model.
  - Enabling SBCCA to demonstrate early impact.
  - Achieving an orderly dissolution of GBEB at the appropriate stage.
- 6.3 The Board is invited to review and comment on the draft Integration Proposal and subject to any agreed amendments, to endorse it as the basis for formal engagement with the SBCCA.
- 6.4 To support effective transition to the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority, the Board is invited to nominate a member to support senior engagement with SBCCA leadership during the integration period. The purpose of this role is to provide visible Board-level support during the transition and to help ensure that the programmes, partnerships and strategic work developed by GBEB are appropriately recognised and considered within emerging Combined Authority structures.

The nominated member would support engagement between the Board and SBCCA leadership by:

- Supporting constructive dialogue with SBCCA political leadership during the transition period.
- Helping communicate the value and readiness of GBEB initiatives — including Sussex Energy, the Economic Opportunities Review, the Inward Investment Desk, Food Systems work and the Creative Industries Vision — as assets that can contribute to SBCCA's early priorities.
- Supporting consistent and coordinated messaging when engaging with SBCCA leadership and regional partners.
- Acting as a link between Board members and officers to ensure that engagement with SBCCA is appropriately informed by the Board's experience and that feedback is shared with the Board.

This role is intended to complement officer engagement and support a smooth and constructive transition of activity into the Combined Authority

6.5 The Board may wish to nominate a member with:

- Experience of place-based leadership or regional partnership working.
- An understanding of economic development, infrastructure, decarbonisation or growth-related programmes.
- Experience of championing or supporting delivery of local projects and an appreciation of how such projects can be supported and scaled through regional coordination and collaboration.
- The ability to engage constructively with regional partners and represent the collaborative ethos of the Board.

The role is intended to operate on a light-touch and time-limited basis, aligned with the transition to SBCCA, and will be supported by officers.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

7.1 None directly arising from this report. Future hosting, resourcing or contract transfer arrangements will be subject to further approval.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Modupe Oshin, BHCC Principal Accountant - Capital  
Date: 13/03/26*

### Legal Implications:

7.2 Any transfer of contracts, digital assets or formal programme responsibilities (including Sussex Energy commissioned work) will require agreement between relevant parties and appropriate legal arrangements.

*Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal, Commercial  
Date: 17/03/26*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Several of the initiatives proposed for integration support inclusive growth and economic resilience, including activity relating to fuel poverty, skills access and SME development. Maintaining continuity through transition helps avoid disruption to activity that may benefit vulnerable communities and smaller partner organisations.

### Sustainability Implications

- 7.4 Several initiatives proposed for integration, particularly Sussex Energy and Food Systems, directly contribute to decarbonisation, climate resilience and sustainable economic development. Structured transition will ensure that environmental and sustainability objectives continue to be embedded within regional growth and infrastructure planning under SBCCA.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

DRAFT GBEB to SBCCA Integration Proposal



## Greater Brighton Economic Board to Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority: Integration Proposal

### 1. Executive Summary

This Integration Proposal serves two purposes: (1) **a transition plan for GBEB**, setting out how its priority programmes, partnerships and assets should be transferred in an orderly way; and (2) **a proposal to the emerging Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA)**, explaining why and how these initiatives should be adopted. The audience is therefore both the GBEB Board and SBCCA leadership.

As SBCCA becomes the primary regional body for growth, investment and infrastructure, GBEB's role becomes time-limited. Without a structured transition, there is a risk of lost momentum, fragmented partnerships, duplicated evidence and reduced partner confidence. This document sets out a practical integration approach to retain existing value and enable early impact, while SBCCA's governance, operating model, funding and external relationships continue to develop. The proposal can be refined as those arrangements crystallise.

The proposal is not only about transfer. It is also about creating the conditions for stronger regional collaboration under the Combined Authority model. By bringing together delivery-ready programmes, strategic evidence, universities, colleges, businesses, local authorities and wider sector networks within a single regional framework, SBCCA has the opportunity to build on foundations already laid by GBEB and enable collaboration at a scale that has previously been more difficult across a fragmented geography.

The proposal focuses on five initiatives that collectively provide both delivery capability and strategic evidence to support SBCCA's statutory and strategic responsibilities. Alongside these five priority initiatives, the proposal also highlights the importance of wider strategic partnerships — particularly the Civic University Agreement and collaboration between higher and further education institutions — as fundamental enablers of innovation, skills development, place leadership and inclusive growth across Sussex. Analysis undertaken for this proposal also shows that these initiatives align closely with the Strategic Authority Areas of Competence set out in the Devolution White Paper, demonstrating how existing GBEB work can support the Combined Authority's emerging responsibilities. Each initiative contributes — in complementary ways — to the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan.

Initiative	Prosperity Strategy	Local Growth Plan	Spatial Development Strategy	Local Transport Plan	Integration Recommendation
<b>Economic Opportunities Review</b> – Evidence-led, politically neutral assessment translating devolved powers into priority actions	Defines long-term economic narrative and priority opportunities	Provides sequenced sector interventions and investment logic	Identifies implications for employment land, housing and infrastructure	Frames connectivity as productivity enabler; highlights key constraints	Recognise as foundational evidence base to inform all four SBCCA strategies and statutory plans.
<b>Sussex Energy</b> – Live regional programme with governance, active commissions and emerging investable pipeline	Positions clean energy and resilience as economic foundations	Provides delivery-ready green infrastructure pipeline and green jobs growth	Informs renewable deployment, grid capacity and energy-growth alignment	Supports electrification, EV readiness and energy-transport integration	Adopt and scale within SBCCA with clear sponsorship and minimum viable resourcing.
<b>Inward Investment Desk</b> – Coordinated inward investment service design blueprint	Strengthens regional competitiveness and investor proposition	Builds shared investor pipeline and retention model	Identifies priority employment sites and cluster locations	Provides intelligence on infrastructure and connectivity needs of investors	Refresh and establish as the foundation for a Sussex-wide inward investment capability, with SBCCA setting the regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton. This would align partner activity and support coordinated engagement with

Initiative	Prosperity Strategy	Local Growth Plan	Spatial Development Strategy	Local Transport Plan	Integration Recommendation
					Government and parliamentarians (e.g. Gatwick AEZ, APPG).
<b>Food Systems</b> – Evidence base and costed intervention pipeline recognising food as economic infrastructure that supports community wealth building, improves public health, strengthens resilience, reduces environmental impacts, and supports growth.	Frames food as economic and resilience infrastructure	Supports SME growth, procurement reform and local supply chains	Informs planning for food hubs, rural enterprise and distribution	Encourages shorter supply chains and logistics resilience	Transfer the evidence base to SBCCA and align with the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships and the Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan, ensuring food system priorities inform regional economic, health and resilience strategies while building on existing partnerships.
<b>Creative Industries Vision</b> – Agreed regional strategy (“Putting Talent First”)	Positions talent-led creative economy as identity-shaping growth driver	Guides cluster development, skills alignment and investment focus	Informs creative corridors, workspace and cultural infrastructure geography	Highlights need for strong inter-town connectivity and sustainable travel	Adopt as basis for focused 12–24 month action plan and targeted investment development.

Collectively, these initiatives provide SBCCA with:

- A consolidated economic evidence platform;
- Delivery-ready programme pipelines;
- Mechanisms for strategic coordination of regional growth activity, including stronger collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and sector networks;
- Spatial and infrastructure alignment logic; and
- Early, visible opportunities for regional impact.

The intended outcomes are continuity and acceleration of priority programmes, stronger regional collaboration across public, academic, business and community partners, transfer of knowledge and partnerships, early demonstrable wins for SBCCA, and a clear pathway to GBEB's orderly dissolution once integration is secured.

## 2. Context

### The Greater Brighton Economic Board

#### Establishment & Purpose

The Board is a formal Joint Committee and was established through the Greater Brighton City Deal with Government in 2014. The main remit of the Board is to help nurture sustainable economic prosperity, by co-ordinating economic development activities and investment at City Region level, and by joining together places and working collaboratively to build on the area's economic assets and unblock its barriers. In bringing together, in a partnership of the willing, seven local authorities, business partnerships, two universities, a college group, a National Park, and recently NHS Sussex, the Board has occupied a unique position within the local governance landscape.

#### Operating Model

The Board is comprised of two parts: the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (GBEJC) and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership (GBBP). Board meetings have operated as concurrent meetings of both the GBEJC and GBBP. The Board meets in public for four, 2-hour meetings per annum, with additional ad-hoc closed meetings as required. Given their democratic mandate, the Chair of the Board is one of the members of GBEJC, and is elected annually by GBEJC. Chairs can serve more than one term, up to a maximum of four consecutive years.

The budget is agreed by the Board annually, usually in the spring meeting. The Board is funded solely from partner contributions, which after the cost of the two dedicated Business Managers, other support costs (Communications, Finance, Democratic Services & Legal), and ancillary costs, leaves modest budget for the work programme.

Since the Board's inception, Brighton & Hove City Council has acted as Lead Authority, meaning that it hosts the two Business Managers and provides the support services outlined in the previous paragraph. The Business Managers are a dedicated resource to support the strategic and operational effectiveness of the Board. In addition to overseeing governance and coordination - including setting meeting agendas, preparing committee papers and monitoring the budget – the Business Managers play a central role in shaping and driving the Board's priority programmes. This includes initiating and developing cross-boundary workstreams, designing and commissioning programme activity, coordinating multi-partner collaboration, and translating Board priorities into deliverable action plans. They also provide strategic policy insight, responding to Government policy announcements and consultations e.g. Levelling Up White Paper, Devolution.

The Board is supported by the Programme Board, which comprises officers from each of the member organisations and the two Business Managers. The Programme Board's primary function is to help drive the work and agreed actions of the Board. Panels and task-and-finish groups are convened when required to oversee elements of work programme.

## **History & Success**

Through the Greater Brighton City Deal Agreement, the Board created the Greater Brighton Investment Programme. Since 2014, over £160m of Local Growth Funding has been secured which has unlocked around £2bn of private sector investment, created 24,000 jobs, built 18,000 homes and delivered 750,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floor space.

The Investment Programme was designed to raise the City Region's productivity, and deliver sustainable economic prosperity by unlocking sites, developing infrastructure and creating space and support for high-value businesses to start-up and grow and thereby reduce reliance on lower-value industries. The Investment Programme contained a number of projects which varied in both their geography and type, including £48m secured through Housing & Infrastructure Fund to unlock 6,000 new homes and in July 2018 Homes England announced that it had purchased 176 hectares in Burgess Hill to unlock the delivery of 3,500 homes at Brookleigh which are being delivered.

As some of the early projects started in 2015, most reached the delivery phase some time ago. These include the Advanced Engineering Centre at the University of Brighton, flood defences in Newhaven, the Construction Trades Centre at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College, the BTN BikeShare scheme, Plus X, Circus Street and the Adur Tidal Walls flood defences in Shoreham.

While still relatively new at the time of the City Deal, the Board established a recognised regional partnership bringing together public, academic and business organisations to address shared economic challenges across the City Region. It is a united partnership that has a detailed understanding of its functional economic area (and the barriers and challenges to increased productivity) and has the ability to shape priorities and target interventions across the City Region.

Whilst the City Deal has meant that the City Region and Board have been formally recognised by Government, the Board has also grown in standing and reputation at a more local level. Crawley and Arun were not original members of the Board but joined in 2018 and 2019 respectively. NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board joined at the start of 2025.

With sustainable economic prosperity being the main focus of the Board, through 2018 and 2019 whilst climate emergencies were declared locally and nationally, the environmental and economic resilience theme became more prominent in the Board's thinking and it began to take a more active role in convening regional partners around the energy transition. This was a few years ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, so the Board was ahead of the curve when identifying economic resilience as a key priority.

The establishment of the Greater Brighton Infrastructure Panel in 2018 created a formal mechanism for cross-boundary collaboration on energy, water and wider infrastructure resilience. From this platform, ambitious energy and water plans were developed and a Hydrogen Working Group was formed, bringing together local authorities, industry, academia and infrastructure partners to explore the region's potential role within emerging hydrogen markets. In parallel, in 2020 the Board Members agreed [10 pledges](#)<sup>1</sup> on the environment, to accelerate the region towards net zero.

This work culminated in the launch of Hydrogen Sussex in 2021. Hydrogen Sussex quickly built a network and momentum, and supported by the Board, led on the development of a regional Hydrogen Strategy in 2023. The strategy assessed the feasibility of hydrogen production, distribution and demand within the Greater Brighton area, including opportunities linked to industrial clusters such as Shoreham Port and wider clean growth ambitions.

While national hydrogen demand projections and investment conditions have since evolved — with market deployment progressing more slowly than originally anticipated — the programme demonstrated the Board's ability to:

- Convene complex multi-sector partnerships across administrative boundaries.
- Commission robust technical and economic analysis.
- Position the region within national clean growth policy discussions.

Importantly, this experience laid the foundations for a broader, systems-based approach to the energy transition. It highlighted both the opportunities and limitations of single-technology strategies and reinforced the need for a more integrated regional mission encompassing generation, demand reduction, flexibility, skills and investment.

### **Key GBEB Initiatives for Integration**

Through its convening role and commissioned work, the Board has developed and supported a range of initiatives over recent years. These initiatives reflect evolving national policy priorities — including clean growth, creative industries, skills, food system resilience and economic productivity — and demonstrate how the region has proactively responded to the direction of travel set out in Government strategy.

The following summarises those initiatives and their alignment with national policy frameworks. A subsequent section then considers how each initiative relates to the proposed Areas of Competence, strategies and statutory plans for the Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority. In the final section, each initiative is broken down into its objective, what GBEB has delivered, the current regional position and the integration recommendation for the SBCCA.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://greaterbrighton.com/work-here/net-zero/gb10/>

### *Economic Opportunities Review*

The Economic Opportunities Review was commissioned by the Greater Brighton Economic Board at a pivotal moment for the region, as Sussex entered the Government's Devolution Priority Programme and preparations began for the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA).

The purpose of the work was to assess Greater Brighton's economic strengths, structural challenges and future opportunities in light of emerging devolved powers and funding. It responds directly to the English Devolution White Paper<sup>2</sup> and the transition towards a Mayoral Combined County Authority model, recognising that responsibilities for transport, skills, housing, regeneration and climate will increasingly sit at the strategic regional level.

The Economic Opportunities Review provides the analytical and strategic bridge between GBEB's existing programme of work and the emerging SBCCA framework. It reframes Greater Brighton's priorities in the context of devolution and sets out a politically neutral suite of interventions aligned to the SBCCA's areas of competence.

Drawing on stakeholder engagement, economic analysis and national policy review, the document:

- Clarifies how devolved powers can be translated into tangible economic opportunities;
- Identifies priority interventions across transport, skills, housing, economic development and climate;
- Highlights cross-cutting synergies between infrastructure, sector growth, natural capital and clean energy; and
- Provides a sequenced framework for short, medium and long-term action.

For the Combined Authority, the Review offers a consolidated evidence base and opportunity framework that can inform early strategic prioritisation and investment decisions, reducing duplication of analysis and accelerating the development of region-wide plans.

It is not a statutory strategy nor a fixed programme of delivery. Rather, it is a structured starting platform from which SBCCA can refine priorities, align resources and maximise the economic and social benefits of devolution.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

*Sussex Energy*

In July 2024 the Board launched the [Sussex Energy Mission](#), an ambition to achieve energy neutrality across Sussex by 2040 — producing enough zero-carbon energy locally to meet regional demand.

The experience of coordinating Hydrogen Sussex demonstrated the value of structured regional collaboration around energy transition themes and directly shaped the design of the Sussex Energy Mission. It is underpinned by a broad partnership of local authorities, public bodies, higher education institutes, business groups and community energy organisations, providing a collaborative platform to move from strategic alignment to delivery.

Since its launch, Sussex Energy has established governance arrangements, delivery workstreams and is establishing a pipeline of investable projects, creating the operating architecture required to accelerate implementation. This provides a strong foundation for SBCCA to build on as it develops its investment, infrastructure and growth priorities — particularly given that the South East net zero economy already contributes £13.1bn GVA and is among the UK’s strongest performing regions. Net zero roles in the South East generate around £136,570 GVA per FTE, significantly above regional averages, and businesses in the region attracted £5.6bn in private investment (2022–24) — averaging c.£1.16m per net zero business. The South East also recorded the highest regional growth in net zero business activity between 2023–24 (11.7%), reinforcing the sector’s trajectory as a major growth opportunity. 2.8% (123,900 FTE jobs) of the South East’s employment is supported by the net zero economy, equating to c 23,000 jobs in Sussex and Brighton using population-scaled estimates.<sup>3</sup>

Nationally, energy security, clean power and green growth sit at the centre of Government’s economic and infrastructure agenda, including the ambition to deliver a clean power system by 2030<sup>4</sup>, expand the clean energy workforce<sup>5</sup>, strengthen domestic supply chains and unlock private capital into low-carbon infrastructure — supported by the establishment of Great British Energy as a publicly owned clean energy investment vehicle<sup>6</sup>.

Recent and emerging policy frameworks further reinforce this direction, including the Local Power Plan<sup>7</sup> (supporting community energy scale-up), the Government’s response to the Heat Network Zoning consultation<sup>8</sup>, the forthcoming Warm Homes Plan<sup>9</sup> (with implications for retrofit, electrification of heat and energy system readiness), and the expected Future

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<sup>3</sup> <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2025/uk-net-zero-economy-grows-10-in-a-year-finds-new-report>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gbe.gov.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gbe.gov.uk/local-power-plan>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-heat-network-zoning-2023/outcome/heat-network-zoning-consultation-2023-summary-of-government-response>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-plan>

Homes Standard<sup>10</sup>, which is expected to embed higher energy performance requirements in new development.

Sussex Energy directly aligns with — and provides a delivery platform for — these priorities through its focus on accelerating renewable generation, heat decarbonisation, green skills development and the creation of delivery-ready local energy investment pipelines.

By developing investable regional energy propositions and structured cross-boundary coordination across the Sussex & Brighton geography, Sussex Energy positions the region to attract public and private capital, strengthen local energy resilience and ensure the economic benefits of the clean energy transition— including jobs, supply chain development and community energy participation — are realised across Sussex.

### *Inward Investment Desk*

In 2020, GBEB commissioned Breeze Strategy to explore the case for establishing a Greater Brighton Inward Investment Desk, responding to evidence that the area was underperforming in attracting investment despite strong assets including connectivity, talent and quality of life. The work set out a proposed lean operating model focused on two priorities—retaining and expanding existing investors and targeting new investment— supported by a clearer “pitch for place”, stronger partner coordination, and a more data-led approach to building an investor pipeline.

While produced in the immediate post-Brexit, post-COVID context, the report provides a structured blueprint for how a coordinated inward investment function could operate at scale.

The analysis and delivery model remain pertinent as the Combined Authority considers how to organise and resource its strategic economic development function and inward investment functions. The work offers an evidence base and practical framework that could inform a future Sussex-wide approach to investment promotion, business growth and regeneration under devolved arrangements. In this context, the SBCCA would be well placed to articulate the overarching regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton — helping to align and inform the activity of partners such as the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone (AEZ) and supporting coordinated engagement with Government and parliamentarians, including through the APPG for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation>

### *Greater Brighton Food Systems*

In 2022, GBEB commissioned a [Food Systems Scoping Report](#)<sup>11</sup> examining resilience, infrastructure and economic opportunity, establishing the foundations for coordinated cross-authority action and a potential Greater Brighton Food Plan.

Alongside this commissioned work, GBEB convened a Food Systems Task and Finish Group, bringing together stakeholders from across the Greater Brighton area including universities, colleges, local authorities, food partnerships, businesses and community organisations. The group provides a cross-sector forum to explore how food systems relate to economic resilience, health, climate and local supply chains, and has helped shape the evidence base and collaborative approach described below.

In 2023, this was followed by a [Food Systems Investment Costings Project](#)<sup>12</sup>, which developed indicative costings and outline business cases for a pipeline of interventions including a dynamic procurement system, regional food hub model, training and circular economy support, Community Supported Agriculture expansion and large-scale community composting.

Since then, Food Partnerships across Sussex have strengthened collaboration, advancing a [Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan \(2025\)](#)<sup>13</sup> and forming a Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships providing a Sussex-wide platform for coordination, shared learning and engagement with emerging with regional policy and devolution discussions. The development of the Local Food Plan coincides with the Government's establishment of the Food Strategy Advisory Board<sup>14</sup> in 2025 to shape a national food strategy focused on improving public health, strengthening food security and resilience, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting economic growth. The Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan reflects many of these same priorities, providing a locally grounded framework aligned with emerging national direction.

Together this work — the evidence base, costed interventions and the convening of the Food Systems Task and Finish Group — puts SBCCA in a strong position to engage with emerging national food strategy and shape a Sussex-wide approach to food system resilience and economic opportunity. Clear opportunities for regional collaboration and investment have been identified as well as the readiness of existing networks of businesses, communities and councils to act.

### *Creative Industries Vision*

The Creative Industries are a success story for the United Kingdom. Over the past decade they have grown at 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy. They currently contribute over

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<sup>11</sup> <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s180511/Greater%20Brighton%20Food%20Scoping%20APX.%20n%201.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s191886/Greater Brighton Food Plan APX. n 1.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sustainweb.org/assets/sussex-and-south-downs-1756380615.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/food-strategy-advisory-board>

£125bn per annum to the UK economy. That makes them bigger than the UK's life sciences, automobile and aeronautical sectors combined. It is not a surprise then, that The Creative Industries are one of the UK Government's eight priority growth-driving sectors and are positioned as central to national growth through the [Industrial Strategy](#)<sup>15</sup>. The ambition is to increase business investment in the sector from £17bn to £31bn by 2035 by improving skills pipelines, improving access to growth finance for SMEs, accelerating innovation, increasing trade and exports and supporting the growth of creative clusters across the UK.

Against this backdrop, the GBEB and Coastal West Sussex [Creative Industries Vision; "Unleashing the Potential"](#)<sup>16</sup>, was agreed in late 2025. Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex's creative industries comprise 10,225 companies and a workforce of 54,428 people. In addition, around 21,000 creative freelancers live and work in our region, meaning that over 10% of employment in the region is within the Creative Industries. *Unleashing the Potential* sets out a clear regional proposition and evidence base for targeted support to sustain and grow the sector. It focuses on "Putting Talent First" and identifies practical areas for action aligned with national priorities —strengthening creative corridors and local clusters, improving routes into creative careers and skills, and supporting scale-up, innovation and investment readiness—so the sector can continue to drive jobs, productivity and place-based economic value across Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex.

## Devolution

### A New Devolution Framework

The [Devolution White Paper](#)<sup>17</sup>, (December 2024) sets out the Government's plans for large-scale public service reform through a "devolution by default" approach, transferring powers from Westminster to new local Strategic Authorities so regional leaders can drive growth and prosperity.

Established Mayoral Authorities will receive a consolidated Integrated Settlement covering housing, regeneration, local growth, transport, skills, retrofit and employment support, replacing multiple funding streams. Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority has been included in the Devolution Priority Programme, enabling the region to work with Government to establish new governance arrangements and secure devolved powers and funding.

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<sup>15</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69256e16367485ea116a56de/industrial\\_strategy\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69256e16367485ea116a56de/industrial_strategy_policy_paper.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s210792/Unleashing the Potential Greater Brighton Creative Industries Vision APX. n 1.pdf](https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s210792/Unleashing%20the%20Potential%20Greater%20Brighton%20Creative%20Industries%20Vision%20APX.%20n%201.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

Strategic Authorities will have a defined list of 'Areas of Competence', set out in law. These are designed to strengthen, not detract from, the functions and roles of other public bodies, such as NHS England, Environment Agency or Local Authorities. Proposed Areas of Competence:

- Transport & local infrastructure
- Skills & employment support
- Housing & strategic planning
- Economic development & regeneration
- Environment & climate change
- Health, wellbeing & public service reform
- Public safety

### **GBEB Initiatives Alignment to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence**

The Board's programme activity over recent years — including both current priorities and previously commissioned work — aligns closely with the proposed Areas of Competence for Strategic Authorities set out in the Devolution White Paper.

Analysis undertaken as part of this Integration Proposal demonstrates that GBEB's initiatives collectively support multiple areas of competence, particularly economic development and regeneration, transport and infrastructure, skills and employment support, housing and strategic planning, and environment and climate change. In several cases, initiatives also contribute to wider objectives around health, wellbeing and public service reform.

This alignment reflects the cross-cutting nature of the Board's work. Many initiatives have been developed specifically to address the interaction between infrastructure, skills, sector growth, energy transition and spatial development — themes that sit at the heart of the Combined Authority model.

A detailed mapping of each initiative against the Strategic Authority Areas of Competence is provided in [Appendix A](#). This analysis demonstrates how the Board's existing programme activity can support the Combined Authority's future responsibilities and highlights where established initiatives may provide delivery platforms or evidence bases for regional policy development.

In summary, the analysis shows that:

- **Economic Opportunities Review** provides an overarching evidence base linking transport, housing, skills and sector development to regional productivity and prosperity.
- **Sussex Energy** supports environment and climate responsibilities while also enabling infrastructure investment, skills development and economic growth.

- **Inward Investment Desk** contributes to economic development by strengthening the region's ability to attract and retain investment aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Food Systems work** demonstrates how food infrastructure can contribute simultaneously to economic resilience, environmental outcomes and public health.
- **Creative Industries Vision** supports sector growth, skills pathways and place-based economic development.

Taken together, these initiatives illustrate how GBEB has already been operating in a way that reflects the integrated, cross-sector approach expected of a Strategic Authority. The analysis therefore provides a useful foundation for considering how existing programmes and evidence can inform the development of SBCCA's future strategies and priorities.

DRAFT

**GBEB Initiatives Alignment with SBCCA Strategies & Statutory Plans**

	<i>Prosperity Strategy</i> <i>What are we trying to achieve, why, and what does success look like?</i>	<i>Local Growth Plan</i> <i>How will we become more prosperous?</i>	<i>Spatial Development Strategy</i> <i>Where will we focus growth and investment?</i>	<i>Local Transport Plan</i> <i>How will we plan and deliver transport to support growth and connectivity?</i>
<b><i>Economic Opportunities Review</i></b>	Articulates the region’s long-term economic narrative, assets and structural challenges.	Provides prioritised sector opportunities, pipeline interventions and sequencing logic.	Identifies spatial implications for employment land, housing, transport and energy infrastructure.	Frames transport as an economic growth enabler and identifies priority connectivity interventions.
<b><i>Sussex Energy</i></b>	Positions clean energy, resilience and energy security as foundational to long-term prosperity and climate leadership.	Provides delivery-ready clean energy infrastructure pipeline; supports green jobs, supply chain growth and inward investment.	Informs energy spatial planning, renewable deployment, grid capacity and integration of energy infrastructure with housing and growth areas.	Supports transport decarbonisation (EV infrastructure, electrification readiness), grid capacity planning and alignment between energy and transport infrastructure investment.
<b><i>Inward Investment Desk</i></b>	Strengthens regional competitiveness narrative and investor proposition.	Provides coordinated model for attracting and retaining investment; builds shared investor pipeline.	Identifies priority employment locations, cluster sites and infrastructure needs attractive to investors.	Provides intelligence on investor transport and connectivity requirements (road, rail, airport, digital infrastructure) to inform prioritisation.

	<b>Prosperity Strategy</b> <i>What are we trying to achieve, why, and what does success look like?</i>	<b>Local Growth Plan</b> <i>How will we become more prosperous?</i>	<b>Spatial Development Strategy</b> <i>Where will we focus growth and investment?</i>	<b>Local Transport Plan</b> <i>How will we plan and deliver transport to support growth and connectivity?</i>
<b>Food Systems</b>	Frames food as economic infrastructure supporting resilience, local wealth retention and public health.	Offers costed interventions (food hubs, procurement reform, CSA expansion) supporting SME growth and supply chain development.	Supports planning for food infrastructure, growing space, distribution hubs and rural enterprise areas.	Encourages shorter supply chains and local distribution models that reduce freight emissions and improve logistics resilience.
<b>Creative Industries Vision</b>	Positions the creative economy as a talent-led, identity-shaping growth sector.	Guides sector action planning, cluster development, skills alignment and investment priorities.	Informs creative corridors, clusters, workspace planning and cultural infrastructure geography.	Highlights need for strong inter-town connectivity and sustainable transport links to support creative corridors, labour mobility and visitor economy growth.

## A Changing Governance Landscape: Transitioning to the SBCCA

Work has begun on the establishment of the SBCCA. As the strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton, SBCCA will be well placed to articulate a clear regional narrative and priority outcomes for growth and investment, and to align partner, government and parliamentary engagement around those priorities. It also creates a significant opportunity to strengthen collaboration across the Sussex and Brighton geography — enabling universities, colleges, local authorities, businesses, community organisations and wider partners to work through a shared regional framework in a way that has previously been harder to achieve consistently.

Following the decision by the government to delay the election of a new mayor they also confirmed the intention to move forward with the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority in 2026. It is anticipated that the new SBCCA will be created in March 2026 but will take time to become fully established. As devolution for Sussex and Brighton gathers pace, the role for the Board becomes less defined, as the areas of focus for the Board will be increasingly led by the SBCCA as the primary governance structure for developing and growing the region's economy.

Given the likelihood that the role and purpose of the Board will eventually be subsumed within the SBCCA advisory structures, the Board is seeking an orderly dissolution. Part of the process of dissolving the Board in an orderly manner includes preparation and delivery of this integration plan.

Preparation of the Integration Plan, and then actioning it, is crucial. Without a clear plan for integration through the transition period there will be a number of significant risks for which there will be limited mitigation. These risks include the slow-down or discontinuity of key activities and programmes, resulting in a loss of delivery. Since the Board's inception since 2014 it has gathered significant experience and expertise in sustainable economic prosperity and this knowledge will be pertinent to the new SBCCA once established. The Board's experience, expertise and good practice needs to be captured so that it is not lost. Likewise, over the last 12 years the Board has established a successful coalition of the willing, through developing strong relationships. Within the Board membership, as well as with wider stakeholders and partners. The integration plans needs to ensure that these relationships, built around trust and goodwill, continue beyond the life of the Board. Below are some suggested milestones for the Integration Plan project:

- Spring 2026 – Draft integration offer agreed by GBEB Board
- Summer 2026 – Engagement with SBCCA leadership
- Summer 2026 – Agreement in principle on adoption of priority programmes
- January 2027 – GBEB agrees dissolution
- March 2027 – formal transfer and closure

### 3. Integration Proposal

#### Overview

The following sections set out proposed approaches for transferring or embedding GBEB initiatives within the emerging Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA).

These initiatives are at different stages of maturity and require different forms of integration. Some represent live, delivery-enabling regional programmes (e.g. Sussex Energy). Others provide completed evidence bases or strategic frameworks (e.g. Food Systems, Economic Opportunities Review) intended to inform future SBCCA policy and investment decisions.

Each proposal is structured consistently to clarify:

- **Objective** – the purpose of integrating the initiative into the SBCCA.
- **What GBEB has delivered** – assets, governance or evidence created.
- **Current regional position** – status at the point of transition.
- **Integration recommendation** – the proposed role for SBCCA.

## Economic Opportunities Review Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Strategic evidence base and policy foundation*

### Objective

To support long-term economic growth and inclusive prosperity across Sussex by identifying the region's key economic strengths, structural challenges and priority opportunities within the context of devolution.

The Review translates the powers, funding and responsibilities associated with the emerging SBCCA into a clear set of evidence-led economic opportunities — helping to increase productivity, attract investment, support job creation and reduce spatial inequalities, while aligning growth with infrastructure, skills, housing and climate objectives.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

The Economic Opportunities Review provides:

- A comprehensive assessment of Greater Brighton within the wider Sussex economic context, including productivity challenges, sectoral strengths and spatial constraints.
- A structured interpretation of the Devolution White Paper, clarifying how devolved powers across transport, skills, housing, regeneration and climate can be deployed to drive economic impact.
- A prioritised suite of short, medium and long-term economic opportunities, linked to measurable outcomes such as job creation, investment leverage and productivity uplift.
- A cross-cutting framework demonstrating how transport, skills, housing, energy, innovation, natural capital and collaboration with universities and colleges must be aligned to generate sustained growth.
- A clear articulation of Sussex's strategic assets — including international gateways, sector clusters, clean energy capacity and natural capital — as foundations for future prosperity.

The Review reframes existing GBEB priorities within the devolved landscape, ensuring that established work (including the Sussex Energy Mission and sector-based initiatives) is positioned to contribute directly to regional growth under SBCCA.

## Current Regional Position

The Economic Opportunities Review has been commissioned and developed during a period of institutional transition as Sussex prepares for the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority.

As SBCCA begins to develop its core strategies — including the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan — there is an opportunity to draw on this existing analysis and stakeholder engagement as an early evidence base, reducing duplication and enabling faster strategic prioritisation.

## Integration Recommendation

It is recommended that SBCCA formally recognise the Economic Opportunities Review as a foundational evidence document to inform:

- The articulation of long-term prosperity ambitions;
- The prioritisation of investment within the Local Growth Plan;
- The spatial alignment of housing, employment land and infrastructure within the Spatial Development Strategy; and
- The integration of connectivity priorities within the Local Transport Plan.

In particular, SBCCA should draw upon the Review's priority opportunities and actions, including:

- Embedding the Sussex Energy Mission as a flagship cross-cutting programme aligned to spatial planning, infrastructure sequencing and green skills pathways;
- Unlocking strategic employment land and modernising premises to support high-value sector growth;
- Raising productivity through targeted support for priority clusters (including advanced manufacturing, quantum technologies, creative industries and the visitor economy);
- Developing a coordinated investment prospectus to attract public and private capital into infrastructure, energy and innovation projects;
- Leveraging major capital projects (e.g. offshore wind, airport expansion, port investment and housing growth) to maximise local supply chain capture and skills development;
- Delivering a long-term, affordable and infrastructure-aligned housing strategy through the Spatial Development Strategy; and

- Strengthening east–west connectivity and integrated transport interventions to unlock labour markets and regeneration.

The Review is not a statutory strategy nor is it intended as pre-determining mayoral priorities. Instead, it serves as a structured starting point — providing the SBCCA with an existing body of economic analysis and stakeholder engagement.

This should help accelerate policy development, reduce duplication of evidence work, and focus early investment on interventions that deliver measurable improvements in productivity, resilience and prosperity across Sussex.

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## Sussex Energy Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Live regional programme – Structured adoption & scaling*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to adopt and scale an established, cross-boundary clean energy programme that is already developing investable pipelines, regional coordination structures and delivery-ready workstreams — ensuring continuity through transition and accelerating early regional impact on clean energy, infrastructure and inclusive economic prosperity.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

Since launching the Sussex Energy Mission in July 2024, GBEB has established the foundations for a coordinated regional energy programme across Sussex, including:

#### 1. A delivery-enabling governance structure

- Sussex Energy Partner Group coordinating programme priorities and commissioned work
- Sussex Energy Forum connecting the wider regional practitioner network
- Sussex Energy Communications Working Group coordinating messaging and engagement

#### 2. A cross-sector regional partnership

Bringing together local authorities, universities and FE partners, NHS Sussex, business networks, community energy organisations, the Greater South East Net Zero Hub and infrastructure stakeholders. Supports alignment of organisations working on the energy transition and helps unblock issues that affect delivery.

#### 3. A recognised programme platform

- Established Sussex Energy brand and communications presence
- Established mechanisms for cross-authority alignment and partner collaboration.
- Foundations for developing a regional clean energy investment pipeline.

Together these elements provide a practical regional coordination platform supporting energy infrastructure development, investment mobilisation and delivery-ready project pipelines.

### Current Regional Position

Sussex Energy has moved beyond convening into active programme development.

Key workstreams currently underway include:

- **Strategic coordination** – a draft Sussex & Brighton Energy Briefing developed jointly by upper-tier authorities, with wider regional testing and pipeline development activity planned.
- **Funding & finance** – a regional Funding & Investment Strategy commission (in procurement) to shape future investment models and strengthen the regional proposition.
- **Solar Across Sussex** – a commissioned programme (in procurement) to identify, prioritise and aggregate solar opportunities, with a follow-on site owner engagement-focused phase planned.
- **Communications & engagement** – an active Sussex Energy LinkedIn presence, practitioner forum, website content, news articles, events participation, comms working group and a developing comms calendar and content library.
- **Regional energy map** – an online, filterable project map in development to improve pipeline visibility and coordination.

Governance structures are embedded, commissions are progressing and partner engagement is active. The programme is transitioning from partnership-building into structured pipeline development and investment readiness.

Maintaining this momentum through the SBCCA transition is critical to avoid delay, duplication or loss of partner confidence.

### **Integration Recommendation**

Given that Sussex Energy is an active, delivery-enabling programme, the recommended approach is:

- **Adopt Sussex Energy as a recognised SBCCA strategic programme**, to build on progress to date in establishing regional energy coordination that supports sustainable economic growth.
- **Provide a defined “landing zone” within SBCCA structures**, including named political and senior officer sponsorship.
- **Secure minimum viable programme resourcing<sup>18</sup>** to maintain coordination, partner engagement, pipeline management and commissioned work oversight. Continuity of the existing programme lead function would help maintain momentum, partner relationships and oversight of commissioned work through transition.
- **Retain existing partnership forums**, aligning them with SBCCA governance while preserving their functionality and trust.

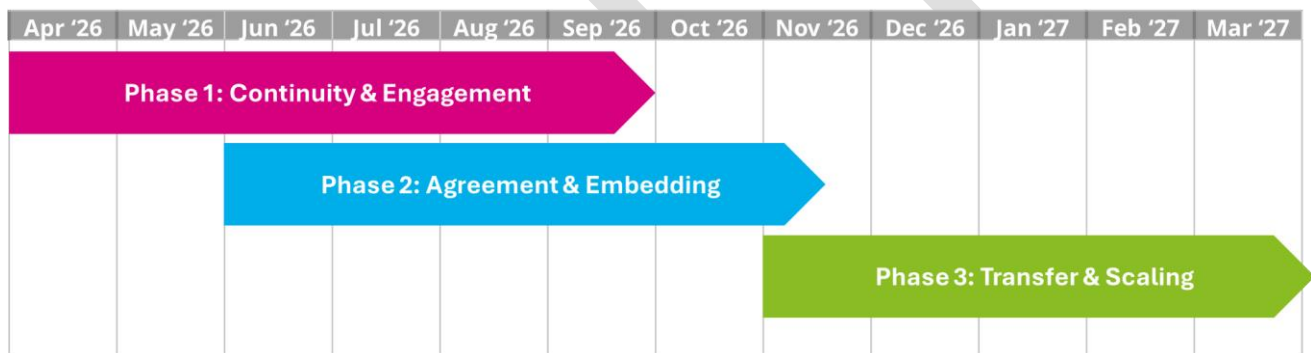
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<sup>18</sup> Resourcing will form part of Phase 1 discussions with the SBCCA to agree the final integration model.

- **Ensure continuity of live commissions and contract administration** during transition.
- **Maintain digital and communications continuity**, including stewardship of Sussex Energy’s LinkedIn presence, website and communications working group, to preserve a visible and coordinated regional voice.
- **Ensure coordinated engagement during SBCCA set-up**, with structured working at officer, senior officer/strategic and political levels, to align Sussex Energy with emerging governance arrangements, maintain confidence among partners and secure early positioning as a delivery-ready regional programme.

This approach preserves existing value, reduces transition risk and enables SBCCA to demonstrate early, tangible progress on regional energy and infrastructure priorities.

GBEB proposes a phased integration model, enabling Sussex Energy to continue delivery while SBCCA structures mature.



**Phase 1: Continuity & engagement (Apr '26 – ‘Sep 26)**

**Aim:** Keep delivery moving; secure SBCCA sponsorship; minimise disruption.

- GBEB continues to convene Sussex Energy.
- Formal SBCCA engagement route established at:
  - officer level.
  - senior officer level.
  - political leadership level.
- GBEB & SBCCA collaborate to produce an SBCCA-ready Sussex Energy Integration Offer:
  - What exists now (workstreams, governance, pipeline).
  - Early-win projects and what SBCCA action unlocks.
  - Resource and governance options for SBCCA adoption.
  - Contract hosting, website and practical transition requirements.

**Phase 2: Agreement & embedding (Jun '26 – Nov '26)**

**Aim:** Agree how Sussex Energy “lands” in SBCCA.

- Secure an agreed SBCCA home for Sussex Energy:
  - portfolio alignment (climate/environment + infrastructure/growth).
  - named senior responsible officer (SRO).

- Agree governance and how existing partner infrastructure is retained.
- Agree and put in place a minimum viable resourcing model to support Sussex Energy coordination, programme management, commissioned work package administration and delivery of early-win projects as it transitions into SBCCA structures.

**Phase 3: Transfer & scaling (Nov '26 – Mar '27)**

Aim: Formalise adoption and scale delivery.

- Sussex Energy becomes an SBCCA-embedded programme (with continuity of brand and partner networks).
- Resourcing is reviewed and scaled as Sussex Energy moves from programme development into delivery and investment mobilisation.
- SBCCA uses outputs (investment strategy, solar pipeline, mapping tool) to inform:
  - Local Growth Plan.
  - Spatial Development Strategy inputs (where relevant).
  - future investment/prospectus activity.
- GBEB dissolves once transfer arrangements are secured.

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## Inward Investment Desk Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Service design adoption for establishing a regional inward investment function*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to establish an effective, region-wide inward investment capability that provides strategic coordination for investment promotion across Sussex and Brighton by building on GBEB's 2020 "Inward Investment Desk" service design — updating it for today's policy and market context — so Sussex can compete more strongly for business investment, expansions and high-growth relocations that support productivity, good jobs and inclusive growth. In practice, this would enable SBCCA to provide strategic coordination for the region's inward investment activity — articulating a clear Sussex and Brighton investment proposition and helping align the efforts of local, regional and national partners around shared priorities.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

GBEB commissioned and developed (2020) a practical blueprint for a lean, inward investment "desk" model, including:

- **A defined service remit** spanning two core functions (business retention & expansion; investor attraction) supported by place product development, partnership leverage and place promotion.
- **A targeting framework** (priority audiences and personas) focused on high-potential opportunity segments (e.g., tech entrants, recent UK entrants not yet rooted, UK high-growths, existing foreign-owned investors).
- **A proposed delivery structure and governance approach** (small specialist team; partner-enabled comms support; transparent pipeline reporting).
- **An outline action plan** for virtual-first lead generation, research and intelligence processes, CRM-style pipeline management, and consistent "pitch for place" messaging (as a practical asset for partners).

*(Note: the report was written in 2020 and was framed around "post-Brexit / post-COVID" recovery conditions. The core service design and disciplines remain useful, but assumptions, market signals, tools and national policy have moved on and would need an update before implementation.)*

## Current Regional Position

- The work is a service design and delivery plan rather than an operational service; it is not a standing, funded regional function.
- Partner organisations continue to undertake elements of inward investment and business support activity, but there is no single, dedicated Sussex-wide inward investment desk with shared intelligence, proactive targeting and consistent pipeline management across the area. This work will inform the Gatwick region work, ensuring Sussex priorities can be clearly articulated and promoted more widely via mechanisms such as the Gatwick Region to create continuity and build on the existing approach.
- With devolution and the formation of SBCCA, there is an emerging opportunity to create a coherent regional “front door” for investors and to align local delivery with a single regional proposition and priority sectors/corridors.
- Currently, there is significant inward investment and advocacy activity already underway across Sussex, including the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone (AEZ) programme and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway. These initiatives are strengthening the region’s profile, external relationships and investor narrative. As the strategic authority, SBCCA is well placed to articulate the overarching regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton, including through more coordinated engagement with Government and parliamentarians. This direction can then inform and strengthen the work of wider partners — with initiatives such as the Gatwick AEZ amplifying the regional proposition internationally and the APPG supporting national political engagement and advocacy.

## Integration Recommendation

Given SBCCA’s role in convening regional growth activity and building an investment proposition, the recommended approach is:

- **Adopt the Inward Investment Desk model as a starting point**, and commission a light-touch **refresh/update** of the 2020 plan (scope, target audiences, tools, resourcing options, governance, KPIs, alignment with Gatwick Region activity) so it reflects current investor behaviour, national policy and Sussex priorities.
- **Embed the function within SBCCA’s economic growth / inward investment capability** (or equivalent), establishing a clear “home”, accountability and reporting.
- **Agree the operating model with local partners** so the desk complements and enhances (not duplicates) existing inward investment activity. SBCCA would provide the strategic coordination function — setting the overall regional investment narrative, priority sectors and investor targeting for Sussex and Brighton — while

partner organisations help amplify and deliver this proposition. This includes local authority economic development teams, Newhaven Enterprise Zone, the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone and the APPG for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway. Through this approach, messaging, targeting, investor engagement and government advocacy can be aligned and mutually reinforcing.

- **Stand up minimum viable capability first** (e.g., a small team/lead function plus shared comms and CRM/pipeline processes), then scale if early results justify expansion.
- **Smarter Investor Targeting** - creating new research and intelligence tools that provide a pipeline of opportunities and engaging with prospects in a professional manner.
- **Avoid starting from scratch on place narrative:** draw on the Greater Brighton “Pitch for Place” content and assets to inform Sussex and Brighton place propositions, updating and tailoring them to current context and SBCCA priorities. Messaging will need to deliver greater consistency and clarity in novel ways that support the primary aim of successful engagement with investors.
- **Use the desk as a devolution ‘early win’ mechanism:** a visible, practical function that demonstrates SBCCA’s role in coordinating regional growth activity and converting collaboration into measurable outcomes (pipeline, projects landed/expanded, jobs, investment).

## Food Systems Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Evidence transfer & strategic alignment with existing regional partnerships*

### Objective

To ensure that the evidence base and investment modelling commissioned by GBEB informs future SBCCA strategy, while recognising and working with the existing Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships rather than duplicating or displacing established networks.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

- [Food Systems Scoping Report \(2022\)](#) assessing resilience, infrastructure and economic opportunity across the Greater Brighton area, in the context of food insecurity, supply chain fragility and climate transition. The scoping work provides the foundations for a potential Greater Brighton Food Plan and an approach to collaborative action across local authorities.
- [Food Systems Investment Costings Project \(2023\)](#) developing indicative costings and outline business cases for interventions including:
  - Dynamic procurement systems.
  - Regional food hub model.
  - Circular economy training and business support.
  - Community Supported Agriculture expansion.
  - Large-scale community composting.
- Greater Brighton Food Systems Task and Finish Group, convened by GBEB, bringing together stakeholders from across the sector including universities, colleges, local authorities, food partnerships, businesses and community organisations. The group provides a cross-sector forum to explore how food systems relate to economic resilience, health, climate and local supply chains, and has helped shape collaboration across the region.

This work provides:

- A structured evidence base.
- A costed pipeline of potential interventions.
- An economic framing of food systems as infrastructure supporting productivity, resilience and local supply chains.

### Current Regional Position

Sussex and Brighton have a strong network of place-based food partnerships bringing together local authorities, public health, community organisations, farmers, food businesses

and education providers to address issues including food insecurity, healthy diets, sustainable farming and local food economies.

These food partnerships collaborate through the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships, which provides a coordinated Sussex-wide voice for food and enables collaboration, shared learning and alignment across the food system.

The partnerships have developed the [Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan](#)<sup>19</sup>, which sets out shared priorities across the region for improving food access, supporting sustainable farming, strengthening local food economies and improving health and environmental outcomes.

The Alliance has expressed an ambition to establish a Sussex Food Board — an overarching stakeholder forum bringing together partners from across the food system to help ensure food remains visible within regional governance and policy discussions as devolution progresses.

The existing Greater Brighton Food Systems Task and Finish Group should be considered a useful foundation for this wider regional collaboration.

This evolving landscape means there is already an active network of delivery organisations and strategic partners to take forward food system priorities across Sussex.

### **Integration Recommendation**

Given the existence of an active network of food partnerships and regional collaboration through the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships, the recommended approach is:

- Transfer GBEB-commissioned scoping and costings outputs to SBCCA as part of the economic, environmental and health evidence base for regional strategy.
- Recognise the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships as a key delivery and engagement partner representing place-based food partnerships across Sussex.
- Engage with the Alliance and wider stakeholders to explore the potential establishment of a Sussex Food Board or similar regional forum, helping ensure food systems are considered within economic growth, health, climate and community resilience agendas.
- Avoid duplication of governance structures by building on existing partnerships and networks.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sustainweb.org/assets/sussex-and-south-downs-1756380615.pdf>

## Creative Industries Vision Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Strategy adoption as a basis for action planning.*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to adopt and operationalise the agreed regional Creative Industries Vision (“Unleashing the Potential”, 2025) as a shared framework for inclusive growth, investment and skills development—using it to shape early priorities, coordinate partners across the new authority footprint, and build a credible delivery and funding approach without restarting the evidence base.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

GBEB has agreed a clear regional proposition for the creative economy, providing a strong platform for SBCCA to build from:

- **A published regional vision and narrative (2025):** A coherent case for why the Creative Industries matter to the Greater Brighton & Coastal West Sussex economy and identity, and why coordinated support is needed now (in a period of devolution and rapid sector change, including AI).
- **A unifying strategic goal – “Putting Talent First”:** A simple, place-based ambition to make the area *the best place in the UK for anyone, whatever their background, to build a fulfilling career in the Creative Industries.*
- **A practical organising framework for sector growth around three integrated areas of focus:**
  - **Creative Corridors** (North-South towards Gatwick/London; East-West along the coast).
  - **Clusters of Excellence** (supporting place-based sub-sector strengths).
  - **Open Boundaries** (working beyond administrative boundaries where it unlocks scale/innovation).
- **A defined set of recommended actions / themes:** including talent pipelines, stronger routes into creative careers, support for creative entrepreneurs and scale-up, better coordination of local assets, and the identification of “tentpole” opportunities to aggregate investment and impact (e.g., Createch/virtual production, industry tourism).
- **An evidence-led picture of the regional ecosystem:** headline scale, spatial patterning, strengths and challenges—helping SBCCA avoid duplication and move faster into delivery design.

## Current Regional Position

- The Vision has been agreed and provides a shared direction across partners, with strong alignment to national growth priorities and the opportunities presented by devolution.
- Delivery mechanisms are not yet formed at a regional level (i.e. no regional action plan, prioritised investment programme, or confirmed governance/resourcing model to take the recommendations forward).
- There are significant existing assets already active across the area (local authority cultural/creative programmes, universities/FE provision, business networks, sub-sector clusters, Createch capability), but activity remains unevenly distributed and not consistently coordinated across the region—one of the core issues the Vision seeks to address.

## Integration Recommendation

Given this is an agreed strategic vision (rather than a live programme), the recommended approach is for SBCCA to embed and activate it through early strategic and delivery decisions:

- Adopt the Vision as SBCCA's shared framework for Creative Industries growth, using "Putting Talent First" as the anchor narrative and outcome focus.
- Translate the Vision into a concise SBCCA Creative Industries Action Plan aligned to the delivery of the wider Local Growth Plan, prioritised for the first 12–24 months—focusing on a small number of high-leverage actions aligned to the Vision's structure (corridors, clusters, open boundaries).
- Use the Vision to guide early investment and partnership choices, including identification of 1–2 "tentpole" opportunities suitable for pooled funding, inward investment propositions, or external bids (e.g., Createch / virtual production ecosystem; industry tourism and major sector events to attract investors, buyers and global partners to the region).
- Enable place-based delivery while maintaining a single regional direction: empower local clusters/sub-sectors to develop locally appropriate activity, while SBCCA provides the convening capacity to connect towns, institutions and industry where scale adds value.
- Align skills and careers infrastructure to "Putting Talent First": Use the Vision to shape structured collaboration between SBCCA, FE and HE institutions, careers hubs and employers — improving visibility of creative pathways, strengthening employer-led provision, supporting inclusive entry routes and freelancer development, and making better use of regional academic and training assets.

- Maintain and use the Vision as an advocacy tool: to support engagement with government, funders and industry by presenting a coherent regional offer and evidence base, reducing the need for repeated “reinvention” of the case for support.

This approach allows SBCCA to move quickly from vision to delivery design—retaining the value of the GBEB/Coastal West Sussex work while creating a practical programme pathway that fits Combined Authority structures and investment planning.

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## Wider Sussex Initiatives

The table below summarises a number of partner-led initiatives that the Board has supported, and how each aligns with the statutory Areas of Competence of the Combined Authority. While these are not the primary focus of the integration proposal, they represent important collaboration platforms and strategic partnerships that can help SBCCA maximise regional impact through stronger joint working across local government, higher and further education, business, community and sector networks. These programmes are delivered by external organisations and networks, but collectively contribute to the region's economic resilience, skills development, environmental ambition and inclusive economic prosperity. Setting out this alignment helps clarify where the Combined Authority may wish to recognise, engage with or amplify existing activity, without creating duplication or assuming direct delivery responsibility.

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Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
<a href="#">Sussex Bay</a> <sup>20</sup>	Partnership restoring 100 miles of Sussex coastline and waterways; aiming to build a £50m nature recovery fund by 2050.	Aligns environmental recovery with long-term economic resilience; strengthens Sussex's coastal identity; unlocks blended finance for nature recovery; supports sustainable tourism, fisheries and coastal enterprise.	Environment and climate change – large-scale habitat restoration and carbon sequestration. Economic development and regeneration – supports sustainable coastal and visitor economy. Public safety – natural flood and erosion mitigation. Skills and employment support – Enhances sustainable fisheries while developing green skills in coastal restoration, marine research and environmental monitoring, supporting maritime employment, apprenticeships and collaboration with FE/HE providers.	Recognise as strategic environmental partner; align with climate, coastal infrastructure and regeneration priorities.
<a href="#">Sussex Six</a> <sup>21</sup>	Business-led initiative encouraging hospitality/retail to stock more Sussex produce.	Strengthens local SME supply chains and local economic multipliers.	Economic development and regeneration – boosts local producers and independent businesses. Skills and employment support – supports agri-food and hospitality employment.	Support through business engagement and SME growth programmes; consider supporting to spread across Sussex as a low cost economy boost, business support and good news story.
<a href="#">Made Smarter</a> <sup>22</sup>	Digital adoption support for	Increases productivity and competitiveness of	Economic development and regeneration – drives productivity and innovation.	Embed within wider regional economic development and productivity work; ensure

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sussexbay.org.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://sussexfoodanddrink.org/sussex-six-campaign/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.madesmarter.uk/>

Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
	manufacturing SMEs.	regional manufacturing base.	Skills and employment support – upskilling workforce in digital and advanced manufacturing.	Sussex firms access national Made Smarter support.
<a href="#">LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan)</a> <sup>23</sup>	Employer-led skills planning framework identifying priority sector needs.	Aligns skills provision with business demand.	Skills and employment support – core statutory alignment of skills to labour market need. Economic development and regeneration – supports priority growth sectors.	Align with emerging Combined Authority skills and employment priorities.
<a href="#">Get Sussex Working</a> <sup>24</sup>	Employment and support programme focused on reducing economic inactivity and increasing long-term employment through a whole system approach.	Tackles economic inactivity and workforce participation.	Skills and employment support – employment pathways and inclusion. Health, wellbeing and public service reform – links to economic inactivity and wellbeing outcomes.	Align with devolved employment support and wider economic inclusion priorities.
<a href="#">Civic University Agreement</a> <sup>25</sup>	Joint commitment between Sussex universities and local partners to support economic, social and environmental	Provides a platform for place-based collaboration between FE, HE, business and public organisations on shared regional priorities, and a strong foundation for deeper	Economic development and regeneration – innovation, R&D and knowledge transfer. Skills and employment support – graduate retention and higher-level skills.	Work with universities and colleges as core strategic partners in the development and delivery of SBCCA priorities, building on the Civic University Agreement to strengthen collaboration on innovation, skills, inclusive

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.futureskillssussex.co.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/partnership-work/get-sussex-working-plan/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25767455.sussex-universities-launch-civic-university-agreement/>

Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
	change across Sussex.	Sussex-wide partnership working under SBCCA.		growth, decarbonisation and place-based economic development.

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## Appendix A

### GBEB Initiatives Alignment to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence

The Board’s programme activity over recent years — including both current priorities and previously commissioned work — aligns closely with the proposed Areas of Competence for Strategic Authorities. The table below summarises how key GBEB initiatives support these areas and why they are strategically relevant within a devolved regional context.

#### *Economic Opportunities Review*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Transport &amp; Infrastructure Planning</b>	Identifies connectivity constraints as barriers to productivity and recommends targeted interventions: A27/A259 upgrades, improved east-west rail to unlock labour markets, mass transit development and active travel integration. Provides an economic rationale for the Local Transport Plan and alignment with the Spatial Development Strategy.
<b>Skills &amp; Employment Support</b>	Recommends a future-ready skills ecosystem aligned to sector growth supporting lifelong learning, strengthened employer engagement, and integration of the Get Sussex Working Plan into mainstream delivery to promote inclusive pathways. Links green skills, digital capability and major capital projects to inclusive labour market participation.
<b>Housing &amp; Strategic Planning</b>	Positions housing affordability and employment land supply as economic growth issues. Supports preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy by aligning housing, strategic sites, infrastructure sequencing and grid capacity with long-term productivity and workforce retention. Recommends adopting a strategic approach to unlock constrained sites and embedding affordability at the heart of housing delivery across the region.
<b>Economic Development &amp; Regeneration</b>	Identifies priority growth sectors (e.g. advanced manufacturing, quantum technologies, creative industries, visitor economy) and recommends repositioning the visitor economy as a driver of inclusive growth, embedding sectoral strengths within the Local Growth Plan, development of an investment prospectus, supply chain capture from major projects, port-led clean growth and town centre renewal.
<b>Environment &amp; Climate Change</b>	Embeds the Sussex Energy Mission as a coordinated framework to improve energy security and create new pathways for regional prosperity. Supports

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
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renewable deployment, grid coordination, green skills pathways and nature-positive development aligned with spatial planning and economic priorities to deliver maximum benefit to the region, balancing environment protection with the needs of a sustainable economy in line with a future Local Growth Plan.

*Sussex Energy*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
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**Environment & climate change**

Coordinates regional decarbonisation, accelerating renewable generation, heat decarbonisation and energy resilience in line with national net zero objectives. Supports community and local authority investment models that retain energy revenues within Sussex rather than exporting value externally. Renewable generation and storage assets can provide long-term income streams for local authorities and businesses alongside carbon reduction benefits.

Energy system planning also has important synergies with wider climate adaptation and resilience priorities — including energy security during extreme weather events — and with energy spatial planning and nature recovery strategies, where renewable deployment, grid infrastructure and land use planning must be coordinated to balance environmental protection, biodiversity net gain and infrastructure delivery.

**Economic development & regeneration**

Develops a pipeline of investable low-carbon infrastructure projects, supports supply chain growth and positions Sussex as a clean energy investment location (estimated c.24,000 jobs linked to net zero transition).

**Transport & local infrastructure**

Increasing renewable electricity generation and electrification of heat and transport require strengthened grid capacity, smart network management and coordinated regional planning. Energy infrastructure is therefore a foundational enabler of housing growth, EV rollout and wider infrastructure readiness.

**Skills & employment support**

Supports development of net zero skills pathways (retrofit, renewables, engineering, project development) and strengthens local supply chains by increasing demand.

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Informs Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP), heat decarbonisation strategies, retrofit programmes and integration of energy infrastructure into spatial plans.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Contributes to fuel poverty reduction, warm homes, decarbonisation of public estate and NHS estate partnerships, improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities.

*Inward Investment Desk*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Attracts external capital, relocations and business expansions; strengthens productivity, diversifies the economic base and improves regional competitiveness. Offers opportunities to build on existing sector specialisms in line with development of Local Growth Plan.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Drives new job creation, supports higher-value employment opportunities and links inward investors with local skills providers and workforce pipelines.
<b>Transport &amp; local infrastructure</b>	Investor engagement provides intelligence on infrastructure requirements (sites, connectivity, utilities), informing prioritisation of enabling infrastructure investment.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Identifies demand for employment land, workspace and cluster infrastructure, supporting coordinated spatial and economic planning as required through SDS and Local Growth Plan.

*Food Systems*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Strengthens SME growth, short supply chains and rural enterprise; supports local procurement models and anchor institution purchasing models; the

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
	visitor economy; and embeds community wealth building by retaining food spend within the Sussex economy.
<b>Environment &amp; climate change</b>	Promotes sustainable production, shorter supply chains, regenerative agriculture and reduced food-system emissions, supporting climate and biodiversity objectives.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Addresses food insecurity and diet-related health inequalities; supports preventative public health through improved access to affordable, nutritious food.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Integrates food infrastructure (growing space, distribution hubs, markets, composting) into spatial strategies and land-use planning.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Strengthens land-based, hospitality, processing and food-sector skills pathways, supporting workforce development and progression routes.

*Creative Industries Vision*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Strengthens a fast-growing regional sector; supports cluster development, inward investment and productivity uplift through innovation and IP-led growth.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Promotes sector-specific skills pathways, freelance career support and stronger links between industry and education providers.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Informs planning for creative workspace, cultural infrastructure and cluster development; supports protection and development of employment space.
<b>Transport &amp; local infrastructure</b>	Creative corridors and cluster connectivity rely on effective transport links and digital infrastructure, supporting labour mobility and collaboration.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Cultural participation and creative activity contribute to wellbeing, social inclusion and community cohesion.

DRAFT





<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Greater Brighton Economic Board Operational Arrangements for 2026/27</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>25 March 2026</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Andy Hill</b>	<b>Tel: 07833 483293</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<a href="mailto:andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk">andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk</a>	
<b>LA(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:**

- 1.1 This report outlines the preparatory steps needed to support the operational aspects of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) in 2026/27.
- 1.2 This report follows [agreement at the January 2026 Board meeting](#) that, whilst the region transitions towards establishment of the Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA), the Board should continue to operate beyond 31 March 2026 and develop an Integration Plan. The Board members agreed to provide funding for FY 2026/27, which will be reviewed whilst the SBCCA is established. Therefore, this report sets out the budget for twelve months (1 April 2026 – 31 March 2027). The Board will consider funding over two periods of six months from 1 Apr – 30 Sep (tranche 1) and 1 Oct 2026 – 31 Mar 2027 (tranche 2), subject to board approval.
- 1.3 The budget does not include the anticipated costs associated with Board closure, including employment liabilities. These are presented in a separate paper to be discussed in Part 2 of the meeting.
- 1.4 This report should be read in conjunction with the Heads of Terms (HoTs) for the Board, attached as Appendix 1.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That the Board:

- 2.1 Agrees the annual budget as set out in Table A;

- 2.2 Agrees on the future of the Board by no later than 24 June based on criteria outlined in [3.1], covering the period 1 October - 31 March 2027;
- 2.2.1 Agrees to release tranche 2 of the agreed budget in Table 3.1 if members agree to extend the Board;
- 2.3 Agrees that if members agree to dissolve the Board, the Lead Authority will make arrangements for dispensing with all liabilities (including employment liabilities) and that all associated costs will be apportioned across the Local Authority Members;
- 2.4 Agrees the proposed member contributions detailed in Table B and Part 2 of this report;
- 2.5 Note that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2026/27;
- 2.6 Agree the process set out at sections 3.13 to 3.18 by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2026/27.

### **3 CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

- 3.1 The SBCCA is expected to be vested by April 2026. The Board has previously identified a number of programmes for the new authority to adopt and carry forward. The decision to extend the current Board for a further six months, from 1 October, will be informed by the level of clarity and commitment received from the SBCCA regarding future arrangements.

The programmes/themes under consideration include:

- 3.1.1 Sussex Energy
- 3.1.2 Economic Opportunities Review
- 3.1.3 Creative Industries
- 3.1.4 Food Systems Integration
- 3.1.5 Inward Investment

3.2 As outlined in the Table A below, the proposed budget for 2026/27 is £117,400 for the period April 2026-March 2027. Given the uncertainty over the Board's future through 2026/27, this total is split into £30,200 for the period April-September 2026, and then £87,200 for the period September 2026-March 2027. The reason the cost for the first six months is lower is that there is going to be an underspend of £57,000 carried forward from 2025/26, and the sensible approach is to feed this into the budget for April-September,

3.2.1 There is a small increase in the staff salary costs for one post due to an increase in weekly working hours from 22.5 to 26.5 to support transition planning.

3.2.2 In previous years there has been an annual contingency of £10,000. Given the level of uncertainty in which the Board will operate, the recommendation is that this contingency amount be increased to £20,000.

3.2.3 Table A does not include £100,000 ringfenced for Sussex Energy that has been carried forward from previous years budgets. Of this, £50,000 will fund work currently being commissioned:

(1) large scale solar site identification and prioritisation; and

(2) development of a regional decarbonisation funding and investment strategy.

The remaining £50,000 will support subsequent work to engage site owners of the priority large scale solar sites identified through this process.

3.3 £3,027 of funding for an intern to support Sussex Energy communications activity has been secured in principle from University of Sussex Summer Internship Scheme. Interns must be employed through the payroll of Brighton and Hove City Council as Lead Authority. While the scheme provides funding equivalent to the National Living Wage salary contribution, employer on-costs (including National Insurance) and any top-up required to meet the employer's minimum salary level must also be covered. This results in an estimated additional cost of approximately £500, which would be met from the £100,000 ringfenced Sussex Energy budget.

- 3.4 The 2025/26 Operational Arrangements and budget, approved by the Board in April 2025, were developed with consideration of the region's inclusion in the Devolution Priority Programme. At that time, the timeline for establishing the SBCCA and its associated structures remained uncertain, and the future of the Board beyond March 2026 was yet to be determined.
- 3.5 A substantial underspend was carried forward into 2025/26; therefore, to prevent a further significant surplus, contributions requested from Board Members were adjusted accordingly.
- 3.6 As outlined in Table A and in 3.2, the projected underspend for 2025/26 is expected to be £57,000. Therefore, to cover the costs outlined above, there is a need to request from members the contributions set out in Table B.
- 3.7 The contributions sought from local authorities are based on working age population figures from 2022. The methodology detailing how the contributions are derived is at Appendix 3.

**Table A**

<b>Running Costs</b>	<b>Total: April 2026 - March 27</b>	<b>April - September 2026 (Tranche 1)</b>	<b>Oct 2026 – March 2027 (Tranche 2)</b>
Salary costs (including on costs) and expenses	£98,029.00	£49,014.00	£49,014.00
Finance support	£8,270.00	£4,135.00	£4,135.00
Legal support	£11,325.00	£5,662.00	£5,662.00
Democratic Services support	£4,826.00	£2,413.00	£2,413.00
Scrutiny (charged £500 (excluding venue) on a 'pay as you go' basis)	£2,000.00	£1,000.00	£1,000.00
GBEB Communications	£24,950.00	£12,475.00	£12,475.00
GBEB Annual report, printing and other materials	£3,500.00	£1,750.00	£1,750.00

Venue hire, hospitality, and refreshments	£500.00	£250.00	£250.00
Additional costs e.g. IT, travel	£1,000.00	£500.00	£500.00
Contingency	£20,000.00	£10,000.00	£10,000.00
<b>Total running costs</b>	<b>£174,400.00</b>	<b>£87,200.00</b>	<b>£87,200.00</b>
<b>Underspend from 2025/26</b>	<b>£57,000.00</b>	<b>£57,000.00</b>	<b>£0</b>
<b>Total cost, less carry-forward</b>	<b>£117,400.00</b>	<b>£30,200.00</b>	<b>£87,200.00</b>

**Table B**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Total sought: April 2026 - March 27</b>	<b>April - September 2026 (Tranche 1)</b>	<b>Oct 2026 – March 2027 (Tranche 2)</b>
South Downs National Park Authority	£4,550.00	£1,170.00	£3,380.00
University of Sussex	£4,550.00	£1,170.00	£3,380.00
University of Brighton	£4,550.00	£1,170.00	£3,380.00
Chichester College Group	£4,550.00	£1,170.00	£3,380.00
NHS Sussex ICB	£4,550.00	£1,170.00	£3,380.00
Adur District Council	£5,725.00	£1,475.00	£4,250.00
Arun District Council	£14,100.00	£3,630.00	£10,475.00
Brighton & Hove City Council	£29,840.00	£7,675.00	£22,165.00
Crawley Borough Council	£11,855.00	£3,050.00	£8,805.00
Lewes District Council	£8,690.00	£2,235.00	£6,455.00
Mid Sussex District Council	£14,150.00	£3,640.00	£10,510.00
Worthing Borough Council	£10,285.00	£2,645.00	£7,640.00
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>£117,400.00</b>	<b>£30,200.00</b>	<b>£87,200.00</b>

**LEAD AUTHORITY:**

3.8 On 18 July 2023, the Board agreed that Brighton & Hove City Council continue to act as Lead Authority for 2023/24. As outlined in section 1.8 of the HoTs, lead

authority arrangements are reviewed every two years and therefore this arrangement was maintained for 2024/25.

3.9 In the autumn of 2024, each local authority represented on the Board was due to be invited to submit an expression of interest in fulfilling the Lead Authority role for 2025/26 and 2026/27. The Board would then instigate a procurement exercise to select the most appropriate authority for that role. However, given that in February 2025 Sussex and Brighton was announced as being on the Devolution Programme, the recommendation for 2025/26 was that Brighton & Hove City Council continue as Lead Authority.

3.10 Establishment of the SBCCA is gathering pace, the Board is likely be dissolved during, or at the end of, 2026/27. The recommendation at 2.5 is that Brighton & Hove City Council continue as Lead Authority during 2026/27.

### **2026/27 BOARD MEETING DATES**

3.11 The Board meeting dates for the new municipal year are proposed as follows:

- 24 June 2026
- 30 September 2026
- 16 December 2026
- 17 March 2027

3.12 It is proposed meetings will be held at various locations across Greater Brighton.

### **MEMBERSHIP AND CHAIRPERSON**

3.13 As outlined in section 6 of the HoTs, the Chair will be elected annually by the Joint Committee members. The Chair of the Joint Committee shall, by virtue of their democratic mandate, be the Chair of the Board. It is for the Joint Committee to elect the Chair.

3.14 The Chair must be formally appointed at the Board's first meeting in the new municipal year. It is proposed that nominations be sought in advance and that the following process be adopted:

- 3.15 On 27 April 2026, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services team will issue an email to the local authority Leaders to ask if they would like to put themselves forward as Chair.
- 3.16 Those local authority Leaders choosing to put themselves forward must notify Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services of their decision by 15 May 2025.
- 3.17 On 18 May 2026, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services will issue an email to all local authority Leaders, advising of the nominations and asking them to cast a vote for their preferred nominee. Each Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee member will have one vote.
- 3.18 On 1 June 2026, Brighton & Hove City Council Democratic Services will issue an email to all members of the Board to advise them of the elected Chair.
- 3.19 On 24 June 2026 members of the Greater Brighton Joint Committee will formally appoint the new Chair (this will be the first item of business).
- 3.20 If the vote is tied, Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services will issue an email to all local authority Leaders, informing that the first round has been tied and asking them to vote again on the preferred nominees.
- 3.21 All member organisations are required to inform Brighton & Hove City Council's Democratic Services of their substitute representatives by 19 June 2026. In line with section 9 of the HoTs, the list of substitutes will be approved by the Board at its first meeting in the new municipal year.
- 3.22 As stated in section 4.3 of the HoTs, the work of the Board shall be subject to review by an ad-hoc joint local authority scrutiny panel that is managed by the Lead Authority. It is proposed that the current Call-In Protocol remains unchanged for 2026/27. The Protocol is attached as Appendix 2.

3.23 Members of the Board are required to inform Brighton & Hove City Council Democratic Services of their Greater Brighton Call-In Panel representatives by 19 June 2026.

#### **4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**

4.1 An alternative option was for the Board to be dissolved at the end of March 2026, in line with the end of the financial year and current funding. This was considered, but the view was that the structures around the SBCCA are not yet mature, and the Board still has a role to play as convenor and supporter of work to establish the SBCCA, including developing the Integration Proposal.

#### **5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION:**

5.1 There are no direct community engagement or consultation arising directly from this paper. However, the development of the proposed Integration Plan will set out how a) the work will continue at SBCCA; and b) make initial recommendations on ongoing community engagement and participation as part of regional devolution activity.

#### **6 CONCLUSION:**

6.1 To ensure that the Board transitions smoothly into the new municipal year, Board members are asked to:

- (1) Agree the costs of running the Board and delivering its work-plan in 2026/27;
- (2) Note that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2026/27;
- (3) Agree the process by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2026/27, and;
- (4) Note the requirement, and instruct the necessary actions within their respective organisations, to:
  - a) Notify the lead authority of their named substitutes by 19 June 2026, and;
  - b) Notify the lead authority of their nominations to the Greater Brighton Call-In Panel by 19 June 2026.

## 7 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The estimated cost of supporting the Board's activity for 2026/27 is £174,400. This covers staffing, finance, legal and democratic support, communications activity, scrutiny, and other operational requirements, but also includes an enhanced level of contingency to reflect that the Board are operating within an uncertain environment in 2026/27. A £57,000 underspend from 2025/26 will be carried forward, reducing the annual funding requirement from members to £117,400. Due to the planned integration of the Board's activities within the SBCCA during 2026/27, the report recommends that the annual budget is split into two tranches, each to cover the first and last 6 months of the year. Member contributions will be requested for tranche 1 as laid out in Table B, which have been calculated in line with the Board's Memorandum of Understanding. Further member contributions required for tranche 2 (also in Table B) will depend on the timeline of the dissolution of the Board.
- 7.2 Brighton & Hove City Council will continue to act as the Lead Authority and Accountable Body. The associated support costs are included within the budget. In addition to the core operating costs, the Board holds £100,000 of ringfenced Sussex Energy funding, which will be used to progress planned workstreams. A small cost pressure of around £500 linked to the Sussex Energy intern will be met from this ringfenced allocation.
- 7.3 The financial implications regarding the costs relating to the dissolution of the Board are covered in Part 2 to the report.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Modupe Oshin, Principal Accountant, BHCC & Deputy CFO (BHCC) Haley Woollard  
Date: 17/03/2026*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.4 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report. If members agree at a future date to the dissolution of the Board, consideration will need to be given to the treatment of any contractual arrangements that have been entered into by the Accountable Body (Brighton and Hove City Council) on behalf of the Board. The Heads of Terms which governs the Board provides for a memorandum of understanding to set out in further detail of the support the Accountable Body is required to give to the Board. The current version of the memorandum (dated April 2014) may require updating to include any finally agreed details for the implementation of the dissolution.

*Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal, Commercial  
Date: 17/03/2026*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 None

Sustainability Implications:

7.6 None

Any Other Significant Implications:

7.7 None

**SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

1. Heads of Terms for Greater Brighton Economic Board
2. Greater Brighton Economic Board Call-In Protocol
3. Approach for Calculating 2026/27 Funding Contributions

## **Appendix 1: Heads of Terms for Greater Brighton Economic Board (Jan 2025)**

### **1. Establishment, Purpose and Form**

- 1.1. The Greater Brighton Economic Board (“The Board”) shall be established from the Commencement Date.
- 1.2. The over-arching purpose of the board is to bring about sustainable economic development and growth across Greater Brighton (‘the City Region’). To achieve this, the principal role of the Board is to co-ordinate economic development activities and investment at the regional level.
- 1.3. The Board comprises the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (“GBEJC”), on which the local authorities will be represented; and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership (“GBBP”), on which the business, university and further education sectors will be represented
- 1.4. Meetings of the Board comprise concurrent meetings of GBEJC and GBBP.
- 1.5. GBEJC shall be a joint committee appointed by two or more local authorities represented on the Board, in accordance with section 120(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972.
- 1.6. The Board may appoint one or more sub-committees.
- 1.7. For the two years starting with the Commencement Date, the lead authority for the Board shall be Brighton & Hove City Council (“BHCC”), whose functions in that capacity shall include the provision of scrutiny (see paragraph 4.3), management of the call-in and review process (see paragraph 8), and the support detailed in paragraph 12.
- 1.8. Unless the Board resolves otherwise, before the start of the third year following the Commencement Date, and every two years thereafter, the Board shall review the lead authority arrangements and, subject to paragraph 1.9, invite each of the local authorities represented on the Board to submit an expression of interest in fulfilling the role of lead authority for the subsequent two year period. The Board shall then instigate a procurement exercise to select the most appropriate authority for that role.
- 1.9. Notwithstanding the appointment of a successor lead authority pursuant to paragraph 1.8, the incumbent lead authority may retain such of their Accountable Body functions as are necessary to enable that local authority to comply with its on-going commitments and liabilities associated with its Accountable Body status.

### **2. Interpretation**

- 2.1. In these Heads of Terms –
  - i. ‘Commencement Date’ means 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014.
  - ii. ‘City Region’ means the area encompassing the administrative boundaries of BHCC, Adur District Council, Worthing Borough Council, Lewes District

Council, Mid Sussex District Council, Crawley Borough Council and Arun District Council; and 'regional' shall be construed accordingly;

- iii. 'economic development' shall bear its natural meaning but with particular emphasis given to :
  - Employment and skills;
  - Infrastructure and transport
  - Housing;
  - Utilisation of property assets;
  - Strategic planning;
  - Economic growth.
- iv. 'Accountable Body' means the local authority represented on the Board carrying out the function set out in paragraph 12.2.

### **3. Functions**

3.1. The Functions of the Board are specified in paragraph 3.2 below and may be exercised only in respect of the Region.

3.2. The functions referred to in paragraph 3.1 are as follows:

- i. To make long term strategic decisions concerning regional economic development and growth;
- ii. To be the external voice to Government and investors regarding the management of devolved powers and funds for regional economic growth;
- iii. To work with national, sub-national, regional and local bodies to support a co-ordinated approach to economic growth across the region;
- iv. To secure funding and investment for the Region;
- v. To ensure delivery of, and provide strategic direction for, major projects and work stream enabled by City Deal funding and devolution of powers;
- vi. To enable those bodies to whom section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 applies to comply more effectively with their duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development.
- vii. To incur expenditure on matters relating to economic development where funds have been allocated directly to the Board for economic development purposes; and for the avoidance of doubt, no other expenditure shall be incurred unless due authority has been given by each body represented on the Board.

3.3. In discharging its function specified in paragraph 3.2 (Viii) above, the Board shall-

- i. (save in exceptional circumstances) seek to invest funding on the basis of-
  - a Proportionality, by reference to the economically active demographic of each administrative area within the city Region;

- b Deliverability;
  - c Value for money and return on investment / cost benefit ratio; and
  - d Economic impact to the City Region as a whole.
- ii. Delegate implementation of that function to the lead authority, who shall also act as Accountable Body in relation to any matters falling within that function.

#### **4. Reporting and Accountability**

- 4.1. The Board shall submit an annual report to each of the bodies represented on the Board.
- 4.2. The Greater Brighton Programme Board shall report to the Board and may refer matters to it for consideration and determination.
- 4.3. The work of the Board is subject to review by an ad hoc joint local authority scrutiny panel set up and managed by the lead authority.

#### **5. Membership**

5.1. The following bodies shall be members of the Board:

- i. Brighton & Hove City Council
- ii. Adur District Council
- iii. Worthing Borough Council
- iv. Lewes District Council
- v. Mid-Sussex District Council
- vi. Crawley Borough Council
- vii. Arun District Council
- viii. University of Sussex
- ix. University of Brighton
- x. Chichester College Group
- xi. Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership
- xii. Adur & Worthing Business Partnership
- xiii. South Downs National Park Authority
- xiv. NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board

5.2. GBEJC shall comprise the bodies specified in paragraphs 5.1(i) to (vii); and GBBP shall comprise the bodies specified in paragraphs 5.1(viii) to (xiv).

5.3. Each of the bodies listed in paragraph 5.1 shall be represented at the Board by one person.

5.4. Each local authority member shall be represented at the Board by its elected Leader.

5.5. Each business sector member shall be represented at the Board by the Chairman of that member or by a person nominated by the Board of that member.

5.6. Each university member shall be represented by a Vice Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellor of that university or by a person nominated by that university member.

5.7. Each further education member shall be represented by its Principal or the Chair of its Governing Body or by a person nominated by that further education member.

## **6. Chair**

6.1. The Chair of GBEJC shall, by virtue of his/her democratic mandate, be Chair of the Board

6.2. If the Chair of GBEJC is unable to attend a Board meeting, the Board shall elect a substitute from its local authority member representatives provided that no such member representative attending in the capacity of a substitute shall be appointed as Chair of GBEJC / the Board.

6.3. The Chair will be elected annually by members of the GBEJC. Election of the Chair will be conducted through a formal process performed by the Democratic Services Team of the Lead Authority. The elected Chair will be appointed at the first meeting of the Board in the new municipal year. A Chair may be re-elected but shall not serve as Chair for more than 4 years.

## **7. Voting**

7.1. Each person represents a member of GBEJC, and each person representing a member of the GBBP, shall be entitled to vote at their respective meetings.

7.2. Voting at each of the concurrent meetings of GBEJC and GBBP shall be by show of hands or, at the discretion of the chair, by any other means permitted by law, and voting outcomes reached at those meetings shall be on a simple majority of votes cast.

7.3. Where voting at a meeting of GBEJC results in an equal number of votes cast in favour and against, the Chair of GBEJC shall have a casting vote.

7.4. Where voting at a meeting of GBEJC results in an equal number of votes cast in favour and against, the motion/proposal/recommendation under consideration shall fall in relation of GBBP.

7.5. Where the respective voting outcomes of GBEJC and GBBC are the same, that shall be taken as the agreed Board decision and the Board may pass a resolution accordingly.

7.6. Where the respective voting outcomes of GBEJC and GBBP differ, the Board –

- i. May not pass a resolution relating to that matter; and
- ii. May refer the matter to the Chief Executive of the lead authority, who may consult with members of the Board or such other persons as are appropriate, with a view to achieving agreement on the matter between GBEJC and GBBP by discussion and negotiation.

7.7. Where, pursuant to paragraph 7.6(ii), agreement is reached the matter at issue shall be remitted to, and voted upon at, the next meeting of the Board.

7.8. Where, pursuant to paragraph 7.6(ii), no agreement is reached the motion/proposal/recommendation at issue shall fall.

## **8. Review of decision**

8.1. Decisions of the Board will be subject to call-in and review in the following circumstances:

- i. Where a local authority voted to agree a recommendation at a GBEJC meeting, but the decision of the Board was not to agree the recommendation.
- ii. Where a local authority voted against a recommendation at a GBEJC meeting, but the decision of the Board considered that the interests of the body they represent had been significantly prejudiced; or
- iii. Where any local authority represented on the Board considered that the interests of the body they represent had been significantly prejudiced; or
- iv. Where any local authority represented on the Board considered that the Board had made a decision beyond its scope of authority.

8.2. The procedure for requesting, validation, and implementing a call-in and review is specified in Schedule 1.

8.3. Where a request for call-in is accepted, the Board decision to which it relates shall be stayed pending the outcome of the call-in.

8.4. Following call-in, the panel convened to review a Board decision may refer the decision back to the Board for re-consideration. Following referral, the Board shall, either at its next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting called for the purpose, consider the panel's concerns over the original decision.

8.5. Having considered the panel's concerns, the Board may alter its original decision or re-affirm it. Paragraph 8.1 shall not apply to the Board's follow-up decision. In consequence, the latter decision may be implemented without further delay.

## **9. Substitution**

9.1. Subject to paragraph 9.2, representatives are expected to attend all meetings however, where a representative of a member of the Board is unable to attend a Board meeting, a substitute representative of that member may attend, speak and vote, in their place for that meeting.

9.2. A substitute member must be appointed from a list of approved substitutes submitted by the respective member to the Board at the start of each municipal year.

## **10. Quorum**

10.1. No business shall be transacted at any meeting of the Board unless at least one third of all member bodies are present, and both GBEJC and GPBBP are quorate.

10.2. Quorum for GBEJC meetings shall be three member bodies.

10.3. Quorum for GBBP meetings shall be three member bodies.

## **11. Time and Venue of Meetings**

11.1 Ordinary meetings of the Board shall be convened by the lead authority and will rotate around the City Region.

11.2 The Chair of the Board may call a special meeting of the Board at any time, subject to providing members with minimum notice of two working days.

## **12. Administrative, financial and legal support**

12.1 The lead authority shall provide the following support services to the Board:

- i. Administrative, as more particularly specified in the Memorandum of Understanding pursuant to paragraph 13;
- ii. Financial (including the Accountable body function specified in paragraph 12.2); and
- iii. Legal, comprising Monitoring Officer and Proper Officer functions in relation to GBEJC meetings.

12.2 The function of the Accountable Body is to take responsibility for the financial management and administration of external grants and funds provided to the Board, and of financial contributions by each member of the Board, as more particularly specified in the Memorandum of Understanding Pursuant to paragraph 13. In fulfilling its role as Accountable Body, the lead authority shall remain independent of the Board.

12.3 Other members of the Board shall contribute to the reasonable costs incurred by the lead authority in connection with the activities described in paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2, at such time and manner as the Memorandum of Understanding shall specify.

## **13 Memorandum of Understanding**

13.1 Members of the Board may enter into a memorandum of understanding setting out administrative and financial arrangements as between themselves relating to the functioning of the Board.

13.2 The memorandum may, in particular, provide for –

13.2.1 Arrangements as to the financial contributions by each member towards the work of the Board, including:

13.2.1.1 The process by which total financial contributions are calculated;

13.2.1.2 The process for determining the contribution to be paid by each member;

13.2.1.3 The dates on which contribution are payable;

13.2.1.4 How the Accountable Body shall administer and account for such contributions;

13.2.2 Functions of the Accountable Body; and

13.2.3 The terms of reference for the Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board.

#### **14 Review and Variation of Heads of Terms**

14.1 The Board shall keep these Heads of Terms under review to ensure that the Board's purpose is given full effect.

14.2 These Heads of Terms may be varied only on a resolution of the Board to that effect, and subject to the approval of each body represented on the Board.

**Appendix 2: Greater Brighton Economic Board Call-In Protocol****1. Requesting a Call-in**

- 1.1. Call-in is a process via which decisions made by the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) but not yet implemented can be challenged by GBEB members and referred to an independent 'call-in panel' for consideration.
- 1.2. Any decision made by the GBEB may be called-in up to five working days from the date of the meeting at which the decision was taken.
- 1.3. Call-in may triggered by any one or more of the constituent members of the GBEB. Such a request shall be made in writing to the Chief Executive of the lead Local Authority (i.e. the Local Authority responsible for GBEB administration at the time of the call-in request) and shall include the reasons for the request and any alternative decisions proposed.
- 1.4. A request for call-in may be made by any GBEB member local authority:
  - i. where a local authority voted to agree a recommendation at a GBEJC meeting, but the decision of the Board was against the recommendation;
  - ii. where a local authority voted against a recommendation at a meeting of the GBEJC but the decision of the Board was to agree the recommendation;
  - iii. where any local authority represented in the Board considered that the interests of the body they represent had been significantly prejudiced; or
  - iv. where any local authority represented in the Board considered that the Board had made a decision beyond its scope of authority.
- 1.5. The Chief Executive may refuse to accept a call-in request which in his/her opinion is frivolous, vexatious or defamatory or where no reason for the decision to be called-in is given.
- 1.6. Should the request be accepted, the Chief Executive will call-in the decision. This shall have the effect of suspending the decision coming into force and the Chief Executive shall inform the relevant decision makers of the call-in. The Chief Executive shall then call a meeting of the GBEB call-in panel to scrutinise the decision.
- 1.7. The GBEB call-in panel must meet within seven working days of the Chief Executive accepting the call-in request. Should the call-in committee fail to meet within this period, or meet but not be quorate, then the original decision shall come into force at the expiry of the seven-day period

**The GBEB Call-in Panel**

- 1.8. The GBEB call-in panel shall include members representing each of the constituent members of the GBEB (i.e. both the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership).
- 1.9. The GBEB call-in panel could potentially also include co-opted members from other bodies. Any decision on co-option would be made annually by the GBEB.
- 1.10. Each constituent member of the GBEB shall appoint a member to the GBEB call-in panel. No member of the GBEB call-in panel may also be a member or substitute member on the GBEB – GBEB call-in panel members should be independent of the GBEB to the degree that they have not as individuals been involved in the decision that they are being asked to consider as a call-in.
- 1.11. The Chair of the GBEB call-in panel shall be appointed annually by the GBEB.
- 1.12. Appointments to the GBEB call-in panel shall be annual.
- 1.13. Substitution is permitted on to the GBEB call-in panel. However, no substitute member may be or have been a GBEB member or substitute.
- 1.14. The GBEB call-in panel shall make decisions on the basis of a majority vote. If the vote is spilt then the panel Chair shall have a casting vote.
- 1.15. **Quorum.** To be quorate a meeting of the GBEB call-in panel shall require at least one third of members to be in attendance.
- 1.16. For the purposes of call-in no distinction shall be made between representatives from the members of the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee and representatives from the members of the Greater Brighton Business Partnership: all members of the call-in panel will vote together.

## 2. Call-in meetings

- 2.1. The GBEB call-in panel will consider call-in requests at a special call-in meeting. Typically, the call-in panel will hear from:
  - i. the GBEB member who made the call-in request (where a request has been made by more than one member the Chair of the GBEB call-in panel will decide whether to take representations from all the signatories to the call-in request or to ask the signatories to make a single representation). The member(s) who requested a call-in will explain why they feel the original decision was unsound and will suggest an alternative decision.
  - ii. the GBEB. The GBEB Chair (or another GBEB member or an officer supporting the GBEB at the request of the GBEB Chair) will explain why the original decision was made and will provide any additional information they feel is germane. Where the GBEB Chair is a signatory to the call-in request, then another GBEB member (or officer supporting the GBEB) shall attend the call-in meeting to represent the GBEB. This representative will be chosen by the Chief Executive of the lead authority, after discussion with GBEB members.

- iii. Other organisations, stakeholders or members of the public may be granted the right to make representations to the call-in panel at the discretion of the GBEB call-in panel Chair. However, in general the intention should be to re-examine the decision originally made not to hold a broader enquiry into the decision in question.
- 2.2. Call-in does not provide for the call-in panel to substitute its own decision for the original GBEB decision, but merely to refer the matter back to the GBEB. The GBEB can only be asked to reconsider any particular decision once.
  - 2.3. In essence the call-in panel is simply tasked with deciding whether the decision in question should be referred back to the GBEB to be reconsidered. Therefore the only substantive decision the GBEB call-in panel can make is whether to refer the decision back to the GBEB or to let the original decision stand.
  - 2.4. In deciding whether to refer a decision back to the GBEB, the call-in panel shall have regard to:
    - i. Any additional information which may have become available since the original decision was made
    - ii. The implications of any delay in implementing the original decision
    - iii. Whether reconsideration is likely to lead to a different decision
    - iv. The importance of the matter raised and the extent to which it relates to the achievement of the GBEB strategic priorities
    - v. Whether there is evidence that the decision-making rules in the GBEB constitution have been breached
    - vi. Whether there is evidence that the GBEB consultation processes have not been followed
    - vii. Whether the decision taken is not in accordance with a policy previously agreed by the GBEB
    - viii. Whether there might be an alternative way of dealing with the matter in hand short of referral back to the GBEB
  - 2.5. If having scrutinised the decision, the GBEB call-in panel feels that the decision was seriously flawed, it may refer it back to the GBEB for reconsideration, setting out in writing the nature of its concerns.
  - 2.6. Implementation of any decision referred back to the GBEB remains suspended until the GBEB has met to reconsider the matter. However, should the GBEB call-in panel choose not to refer the matter back to the GBEB for reconsideration then implementation may begin immediately following the call-in committee meeting.
  - 2.7. The GBEB shall reconsider any matter referred back to it by the GBEB call-in panel either at its next scheduled meeting or at a special meeting called for the

purpose. Having considered the concerns expressed by the GBEB call-in panel the GBEB is free to make any decision it chooses *including re-affirming its original decision*.

### **3. Call-in and urgency**

- 3.1. The call-in procedure set out above shall not apply where the decision being taken is urgent. A decision will be urgent if any delay likely to be caused by the call-in process would seriously prejudice the interests of the GBEB or the general public across the 'Greater Brighton' region. The record of the decision, and notice by which it is made public, shall state if in the opinion of the GBEB the decision is an urgent one and therefore not subject to call-in. This is subject to the agreement of the Chief Executive of the lead authority.
- 3.2. Any decision exempted from call-in for reasons of urgency shall be communicated to the Chair of the GBEB call-in panel by the Chief Executive of the lead authority, together with an explanation as to why the decision has been deemed urgent. The intention is that urgency exceptions are used sparingly and only where there is an overriding reason to do so.



### Appendix 3: Approach for Calculating 2026/27 Funding Contribution

**Total Funds sought for 2026/27 = £117,400**

Greater Brighton Business Partnership (GBBP):

- Due to their being largely local authority funded, no contributions will be sought from the Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership and the Adur & Worthing Business Partnership.
- All remaining Business Partnership members will be charged a 'flat fee' of £4,550.

**Total funds sought from GBBP = £22,750**

Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee:

- The contributions sought from the unitary, district and borough councils for 2026/27 total £94,650
- Amounts requested from each local authority have been apportioned in relation to the size of their working age populations and are calculated based on the demographic figures from the 2022 ONS estimates. Please see table below and the latest Business and Demographic Overview overleaf

**Total funds sought from GBEJC = £94,650**

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>% of working age population (ONS 2022)</b>	<b>2026/27 Contribution Calculation</b>
Adur District Council	6.04%	£5,725.00
Arun District Council	14.92%	£14,100.00
Brighton & Hove City Council	31.53%	£29,840.00
Crawley Borough Council	12.53%	£11,855.00
Lewes District Council	9.17%	£8,690.00
Mid Sussex District Council	14.93%	£14,150.00
Worthing Borough Council	10.89%	£10,285.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>£94,650.00</b>



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