

Subject:	Sussex Chamber of Commerce – Invitation to join the Greater Brighton Economic Board		
Date of Meeting:	9 July 2025		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Hill	Tel: 01273 291873
	Email:	Andy.Hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

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

- 1.1 The Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) was established in 2014 as part of the Greater Brighton City Region Deal with Government.
- 1.2 The Board comprises the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (“GBEJC”), on which the local authorities are represented; and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership (“GBBP”), on which the business, university and further education sectors, NHS and South Downs National Park Authority are represented. Meetings of the Board compromise concurrent meetings of GBEJC and GBBP.
- 1.3 Sussex Chamber of Commerce is the accredited voice of business across Sussex. Established in 1945, the Chamber has built an 80-year legacy of supporting local enterprises, from ambitious startups to long-standing manufacturers, by offering an integrated suite of services designed to help businesses grow, trade internationally, and influence policy. As a member of the British Chambers of Commerce network, Sussex Chamber delivers expert advice on importing and exporting—handling everything from Certificates of Origin and EUR.1 movement certificates to ATA Carnets—while also providing accredited training in customs procedures and regulatory compliance. Through its comprehensive programme of networking events, sector-specific forums, and the widely circulated Business Edge magazine, Sussex Chamber fosters collaboration between SMEs, corporates, academia, and government. Moreover, it acts as a powerful advocate for the region’s business community, liaising directly with decision-makers in Westminster, Brussels, and beyond to ensure the concerns and opportunities of Sussex firms are heard at the highest levels. The Chamber has expressed an interest in becoming a formal member of the Board, which would bolster the pan-Sussex geographical reach of the Board and the connection to local businesses.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board agrees to formally invite the Sussex Chamber of Commerce to become a constituent member of the Board, joining the GBBP subject to both their agreement and formal ratification from the Board’s member organisations.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 The following bodies are the current members of the Board:

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

3.2 The GBEJC comprises the bodies specified in paragraphs 3.1(i) to (vii); and GBBP comprises the bodies specified in paragraphs 3.1(viii) to (xiv).

3.3 Board membership has been extended three times since the Board's inception; Crawley Borough Council and Arun District Council joined the GBEJC in February 2018 and in October 2019 respectively. NHS Sussex ICB joined the GBBP in January 2025.

3.4 The Sussex Chamber of Commerce attended the Board meeting as observers on 2 April 2025.

3.5 When considering the request by Crawley to join the Board in 2018, it was agreed that the Board should adopt a fair and consistent approach to organisations that express an interest in joining, and for proposed new members consideration would need to be given to the following five questions;

- i. Does the organisation buy into the Board's agreed vision and priorities?
- ii. Do they share economic characteristics and represent the Greater Brighton functional economic area?
- iii. Do they add capacity to help the Board deliver on its agreed vision and priorities?
- iv. Will they add to the Board's reputation, in terms of legitimacy, standing and reach?
- v. Are they going to actively participate and commit resource to supporting the Board and deliver the work programme?

This methodology was also employed with regards the request to join by Arun District Council in 2019 and NHS Sussex ICB in 2025.

3.7 The Board is asked to extend its membership; formally inviting the Sussex Chamber of Commerce to become a constituent member of the GBBP. This is subject to the approval of Sussex Chamber of Commerce. It would also trigger a

variance in the Board's Heads of Terms (see Appendix 1) that will require the formal ratification of all Joint Committee members.

3.8 Some points for consideration are summarised below;

Does the organisation buy into the Board's agreed vision and priorities?

3.8.1 Sussex Chamber of Commerce has a vision "to support and drive sustainable economic growth and champion key issues in Sussex".

The priorities are to allow businesses to:

- Grow – through business support, discounted services and through networking forums and events;
- Develop skills – to increase skills and knowledge, through training courses and through the Local Skills Improvement Plan work to reduce skills gaps challenges, working with providers and education to address gaps;
- Discover global markets – to unearth export and import prospects through its international trade services to allow businesses to export and import;
- Influence business – through its campaigns by having a voice.

3.8.2 The Sussex Chamber's priorities are:

- Global Britain – opening the door to expansion and exports;
- People and Work – attracting and retaining people with the right skills and addressing skills gaps;
- Local Economy of the Future – making Sussex the best place to build and grow a business;
- Green Innovation – driving sustainability and the climate agenda for a better future;
- Digital Revolution – better connectivity, more efficient process and skilled employees.

Its vision and priorities are aligned with the Board's focus on economic development, the environment, climate change and infrastructure.

Do they share economic characteristics and represent the Greater Brighton functional economic area?

3.8.3 Sussex is a vibrant and diverse economy. Businesses have no borders, and many businesses work with local, national and global supply chains. Having two airports, two international seaports and three Universities in Sussex, Sussex Chamber works across the county (as well as with its counterparts across the UK) to ensure businesses are aware of opportunities to drive sustainable, inclusive economic growth.

Will they add to the Board's reputation, in terms of legitimacy, standing and reach?

3.8.4 Sussex Chamber of Commerce covers the entirety of Sussex. As an Accredited Chamber of Commerce, and part of the British Chamber network, which sits at the heart of 51 county Chambers in the UK, with the British Chambers represents the business voice in government. Sussex Chamber also has links with over 75 global British Chambers around the world, providing businesses with essential links locally, regionally and internationally.

3.8.5 Sussex Chamber celebrates its 80th year in July 2025, having supported businesses since 1945. Sussex Chamber is also an Accredited Chamber which undergoes a strict governance review by the British Chambers. Sussex Chamber also holds licences in export documentation and customs declarations, to ensure businesses have the right paperwork and can move their goods and shipments around the world.

Are they going to actively participate and commit resource to supporting the Board and deliver the work programme?

3.8.6 Sussex Chamber will actively participate and commit resource to supporting the Board deliver its work programme, as this will help support and drive sustainable economic growth.

Governance

3.8.7 Sussex Chamber of Commerce attended the April Board meeting and a Chamber Board member is part of the Sussex Energy Partner Group to provide the business/skills voice. They are attending Sussex Energy meetings and playing an active role, so are already participating in and adding value to the Board's work. The Chamber have nominated a prospective representative to sit on the Board as well as a deputy and have also nominated a member of the Team to sit on the Greater Brighton Programme Board.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

4.1 The alternative would be for the membership to remain as it is currently, but for the reasons outlined in 3.8.1-3.8.7, the recommendation is that Sussex Chamber of Commerce should be formally invited to join the Board.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

5.1 The governance committees of constituent Board members will be consulted as part of the changes to Heads of Terms.

6 CONCLUSION

6.1 The Board is asked to note the benefits of Sussex Chamber of Commerce joining the Board and accordingly approve the extension in membership; formally inviting the Chamber to become a constituent member of the Business Partnership. Changing the Board's membership will trigger a variance in the Board's Heads of Terms that will require the formal ratification of all Joint Committee members.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 In joining the Greater Brighton Economic Board, Sussex Chamber of Commerce would be required to make a budgetary contribution towards operational costs in line with other Business Partners as agreed as part of the Operational Arrangements 2025/26 at the board meeting on 2 April 2025.

Finance Officer Consulted: Haley Woollard, Head of Corporate Finance

Date: 26/06/25

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 The legal implications in relation to the recommendations are contained within the body of this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal (Commercial) BHCC

Date: 26/06/2025

Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 To follow.

Sustainability Implications

- 7.4 To follow.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

Greater Brighton Economic Board Heads of Terms

