

# GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

10.00am 18 OCTOBER 2022

QEII ROOM, SHOREHAM CENTRE, BN43 5WU

## MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Mac Cafferty (Chair) Appich, Ash-Edwards, Cooper, Gunner, Jones, Nicholson and Parkin

**Business Partners:** Trevor Beattie, Dan Power, Prof. Humphris, Prof Roseneil, Dean Orgill

### PART ONE

#### 10 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 10a Declarations of substitutes

10.1 There were none.

##### 10b Declarations of interests

10.2 There were none.

##### 10c Exclusion of the press and public

10.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Board considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

10.4 **Resolved-** That the press and public not be excluded.

#### 11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

11.1 **Resolved-** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as the correct record.

#### 12 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

12.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

On behalf of the Board, I would like to welcome Sasha Roseneil and Dan Power to their first Board meeting. Sasha joined the University of Sussex as VC at the start of September and will be representing the University on this Board. Since our last meeting

the merger of GBMet and Chichester College Group has been completed. The merger sees the Group become the biggest college group in the south east region, providing high quality learning opportunities for more than 25,000 students across seven college campuses, five of which are in the City Region. Dan was appointed as the Group Chief Commercial Officer in August and will be representing the Group going forwards.

The last few weeks have demonstrated that the UK economy is in a fragile state. Rising energy, fuel and food prices has caused the cost-of-living to soar. The recent increases in borrowing rates, including mortgages only add to the financial burden faced by households across Greater Brighton. We know that in Brighton & Hove alone more than 5,000 people need help from the city's foodbanks and coops every week, including nurses, teaching assistants, care workers and others essential to the effective running of our city region.

The Greater Brighton Local Authorities are doing what they can to help residents. But the £100m cut from LA budgets over the last decade means less money to provide key services such as adult social care, parks, bin collections and libraries. Across the country, councils of all political colours are in dire straits. Talk of Local Authorities having to find further 'efficiencies' is concerning. Let us be clear, that means councils across the country will have to consider the services they provide from libraries to toilets to adult social care. This attack on local authorities needs all of us to demand for a proper local government settlement.

In the cost-of-living report before you details our plan for a deep-dive into the city region economy so that we can understand what the challenges are, particularly for businesses. Whilst we wait for that work to be completed we will work with the city's MP's to lobby for crucial business support, including:

- Suspension of Covid loan debt repayments for up to two years
- Including reduction of tourism VAT to 5%,
- introducing a dedicated business grant for SMEs
- And an Extension of business rates relief for all SME's and pubs

### **Away Day**

Last month an excellent Away Day session was held for Board Members. The purpose of the meeting was to review current priorities and the way the Board is governed, and also talk about the opportunities presented under the Levelling-Up agenda, including devolution. Key messages to come out of the session include:

- Reaffirming that our priorities; building social and environmental resilience, transitioning to net zero, are correct and valid
- That the cost-of-living crisis has rapidly emerged as an urgent priority
- Need for practical steps and next actions relating to the above – the Board needs to be able to make agile decisions and move ahead with real purpose
- The Board needs a clear narrative on what it is trying to achieve that can be transmitted
- Board to continue to explore opportunities presented by Levelling-Up and Devolution

On 6 October 2022 the new Moulsecoomb bridge was fully opened to the public. The landmark structure, which weighs the same as 15 double decker buses, is designed to help bring together the communities on either side of the Lewes Road, including locals and staff and students of the university's Moulsecoomb campus. It provides an impressive new gateway to the city, whilst at the same time providing a safe high-level crossing which is designed to keep traffic on the Lewes Road moving.

The opening of the bridge marks the fact that the Preston Barracks regeneration programme is nearing completion: a programme of regeneration that started with the opening of Plus X, which this Board championed and helped to win government funding for.

### **13 ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FOR GREATER BRIGHTON**

13.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that set out the background and some of the key challenges of the current economic downturn and proposed responses the Region may undertake.

13.2 The following matters were raised during discussion of the item:

- It was key that the Region acted as a collective lobbying voice as well as simultaneously data gathering for funding applications
- Any data gathering should include the rural economy
- Energy saving measures could be a key part in minimising cost of living increases for residents
- The cost-of-living crisis was a national issue and there was currently an absence of national measures of mitigation
- A Board action plan was required to ensure Members were aware of what measures could be taken to help the Region.
- The Board could hold an urgent meeting to discuss any actions of plans

#### **13.3 Resolved-**

- 1) That the Board acknowledges the need for a deep-dive into the Greater Brighton economy, so as to understand the sectors and geographic areas that are likely to be most impacted.
- 2) That the Board agrees that due to the pressing need to act, the report will be circulated when ready even if this is outside of the usual Board cycle.
- 3) That the Board supports the #BusinessSOS campaign submitted by the 300 BIDS asking Government for an urgent package of support for businesses.

### **14 GREATER BRIGHTON RETROFIT TASKFORCE**

14.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that provided the Greater Brighton Economic Board with a further update and making recommendations to enable City Region housing to reach zero-carbon by 2030.

14.2 The following matters were raised during discussion of the item:

- That discussions should be held with BEIS and Housing ministers as the projects would deliver savings but would need additional funding
- That the public sector could lead the way as it had the scale and volume to drive down supply prices

- That training was required for the sector to deliver and install new technology and this was not currently happening. Both skills and workforce capacity needed significant upscaling

#### 14.3 Resolved-

- 1) That the Board notes the research has proven the original concept that Council budgets taken together with Government and Supply Chain collaboration is the optimal way to deliver a medium to long term plan for zero carbon council homes, and that there is a trade-off between carbon, capital spend, and cost to occupier.
- 2) That the Board given the context of the cost-of-living crisis agrees that a programme to target fuel costs at the same time as developing the supply chain forms the early part of a programme roll out.
- 3) To Board agrees to further develop the zero-carbon business case with a view to submit a joint proposal to Government/BEIS to trial an approach in the Sussex area.
- 4) That the Board agrees with the aim to submit a joint bid for grants to trial the collaborative working of the Board. This will lay the foundation and provide the potential for rapid future expansion. The bid will be an aggregated pipeline with individual authority control.
- 5) That the Board agrees to explore the best procurement option for delivering the zero-carbon works, and notes that Clear Futures (a joint venture between Lewes and Eastbourne Councils, AECOM and Robertson Construction) could be one such option to consider.

### 15 GREATER BRIGHTON 10 PLEDGES ANNUAL UPDATE

11.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that presented the second annual update of the Greater Brighton 10 Pledges on the Environment.

11.2 The following matters were raised during discussion of the item:

- Issues with local water companies persisted and the Greater Brighton region should request that all fines issued go to local authorities and regional bodies not central government
- That the pledges should have associated targets

#### 11.3 Resolved-

- 1) That the Board notes the progress demonstrated on the 10 Pledges on the Environment since October 2021.
- 2) That the Board supports the actions needed to take the Pledges forward in the next year to October 2023.
- 3) That the Board agrees that the GB10 pledges work and monitoring progress should be included in the Transition to Net Zero Action plan (agreed at the July 2022 meeting).

16 GREATER BRIGHTON INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

**Resolved-** That the Board note the report.

The meeting concluded at 12.15pm

