



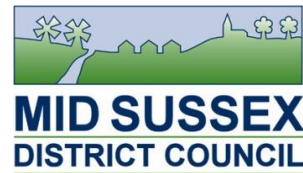
Greater Brighton Economic Board

7 October 2026

10.00am

**Vaillant Training Centre, Brighton MET East Campus,
Wilson Avenue, Brighton, BN2 5PB**

AGENDA



Members:	Councillors: Baxter (Chair), Sankey, Eggleston, Gardner, Jones, Lury, McGregor and Nicholson Business Partners: Caroline Baxter, Tim Slaney, Prof Rusi Jaspal, Prof. Debbie Keeling, Dean Orgill, Dan Power, Karl Roberts and Andrew Swayne
Contact:	Francis Mitchell Democratic Services Officer 01273 294183 Francis.Mitchell@brighton-hove.gov.uk

AGENDA

PART ONE

Page

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
Follow

To consider the minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 June 2026.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

4	DISSOLUTION OF THE GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD	5 - 18
5	SUSSEX ENERGY UPDATE	19 - 32

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For further details and general enquiries about this meeting contact Francis Mitchell (01273 294183, email Francis.Mitchell@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or email democratic.services@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Date of Publication - Tuesday, 29 September 2026

Subject:	Dissolution of the Greater Brighton Economic Board		
Date of Meeting:	7 October 2026		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board		
Contact Officers:	Name:	Andy Hill	
	Email:	Andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

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

- 1.1 For some time, it has been clear the Greater Brighton Economic Board “The Board” would be dissolved once the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) was established. The timing of this was subject to the maturity of the SBSA organisation, and at the Board meetings since January 2026, papers have been produced outlining progress and recommending a pathway towards an orderly dissolution, with September being one possible option.
- 1.2 The [most recent paper](#) on this subject, presented at the 24 June Board meeting, outlined several considerations that the Board may wish to take into account before confirming to proceed towards orderly dissolution. These considerations related to the extent to which the Board’s flagship mission, Sussex Energy, had been embedded and integrated within the SBSA, and that the Board’s other key strategic priority areas, including the Creative Industries and inward investment, had been recognised as priorities for the SBSA.
- 1.3 In June the Board agreed that these decision considerations seemed sensible, and based on that, took the view that it would be too early to seek dissolution in September. Instead, the Board agreed to seek contributions from members to cover the Board’s operational costs from September-December 2026, with a view to finalise a decision to dissolve the Board in December at the following Board meeting (7 October).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That the Board notes that as of September 2026, good progress has been made regarding engagement with SBSA, and that the SBSA are close to publishing the draft Prosperity Strategy.
- 2.2. That the Board prepares and submits a consultation response to the draft Prosperity Strategy.
- 2.3. That the Board agrees in principle to dissolve on 31 December 2026, subject to arrangements being agreed for the transfer of any existing contracts held by the

Accountable Body e.g. Sussex Energy commissioned work and the arrangements set out at recommendation 2.4.

- 2.4. That the Board receives a final budget at its December 2026 meeting and agrees that if dissolution costs are identified which could exceed the current budget, the Accountable Body (Brighton & Hove City Council) will seek to apportion these costs equitably across Board members, in line with the original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Appendix 1.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Board agreed that the initiatives proposed through [Integration Proposal](#) (March 2026) represented important strategic, delivery and partnership assets which have the potential to support emerging SBSA priorities, strategies and investment activity. Given the differing nature and maturity of these initiatives, the Board considered it important that progress be demonstrated towards their future positioning, continuity and integration within SBSA strategy and plans before dissolution is confirmed.
- 3.2 In addition, the Board wished to see the value and momentum developed through over a decade of activity, reflected in SBSA future plans to avoid activity pausing or fragmenting.
- 3.3 In the [2026/27 Operational Arrangements](#) paper presented in March, the Board agreed to two budget periods; one covering the period April-September 2026, and the second from October 2026-March 2027.
- 3.4 The recommendation in March was that at the June Board meeting, progress would be reviewed and a decision taken as to whether to seek dissolution in September 2026 or look to continue operations until March 2027. It was noted that three months would be required to provide notice to officers impacted by closure, so a decision to dissolve the Board in September would need to be taken in June.
- 3.5 Given the differing nature of the initiatives proposed through the Integration Proposal, the Board understood that dissolution should not be determined by a single event or formal transfer decision alone, but by the progress made to provide confidence that:
- i. live programmes can continue effectively supported by identified resource;
 - ii. strategic evidence and commissioned work have identified “landing zones” within SBSA structures;
 - iii. governance, accountability and sponsorship arrangements are emerging;
 - iv. and the collaborative relationships and delivery capacity developed through the Board’s work can continue under SBSA arrangements.
- 3.6 The June paper set out the following considerations, which intended to support the Board’s assessment of transition readiness and inform discussion regarding the most appropriate timing for orderly dissolution.

Sussex Energy transition considerations

- 3.7 Sussex Energy is the most operationally advanced and delivery-critical initiative within the Integration Proposal. The extent to which confidence existed regarding its future continuation within SBSA arrangements would likely to be a significant consideration in determining the appropriate timing for dissolution.
- 3.8 The Board recognised that SBSA may ultimately determine its own regional targets and strategic framing through development of the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and other emerging strategies. Accordingly, the Board is not seeking formal adoption of the Sussex Energy Mission target itself (i.e. energy neutrality by 2040) as a prerequisite for transition. Rather, there was demonstrable progress towards the programme being embedded within SBSA plans.
- 3.9 The situation in June was that whilst positive engagement had taken place and there was recognition of the value of Sussex Energy as a live regional programme, many organisational and governance arrangements within SBSA remained at a fairly early stage. Discussion with officers has started to propose consideration is given to how Sussex Energy governance, coordination and communications activity could align with emerging SBSA structures, but the SBSA's first AGM, where some of the future governance arrangements would become more clear, wasn't until July.

Wider initiative transition considerations

- 3.10 The Board recognised that the remaining initiatives proposed through the Integration Proposal are primarily evidence based, strategic frameworks and partnership platforms rather than live delivery programmes. Discussions with SBSA officers had indicated recognition that the initiatives represent useful regional evidence bases, partnership platforms and strategic assets capable of informing future SBSA priorities and activity.
- 3.11 Discussion with officers had started to propose that consideration is given to where initiatives and evidence bases may align within emerging SBSA portfolios, strategies, and work programmes. Documents have been sent to SBSA officers to incorporate into evidence collation for the Prosperity Strategy. There is positive recognition of the value of wider partnership-led initiatives and collaboration platforms, although future engagement and coordination arrangements remain to be determined through SBSA structures.
- 3.12 A meeting in early August brought together a number of senior SBSA officers including their Inclusive Growth Lead and Investment Lead, with members of the Sussex Energy Partner Group, to discuss Sussex and Brighton Regional Energy Opportunities and Priorities - a document that was presented to the Board in January and has since been ratified with the Sussex Energy Partner Group, districts and boroughs and the wider Sussex Energy Forum.

Conclusion and recommendation

- 3.13 The intention was that the Board could use the considerations to help inform its judgement regarding the appropriate timing for orderly dissolution. The requirement is not completion of every element before dissolution can proceed, but to support an informed assessment of transition confidence, programme continuity and organisational readiness.
- 3.14 Discussions regarding future positioning, sponsorship and organisational arrangements within SBSA were still emerging, so the Board had to carefully consider whether sufficient confidence currently existed regarding the continuity and future development of Sussex Energy and wider Board initiatives to support dissolution at that stage. The conclusion and recommendation from the June meeting were that pursuing a September dissolution was not prudent given the progress made in establishing the SBSA.

December dissolution

- 3.15 As noted in 3.3, the [2026/27 Operational Arrangements](#) presented to the Board in March 2026, set out two budget options; one covering the period from April-September 2026 and another from April 2026-March 2027. Whilst the Board agreed for operations to continue beyond September, the other initially proposed endpoint of March 2027 seemed a long way ahead, and the Board was reluctant to commit funding for a further six months given the progress made in establishing the SBSA through the spring and early summer, and the future timescales that the SBSA were working towards.
- 3.16 The methodology described in 3.5 was intended to provide a flexible framework through which the Board can continue to assess transition progress and organisational readiness. This would enable the Board to review progress again at the next meeting and determine whether conditions are emerging which would support an orderly dissolution in December 2026, whilst retaining March 2027 as the latest planned dissolution point if further transition time is considered beneficial.
- 3.17 Referenced in 3.8 are three key strategy documents that the SBSA will develop and publish. These documents will set out the priorities, outcomes and wider devolution parameters for the region. The first strategy to emerge will be the Prosperity Strategy, which is currently in draft format. The draft is due to be published in November, after which it will be out for consultation for before being finalised and adopted in early 2027.
- 3.18 Conversations with SBSA have been positive with acknowledgement that the Sussex Energy Mission cuts across a number of key themes and priorities as well as sustainability, including inclusive growth, skills and resilience, and that it will help guide investment decisions.
- 3.19 The recommendation at 2.3 is that the Board now formally agree to move towards a formal dissolution in December.

- 3.20 As highlighted in the January Board Paper, consideration will need to be given to additional costs that could be incurred by the dissolution of the Board, including any employment liabilities and ongoing costs such as maintenance of the Sussex Energy website.
- 3.21 If dissolution costs are identified which could exceed the current budget, the Accountable Body (Brighton & Hove City Council) will seek to apportion these costs across the Local Authority Board members, based on working age population, in line with the original Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at appendix 1. Likewise, any surplus remaining in the Board budget, once all costs have been covered, would be apportioned across Board members following the same methodology.
- 3.22 It is proposed in recommendation 2.4 that a final budget be presented at the next meeting in December, which will address the points covered in 3.20 and 3.21 above.

4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The alternative to a December dissolution would be for the Board to continue until March 2027, as per one of the original options put forward and agreed. This would require further contributions from Board members, as the budget secured until now will only keep the Board operational until December.
- 4.2 Board Members are aware that whilst the Board and SBSA operate in parallel, there is the potential of duplication of effort and time, which both the Board and SBSA are keen to avoid so far as possible. As current Board priorities and responsibilities progressively transfer into SBSA structures, there comes a point at which Board will effectively become redundant, and it is likely this point will arrive before March 2027.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 There are no direct community engagement or consultation arising directly from this paper. However, stakeholder engagement is crucial to the success of Sussex Energy and relationships through the transition will be at the forefront. Further engagement with SBSA leadership and partners will need to take place to ensure a smooth transition of the Programme and other key initiatives.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Given that Sussex & Brighton will be covered by a strategic authority which will assume many of the Board's responsibilities and activities, the Board has been seeking an orderly dissolution at the optimal time. An optimal time would be the point at which the Board has clarity and confidence around the key initiatives proposed through the Integration Proposal regarding their future positioning, continuity and integration within SBSA arrangements.

- 6.2 Given the progress made during the summer, especially around development of the draft Prosperity Strategy, which is now close to publication, the recommendation is that the Board commit to proceed to orderly dissolution.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 The operational costs of the Board have been funded through contributions from board members in accordance with the 2026/27 Operational Arrangements. This paper recommends that the board agrees to be dissolved in December 2026. If approved, a final budget position will be presented to the Board in December 2026.
- 7.2 Dissolution of the Board may give rise to additional one-off costs, including any employment-related liabilities, contractual commitments and ongoing costs associated with legacy assets or activities. Should dissolution costs exceed the resources currently available, Brighton & Hove City Council, as the Accountable Body, will assess the additional costs from each member in accordance with the cost-sharing arrangements set out in the Memorandum of Understanding. Any surplus remaining following settlement of all liabilities will similarly be returned to members on the same basis.

Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard, Head of Finance

Date: 28/09/26

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 The recommendations of this report provide for the orderly dissolution of the Board by 31st December 2026. As such this report proposes the dissolution of the Board subject to the final arrangements being made as set out in this report, including transfer of any Accountable Body functions which have been agreed by the members of the Board should continue beyond the Board's dissolution (such as Sussex Energy) and the accounting for any final liabilities to be apportioned between the members. It is intended that the final closure of the Board will be subject to a final resolution at the December Board meeting.

Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry – Head of Legal - Commercial BHCC

Date: 29/09/26

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 None directly arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

- 7.6 None directly arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

- Greater Brighton Economic Board Memorandum of Understanding

Background Documents:

- Transition & Dissolution Pathway (June 2026)
- Integration Proposal (March 2026)
- Operational Arrangements 2026/27 (March 2026)
- Transitioning Towards the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority (January 2026)

Greater Brighton Economic Board

Memorandum of Understanding

1. Background

- 1.1 This Memorandum of Understanding ('Memorandum') is made pursuant to paragraph 13 of the Heads of Terms for the Greater Brighton Economic Board (the 'Board'), and sets out the arrangements in respect of:
- (i) The Accountable Body's role in relation to the Board;
 - (ii) The Board's budget and financial accountability;
 - (iii) Financial contributions by specified Board members towards the running and administration of the Board;
 - (iv) The administrative support to be provided to the Board by the Lead Authority.
- 1.2 In this Memorandum, 'Lead Authority' and 'Accountable Body' both mean the local authority member of the Board appointed as lead authority in accordance with the Board's Heads of Terms.

2. Accountable Body Role

- 2.1. The following provisions set out the responsibilities of the Accountable Body.
- 2.2. The Accountable Body shall, in relation to any funds received by it on behalf of the Board, be responsible for the legal and financial management of those funds and for ensuring that they are spent in accordance with the objectives and criteria for those funds and the directions of the Board. Any Board decision which incurs expenditure or which could generate any ongoing liability which cannot be defrayed directly from any central government funds or other external funding sources held by the Accountable Body on behalf of the Board shall require the unanimous agreement of all members of the Board prior to its implementation by the Accountable Body.
- 2.3. The Accountable Body will undertake an administrative role which will include but is not limited to the following:
- 2.3.1. development and maintenance of administrative systems to enable the Accountable Body and the Board to fulfil their responsibilities, including setting up such accounting and other financial and management arrangements as are required;

- 2.3.2. where applicable, submitting grant claims to the Board for approval.
- 2.4. The Board and the Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board will carry out their activities so far as practicable in a manner which enables the Accountable Body –
- (i) to comply with the terms of any central government or other third party funds received in connection with the Board's functions; and
 - (ii) to ensure that the functions of the Board are carried out with regard to the principles of sound financial practice.
- 2.5. The Accountable Body shall not be obliged to act upon any decision or direction of the Board if such action is not in accordance with the proper exercise of the Accountable Body's powers or if such a decision or direction would cause the Accountable Body to be in breach of its obligations under any funding agreement. Furthermore, the Accountable Body shall not be obliged to act upon any decision or direction of the Board which is in conflict with its own constitution.
- 2.6. Subject to paragraph 1.9 of the Board's Heads of Terms, if the local authority appointed as Accountable Body is no longer to act as the Accountable Body for any reason, then upon ceasing to act the exiting Accountable Body will forthwith transfer any funds held in the Board's budget, or funds held on behalf of the Board, to the local authority that is to be the replacement Accountable Body.

3. Board Budget

- 3.1. Any increase in the financial contributions made by specified members of the Board towards the running and administration of the Board shall be agreed unanimously by the Board no later than 2 (two) calendar months before the commencement of each financial year.
- 3.2. The Board's budget will not exceed the total amount of the following:
- 3.2.1. the financial contributions made by members of the Board pursuant to paragraph 5;
 - 3.2.2. any other financial contributions from central government and other third parties; and
 - 3.2.3. any contributions from the private sector.
- 3.3. The financial contributions from Board members pursuant to paragraph 5 will be paid to the Accountable Body within 30 days of receipt of the Accountable Body's invoice.
- 3.4. The Accountable Body shall not take any action which will result in expenditure exceeding the Board's budget for the year without the prior

unanimous approval of the Board. Any expenditure in excess of the Board's budget shall be funded by additional contributions from those Board members specified in Schedule 2.

- 3.5. Subject to paragraph 3.6 below,
- (i) all expenditure and liabilities in connection with the running and administration of the Board shall be met from the Board's budget;
 - (ii) nothing in this Memorandum shall oblige the Accountable Body to spend any money or otherwise incur any liabilities whatsoever that are not fully recoverable through the Board's budget; and
 - (iii) the Accountable Body shall be indemnified by the Board members to such extent and in such proportions as set out in Schedule 1 for all and any losses relating solely to the running and administration of the Board (such losses to include costs, liabilities, claims, demands, actions, damages and expenses (including reasonable legal expenses)) properly and reasonably incurred and arising from or incurred by the Accountable Body in performing its role pursuant to this Memorandum.
- 3.6. Notwithstanding paragraph 3.5, where any losses (as defined in the preceding paragraph) are incurred as a result of a negligent act or default of or breach of this Memorandum by a Board member or an act of a Board member which was not authorised by the Board, that Board member shall indemnify the other Board members in respect of any such losses arising.
- 3.7. For the avoidance of doubt, the indemnities referred to in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.6 above shall not apply in the case of any losses that occur in relation to projects which the Board is managing in exercise of its functions.
- 3.8. Where the Board has delegated the implementation of a project to the Lead Authority pursuant to paragraph 3.3(ii) of the Board's Heads of Terms, that authority shall, in its capacity as Accountable Body, be individually liable for any losses or overspend incurred in the delivery of that project.

4. Financial Accountability

- 4.1. The Accountable Body will operate the financial systems relating to the Board in respect of obligations undertaken in accordance with paragraph 1.
- 4.2. The Board will act upon the advice of the Accountable Body's chief financial officer in respect of improvements to controls, both financial and non-financial.

- 4.3. The Accountable Body will provide financial monitoring statements to the Board in relation to the Board's budget on a quarterly basis together with a financial year end report.
- 5. Financial Contributions of Board Members to the running and administration of the Board**
- 5.1 Financial contributions payable by specified Board members to the running and administration of the Board shall be made annually from 1 April 2014. Those Board members listed in Schedule 2 shall, in respect of the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015, pay the respective contributions set out in that Schedule.
- 6. Administrative Support to be provided to the Board by the Lead Authority**
- 6.1 The Lead Authority will provide the following administrative support to the Board:
- (i) The timetabling of Board meetings and the booking of venues;
 - (ii) the co-ordination, publication and circulation of agendas (in hardcopy and electronic format as appropriate), including on the internet.
 - (iii) the taking of minutes at Board meetings and their subsequent circulation.
 - (iv) other functions to facilitate the smooth running of the Board, at the discretion of the Lead Authority.

Agreed on behalf of...

[List of each Board member signatory]

Schedule 1

Apportionment of Losses between Board Members

Board Member	Relevant Proportion of Losses
Brighton & Hove City Council	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Adur District Council	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Worthing District Council	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Lewes District Council	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Mid Sussex District Council	1/12 th (one twelfth)
University of Sussex	1/12 th (one twelfth)
University of Brighton	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Further Education Representative	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Adur & Worthing Business Partnership	1/12 th (one twelfth)
Coastal West Sussex Partnership	1/12 th (one twelfth)

Schedule 2

Financial Contributions Payable by Specified Board Members to the running and administration of the Board in respect of the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015

Board Member	Contribution
Adur	£4,964
Brighton & Hove	£26,063
Lewes	£7,801
Mid Sussex	£11,643
Worthing	£8,629
Coast to Capital LEP	£7,500
University of Sussex	£5,000
University of Brighton	£5,000
FE Colleges	£5,000
South Downs National Park	£5,000

Subject: Sussex Energy Update
Date of Meeting: 7 October 2026
Report of: Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board
Contact Officer: Name: Andy Hill
Email: Andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 On 16th July 2024 the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) approved the launch of the Sussex Energy mission.
- 1.2 This report provides a further update on Sussex Energy progress since the 24 June 2026 Board meeting and sets out the next steps in developing the mission.
- 1.3 The update also sets out how Sussex Energy is being positioned to support transition of the work into the Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA), with a focus on maintaining momentum, strengthening the project pipeline, and attracting investment into the region.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board notes the progress on Sussex Energy.
- 2.2 That the Board supports the:
 - i. Next steps needed to take Sussex Energy forward as set out in section 3.9, 3.17, 3.21, 3.27, 3.33, and 3.39.
 - ii. Progression of the 2nd phase of Solar Across Sussex running from August 2026 to December 2026, focused on stakeholder engagement and enabling actions to accelerate delivery of investable solar projects across Sussex.
 - iii. Progression of the Regional Energy Finance Strategy development commission with the work scheduled to be complete in December 2026.
- 2.3 That the Board agrees to receive a further update on Sussex Energy at the next Board meeting.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Sussex Energy aims to achieve energy neutrality across Sussex by 2040, ensuring that the region's energy demand is matched by the supply of locally generated, renewable energy. The mission seeks to enhance energy security, reduce energy bills, address climate change and support inclusive economic prosperity.
- 3.2 The Mission remains a strategic priority. As regional governance changes through devolution, it is important that the momentum, partnerships and programme infrastructure developed through Sussex Energy are maintained and positioned effectively within future SBSA arrangements.
- 3.3 Energy security, energy affordability and the economic opportunities linked to clean energy infrastructure are expected to remain important regional priorities irrespective of future political or governance arrangements. Sussex Energy is therefore increasingly being positioned not only as a net zero programme, but also as a practical platform to support investment, infrastructure resilience, local job creation and long-term economic growth across Sussex.
- 3.4 MCS-certified renewable energy installations across Sussex local authorities increased by around 27% between 2024 and 2025, compared with around 5% growth the previous year. This demonstrates increasing momentum in local energy deployment across Sussex during the period Sussex Energy has been operating and reinforces the opportunity for coordinated regional action to accelerate investment, energy resilience and supply-chain growth.

LATEST UPDATE

Summary

- 3.5 Sussex Energy has continued to make strong progress across all workstreams. Key developments include:
 - The **Sussex and Brighton Energy Briefing**, developed by net zero, energy and environment leads across the three upper-tier authorities to give the Strategic Authority a clear starting point on energy, has been reviewed with districts and boroughs, and was presented to the Sussex Energy Forum in July to strengthen regional alignment before being shared with the SBSA. It was agreed to have follow on meetings with SBSA to keep on top of this topic and continue working with SBSA on energy priorities and Sussex Energy transition.
 - A survey has been developed and distributed to **collate a regional pipeline of clean energy and energy efficiency projects**. The deadline was in September and the 17 responses are being evaluated. This will support the Energy Briefing, inform potential community energy proposals to Great British Energy, and help position Sussex as an investable region for wider public and private sector funding opportunities. Early modelling from Sussex community energy partners suggests that coordinated regional investment could unlock significant renewable energy deployment, community benefit and local economic value.

- The **Solar Across Sussex identification and prioritisation work** reached a key milestone in July, with phase 1 reaching completion. The work has focused on identifying and assessing rooftop and ground-mounted solar opportunities across Sussex. An update on progress was presented at the June Board meeting and then at the Sussex Energy Forum a few weeks later. Phase 2 of this work is currently underway and is due to be completed by the end of the year. This phase will focus on delivery enablement, which is about removing the barriers that stop multiple projects progressing, and delivering stuck solar projects.
- The **Regional Energy Finance Strategy** went out to procurement in July, and consultants appointed in August. This work will assess funding and investor opportunities and recommend how Sussex can attract and coordinate finance into energy decarbonisation. Early investor engagement suggests that the scale of investment is hundreds of millions of pounds, substantially larger than individual projects or organisations can typically attract alone, reinforcing the value of a coordinated Sussex-wide programme capable of building and maintaining a regional pipeline.
- The second **Sussex Energy Forum in-person session was held on 14 July 2026** with 100% of post-event survey respondents rating it as valuable. Bringing together 65 representatives from 45 organisations, the aim was to strengthen partner relationships, provide an update on Sussex Energy progress, and draw on the collective expertise of the network to explore practical opportunities to improve energy security, attract investment and support delivery of local energy infrastructure projects across Sussex, helping inform the emerging priorities of the Strategic Authority.
- As reported at the June Board meeting, a University of Sussex intern spent 6 weeks through June and July progressing the Sussex Energy communications work including developing a “pick and mix” content library and calendar, to help engage partners to align communications around shared Sussex Energy themes. The “*Community Energy Communications Toolkit*” was published at the start of July to support Community Energy Fortnight. A second Sussex Energy Ready Made Comms pack - “*Upgrade Your Home, Power Our Future*” is currently in development.
- A University of Brighton master’s student with Brighton & Hove City Council support has developed a **regional map dashboard showing energy decarbonisation projects across Sussex**. This was presented at the June Board meeting and subsequently published via the Greater Brighton website.

Workstream: Devolution – Transition to SBSA

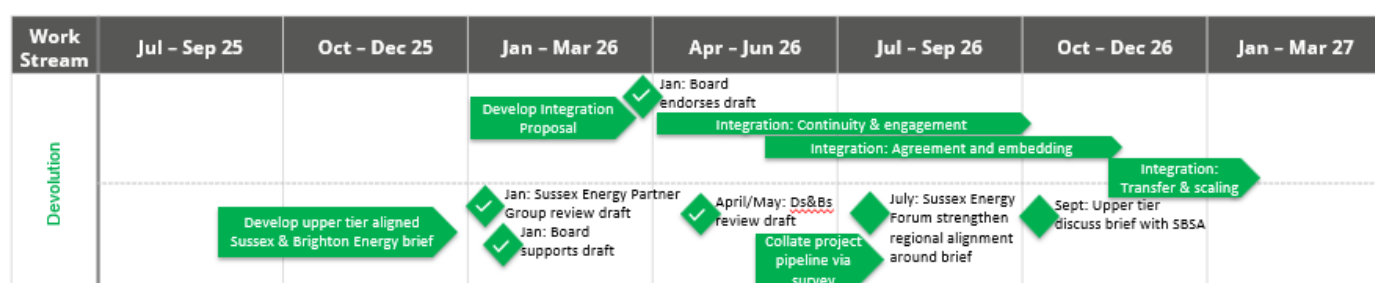
- 3.6 Engagement is ongoing with the SBSA on the Integration Proposal, including how Sussex Energy could be taken forward within future regional governance arrangements. Discussions are exploring how Sussex Energy can support wider regional priorities including energy security, investment, infrastructure resilience and local job opportunities, alongside the transition to lower-carbon energy systems.

- 3.7 Sussex Energy is being positioned as a delivery-ready, investable regional programme. It already has active partners, established governance through the Partner Group, communications channels, commissioned work and an emerging pipeline of projects. This gives the SBSA a practical platform to demonstrate early regional delivery on energy, net zero, infrastructure and economic growth. It also provides an emerging mechanism for the SBSA to help coordinate regional energy investment opportunities and develop project portfolios of a scale capable of attracting institutional investment.
- 3.8 Maintaining Sussex Energy through the transition period remains important. The work currently underway — particularly the Energy Briefing, project pipeline, Solar Across Sussex and Regional Energy Finance Strategy — is creating the evidence and investment proposition needed to help the SBSA understand the value of adopting and supporting this work.
- 3.9 Next Steps:
- ***Continue engagement with SBSA officers and leadership on the Integration Proposal, using Sussex Energy outputs to demonstrate the value of the programme.***

Workstream: Devolution – Sussex and Brighton Energy Briefing

- 3.10 The Sussex and Brighton Energy Briefing has been developed by net zero, energy and environment leads across the three upper-tier authorities. Its purpose is to give the SBSA a clear starting point on energy, building on activity already underway so the Strategic Authority can move quickly, demonstrate early progress and begin attracting investment into the region.
- 3.11 The briefing has now been reviewed with districts and boroughs and was presented to the Sussex Energy Forum in July to strengthen regional alignment before being shared with the SBSA.
- 3.12 At the July Sussex Energy Forum event, a prioritisation exercise was run to understand the room's sense on the highest priorities for the region. Those identified were accelerating and scaling what already works across Sussex, developing a Sussex-wide Local Area Energy Plan and embedding energy and climate considerations across all SBSA functions. A follow up meeting has been held between the energy/net zero/environment leads from the upper tier authorities and the SBSA Local Growth team, to make them aware of the regional energy priorities recommended to be taken forward. Subsequent meetings are being planned with SBSA to continue this discussion.
- 3.13 A survey has been developed to collate a regional pipeline of energy projects. The survey went live on 23rd July 2026, with a closing date of 4th Sept 2026. This pipeline will support the Energy Briefing by identifying projects where regional coordination, funding or investment could unlock faster delivery or greater scale.

- 3.14 The project pipeline also has wider value beyond the Energy briefing. It is helping to identify investable opportunities that could support bids to Great British Energy and attract wider institutional, philanthropic and private investment into Sussex, including place-based investment approaches. Early discussions with place-based investors indicate that aggregated regional energy programmes in the range of £300m-£500m may be attractive to institutional capital, provided a sufficiently mature and investable pipeline can be developed. This highlights the importance of Sussex Energy's work to identify, aggregate and prepare projects capable of attracting investment at a scale that individual organisations would struggle to achieve independently. All investment approaches would be reviewed in the Regional Energy Finance Strategy work.
- 3.15 For example, Sussex community energy organisations, working with Community Energy Pathways, are developing a proposal to Great British Energy seeking £33m of investment over four years into a Sussex Community Energy Revolving Fund. Early modelling suggests this could unlock around 88MW of new community-owned renewable energy generation and approximately £66m of project value, alongside wider community benefits including fuel poverty support, energy advice and local supply-chain development.
- 3.16 The pipeline work being coordinated through Sussex Energy will help identify, evidence and aggregate projects that could contribute towards opportunities of this nature, demonstrating how Sussex Energy can support not only net zero objectives but also inward investment, economic growth and community wealth-building across the region.
- 3.17 Next Steps:
- ***Collate and analyse survey submissions to identify and prioritise investable opportunities.***
 - ***Refine the briefing and maintain project pipeline. Update and share with the SBSA and continue engagement.***



Workstream: Solar Across Sussex (Commissioned Work)

- 3.18 The Solar Across Sussex identification and prioritisation work reached a key milestone, with phase 1 work reaching completion. The work has focused on identifying and assessing rooftop and ground-mounted solar opportunities across Sussex. An update on progress was presented at the June Board meeting and then at the Sussex Energy Forum a few weeks later.

3.19 The project is intended to strengthen Sussex's long-term energy security and affordability by accelerating deployment of locally generated solar energy, reducing reliance on imported fossil fuels and increasing the amount of energy produced within the region. Solar represents a significant opportunity for Sussex due to the region's high levels of annual sunshine, established community energy expertise, and growing technical capability in renewable energy deployment. Increasing local solar generation can strengthen energy security, reduce exposure to volatile energy prices, support electrification of heat and transport, and help relieve pressure on parts of the electricity grid. Expanding solar deployment also has the potential to attract investment, stimulate local supply chains and jobs, and retain more economic value within Sussex through community and public-sector investment models. For rural areas, solar can provide an important additional income stream for farms and landowners, as well as reducing their energy bills, helping support the long-term viability of agricultural businesses, while contributing to regional energy resilience.

3.20 Key challenges identified from stakeholders include;

- Knowledge/understanding of how to run a successful solar project
- Public perception
- Planning challenges
- Landlord/tenant barriers – the key barrier to rooftop solar
- Limited resource and capacity in local authorities, especially for complex projects
- Nervousness about community energy – long term legal agreements, major outlay of funds
- Preference to avoid leasing arrangements or debt
- NHS and Police restrictions to funding e.g. inability to use government funding on leased sites (NHS), maximum contract length (Police)
- Insurance concerns – risk aversion from insurance companies e.g. around fire risks from rooftop solar and batteries
- Lack of inclusion of solar land requirements in Local Plans
- Ground mount solar in competition with other land uses (housing mainly)

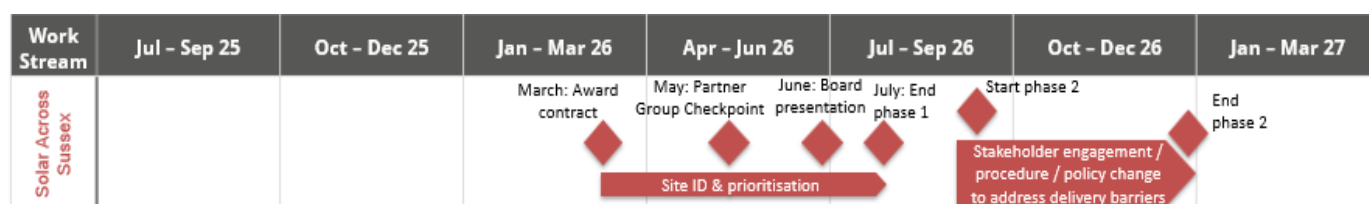
3.21 Recommendations;

- Local Authorities Planning Guide
 - What is/is not acceptable
 - What is included under Permitted Development
- Potential Policy drivers to overcome landlord/tenant gap
 - What levers are available to pull (Energy/property/planning/policy)
 - Provide evidence base and run meeting/event
 - Review potential policy areas that LA's have control over

3.22 Phase 2 of this work is currently underway and is due to be completed by the end of the year. The work is funded by the remaining Sussex Energy allocation previously agreed by the Board and will focus on two main areas. The first is around delivery enablement, which is about removing the barriers that stop multiple projects progressing (e.g. working with local authorities to improve solar planning guidance, identifying levers to overcome the issue of landlords not getting a benefit from installing solar on tenanted buildings). The second thread is around delivering stuck solar projects. The aim is to enable and assist viable sites to progress towards development and identify changes that would make future solar projects easier to implement.

3.23 Next Steps:

- ***Review consultant phase 1 findings of priority opportunities for progression.***
- ***Finalise scope and commissioning arrangements for the proposed phase 2.***
- ***Develop a communications and stakeholder engagement approach for phase 1 findings.***
- ***Align Solar Across Sussex outputs with the wider regional investment pipeline, community energy proposals and SBSA engagement.***



Workstream: Regional Energy Finance Strategy (Commissioned Work)

3.24 The Regional Energy Finance Strategy went out to procurement in July. A number of strong proposals were received, and the contract was awarded to CIPFA in partnership with Edenseven, as the evaluation panel concluded that their submission represented the strongest overall response to the specification. The panel particularly valued their demonstrated understanding of the changing funding and investment landscape, and their relevant experience in developing regional investment strategies and investment-ready portfolios. The methodology presented in their proposal demonstrated a pragmatic approach that builds on existing frameworks and guidance. The work is due to complete in December 2026.

3.25 This strategy will set out how Sussex can attract and coordinate investment into energy decarbonisation, including consideration of revolving funds, blended finance, institutional investment and community wealth-building approaches. It will review funding and investor opportunities, assess potential models, and recommend how Sussex should position itself to draw finance into the region.

3.26 As part of this work, potential investors and finance models will be reviewed to assess their match for Sussex. This will be key to moving Sussex Energy from a collaboration and planning platform into an investable regional programme capable of attracting external funding and finance.

3.27 Next Steps:

- **Complete the work by end of 2026.**
- **Use the emerging strategy to support SBSA engagement and future investment propositions.**

Work Stream	Jul - Sep 25	Oct - Dec 25	Jan - Mar 26	Apr - Jun 26	Jul - Sep 26	Oct - Dec 26	Jan - Mar 27
Regional Energy Funding & Investment Strategy					August: Award contract 	Nov: Regional Energy Funding & Investment Strategy 	
					Sept: • Sussex Energy Landscape & Funding Baseline • Regional Benchmarking & Case Study Summary	Dec: • Investor and Funding Landscape Summary • Implementation Plan	

3.28 As discussed at the last Board meeting, the Board is seeking an orderly dissolution at the end of 2026. The intention is that this work will be complete by then. If that is not the case, there would be a requirement for an organisation to administer and manage the contracts to completion for the Sussex Energy commissioned work. Delivery oversight will be provided by an agreed group from the Sussex Energy Partner Group, responsible for monitoring progress and confirming deliverable sign-off. The role would therefore be limited to contract administration, including verification of signed-off deliverables and processing payments to suppliers. Further consideration will be given to which organisation could appropriately house this role and whether any additional costs arise from this arrangement. These costs would be covered by the Board's Contingency budget.

Workstream: Network – Sussex Energy Forum

3.29 The second Sussex Forum in-person event, building on the successful inaugural event held last summer, was held on 14 July. The second Forum brought together 65 representatives from 45 organisations including local authorities, community energy organisations, other public bodies, universities, businesses, industry experts and regional partners to share progress, explore emerging opportunities and help shape the next phase of the Sussex Energy programme.

3.30 Discussions highlighted several recurring themes across the afternoon:

- **Strategic regional coordination** – Strong support for a strategic regional capability that coordinates investment, planning and delivery across the whole energy system, helping Sussex to overcome grid constraints, accelerate decarbonisation and maximise social, economic and environmental benefits.
- **Community energy** – The need to strengthen community energy through trusted local leadership, targeted funding, collaboration and streamlined delivery.

- **Solar deployment** – Practical discussions on accelerating rooftop and ground-mounted solar while ensuring communities benefit, protecting the environment and improving public understanding.
- **Investment and project delivery** – The importance of developing an investable pipeline of energy projects, which could be unlocked through access to technical expertise, legal support, increased grid capacity, increased organisational capacity, greater certainty around funding, and a better understanding of project risks.
- **Innovation and engagement** – Support for creating a Sussex Energy Innovation and Engagement Centre to bring together research, demonstration, education and collaboration in one trusted regional space.

3.31 Alongside the main session, attendees also had the opportunity to engage with exhibition stalls from key national and regional partners, including the National Energy System Operator (NESO) and Shoreham Port. These stands provided valuable insight into regional energy strategic planning and the role of the port in leading the way on the energy transition.

3.32 In the post-event survey, 100% respondents found the event “very valuable” or “valuable”.

3.33 Next Steps:

- ***Integrate outputs from workshop into Sussex Energy workstreams.***

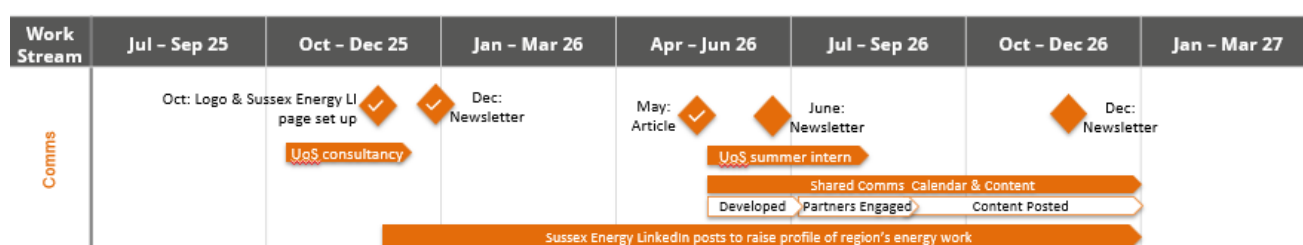
Work Stream	Jul – Sep 25	Oct – Dec 25	Jan – Mar 26	Apr – Jun 26	Jul – Sep 26	Oct – Dec 26	Jan – Mar 27
Network	 Jul: Forum event  Jul: Forum LI group set up	 Feb: Worthing Heat Network - Forum drop in			 July: Forum event	 Dec: Newsletter	
	Sussex Energy forum LI group activity						

Workstream: Communications

3.34 Sussex Energy communications activity has continued to develop. Early in the summer a Sussex Energy article was published on the Sussex Green Edit website (<https://sussexgreenedit.ghost.io/from-rooftops-to-resilience-the-mission-to-make-sussex-energy-neutral-by-2040/>) by a local journalist who has been collaborating with Sussex Energy to promote positive local energy stories. A report on the [July Sussex Energy Forum](#) was also published following the event. In August the Argus also [published a news story](#) linking the important work of Sussex Energy to the sunny and hot summer that we experienced.

3.35 As reported at the June Board meeting, a University of Sussex intern (Bruno D’Orta) spent 6 weeks through June and July progressing the Sussex Energy communications work. Bruno’s key achievement was to develop a “pick and mix” content library and calendar, building on previous student consultancy work, to help engage partners to align communications around shared Sussex Energy themes. The “[Community Energy Communications Toolkit](#)” was published at the start of July to support Community Energy Fortnight.

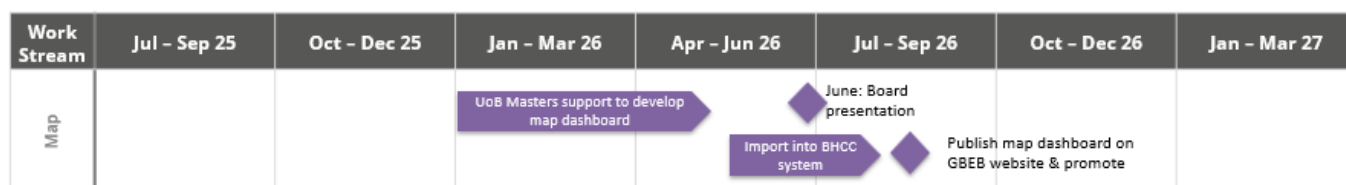
- 3.36 The toolkit contains a bank of ready-to-use, non-branded communications content that organisations can adapt and share through their own channels, including social media, websites and newsletters. It includes:
- ready to use wording, graphics, images and links to videos
 - local case studies from across Sussex
 - links to advice, campaigns and opportunities to get involved.
- 3.37 This work will help coordinate and amplify the region's voice on energy, ensuring that partners can promote local success stories, raise public awareness and strengthen Sussex's profile as a leading place for low-carbon energy activity.
- 3.38 With Natasha Bridge moving from her Greater Business Manager role in September, colleagues from across the Sussex Energy Partnership have offered their time to keep the momentum. Lucy Harbor, from East Sussex CC is taking a lead role on the Sussex Energy comms, and is leading on the development of and launch of the next Sussex Energy Ready Made Comms pack, "*Upgrade Your Home, Power Our Future*", encouraging homeowners to improve their homes through energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades that increase comfort, reduce bills and carbon, and support Sussex's transition to clean, local energy. This will be timed with the launch of the new Sussex wide programme to enable aggregated buying of solar panels by the able to pay market (programme being delivered by West Sussex CC).
- 3.39 **Next Steps:**
- ***Develop and launch the second Ready Made Comms Pack.***
 - ***Engage partner organisations to support development and launch of the second Ready Made Comms Pack ("*Upgrade Your Home, Power Our Future*").***
 - ***Continue working with local media and partners to promote positive Sussex energy stories.***



Workstream: Mapping Work – Sussex Energy Project Map

- 3.40 A University of Brighton master's student (Aadarsha Dhakal) developed an interactive map and dashboard showing energy decarbonisation projects across Sussex. This responds to a key gap identified by partners: the absence of a single, visible and up-to-date view of energy activity across the region. The map was presented at the June Board meeting and has since been published on the [Sussex Energy website](#).

- 3.41 The map will help build a visible identity for Sussex as a leading place for the energy transition. It will support investment, collaboration and public understanding by showing the scale and range of activity in plan or operational.
- 3.42 The map will also help inspire replication by allowing communities, councils and delivery organisations to see examples of projects elsewhere in Sussex. It will enable organisations to showcase their work and support partnership-building, funding applications and increased delivery.



4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 4.1 The Board does not have sufficient funding to directly deliver large-scale energy projects. However, Sussex Energy can add significant value by convening partners, building shared evidence, developing an investable project pipeline, and laying the foundations to attract finance into the region.
- 4.2 The work now underway demonstrates that Sussex Energy is not only supporting net zero objectives, but also creating the conditions for inward investment, infrastructure delivery, community wealth-building, lower energy costs and long-term economic growth. Emerging opportunities linked to Great British Energy and other investment models demonstrate the potential scale of external capital that coordinated regional working could help unlock for Sussex. Early discussions suggest that institutional investors are often seeking opportunities at a scale of hundreds of millions of pounds, highlighting the importance of coordinated regional activity to build a sufficiently large and credible pipeline.
- 4.3 An alternative option would be to pause or reduce activity while SBSA governance arrangements develop. This is not recommended. The Energy Briefing, Solar Across Sussex, Regional Energy Finance Strategy and Project Map Dashboard all require continued coordination if they are to produce maximum value and be effectively positioned for SBSA adoption.

5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Community engagement remains a core principle of Sussex Energy. The approach varies depending on the project, from awareness raising and consultation to community ownership and community-led delivery models.
- 5.2 The Sussex Energy Forum provides an important in person and online mechanism for engagement with organisations working across low-carbon energy in Sussex. The July 2026 in-person Sussex Energy Forum provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration, test emerging proposals and draw on the experience of partners to develop a stronger project pipeline.

- 5.3 The communications content library and calendar, the Sussex Energy project map, and the public Sussex Energy LinkedIn presence – now with over 400 followers – help raise public awareness, promote regional energy activity, amplify partner messaging and strengthen local support for energy decarbonisation across Sussex.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 Sussex Energy has continued to make strong progress and is increasingly moving from network-building into delivery, investment readiness and regional pipeline development. The work now underway is helping position Sussex not only as a leader in local energy collaboration, but as a credible destination for future energy investment and infrastructure funding.
- 6.2 The Board is asked to agree the recommendations 2.1-2.3, noting the progress made and supporting the next steps needed to maintain momentum, strengthen the project pipeline, and position Sussex Energy as a practical, investable regional programme for the SBSA.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 In July 2024, the Board agreed to earmark a total of £100,000 from the Greater Brighton Economic Board Operational Budget to support the Sussex Energy mission — £50,000 from the 2024/25 Operational Budget (carried forward to 2025/26) and a further £50,000 from the 2025/26 budget.
- 7.2 The funding has been approved in previous reports to be utilised to:
- commission priority work to provide specialist expertise to accelerate delivery of Sussex Energy priorities (the *Regional Funding & Investment Strategy* and *Solar Across Sussex – Solar Identification and Prioritisation*).
 - follow on Solar Across Sussex work to engage site owners, push policy change and develop projects.
- 7.3 Elsewhere on the agenda the Board are considering the dissolution in December 2026. The timeline outlined in 3.27 states that work around the Regional Energy Funding & Investment Strategy should be complete at the end December 2026, so there should be no further work if the Board dissolves in December 2026. However, should there be any slippage in the delivery, as detailed in 3.28, the Board's contingency budget may need to cover contract administration for the Sussex Energy ongoing contracts until project completion.

Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard, Head of Finance
Date: 28/09/26

Legal Implications:

- 7.4 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. In progressing the procurement activity noted within this report, Brighton and Hove Council (BHCC) as accountable body is required to comply with the relevant Public Contract Regulations and legislation as well as its Contract Standing Orders.

Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal - Commercial

Date: 29/09/26

Equalities Implications:

- 7.5 Sussex Energy aims to ensure that the benefits of the energy transition are shared fairly across the region. This includes supporting community energy models that retain value locally; promoting investment in energy efficiency measures that help reduce fuel poverty; and ensuring that smaller organisations and community groups, which often lack capacity or technical expertise, can access support through dedicated workstreams.
- 7.6 The communications working group has a wide variety of organisations to ensure the communications shared content and calendar engagement activity will be inclusive, reaching residents, businesses, and voluntary sector organisations across Sussex. Citizens Advice and Fuel Poverty Coordinators are included in the Sussex Energy Forum so that the voices of those most affected by high energy costs or poor housing are heard when shaping solutions. The Sussex Energy Useful Resources page also signposts to Citizens Advice and support services focused on tackling fuel poverty and reducing energy costs. Citizens Advice have also recently joined the Partner Group, which will help provide the group with a stronger voice to tackle the issues of consumer protection and fuel poverty.
- 7.7 By embedding these practices, Sussex Energy is helping to ensure that vulnerable households and smaller organisations are not left behind in the transition but instead are supported and empowered to participate in and benefit from a fairer, more resilient low-carbon economy.

Sustainability Implications

- 7.8 Sussex Energy supports the reduction of carbon emissions and the acceleration of the energy transition, from fossil fuels to renewables, which will help protect the environment, limit the effects of climate change, build resilience in key infrastructure and improve energy security. The programme promotes renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, and decarbonisation of heat, all of which directly contribute to the UK's legally binding carbon budgets. Co-benefits include strengthened energy security, improved air quality from reduced fossil fuel use, community wealth-building, local job creation in low-carbon industries, and the development of skills and stronger regional supply chains that will have long-term positive impacts for the Sussex economy. Sustainability principles will also be embedded in procurement processes, for example by exploring ways to prioritise local suppliers and ensure social value.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices: None

Background Documents: None