

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Cabinet

## Agenda Item 22

**Subject:** Seafront Development Board

**Date of meeting:** Thursday, 17 July 2025

**Report of:** Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration

**Lead Officer:** Alison McManamon, Corporate Director, City Operations

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**Wards affected:** All

**Key Decision:** No

**For general release**

### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 This report seeks approval to establish a Seafront Development Board 'the Board' that will advise on the strategic development, commercial future regeneration and sustainable management of Brighton & Hove's iconic seafront, ensuring it is a vibrant, playful, accessible, and economically thriving destination for residents, visitors and businesses.
- 1.2 The Seafront Development Board aligns with the Council Plan 2023-2027, particularly Outcome 1 *A city to be proud of*, which sets out the commitment to '*Protect and manage Brighton & Hove's unique coastal environment and invest in the seafront*'. It also aligns with many other areas of the Plan including Outcome 3, '*A healthy city where people thrive*'.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees to establish a Seafront Development Board and the Terms of Reference in Appendix 1.
- 2.2 Cabinet agrees to the appointment of Rt Hon Lord Bassam as Chair and to the appointment of the Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration as Vice Chair of the Board.
- 2.3 Cabinet note progress with the recruitment process for Board members and delegates authority to the Director for Place, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Finance & City Regeneration and Chair of the Board, to finalise membership and operational arrangements.

### 3. Context and background information

- 3.1 Brighton & Hove's seafront is a defining heritage feature of the city, vital to its identity, economy, quality of life and global recognition. Recent years have seen significant investment in areas such as Black Rock, Madeira Terrace, and Hove Beach Park ensuring the seafront is a successful and vibrant place. There remain areas of the seafront requiring further regeneration to reach their full potential.
- 3.2 The city's 13km of the seafront is a commercial environment and there is a need for commercial leadership from the new Board to look at how the seafront can be developed as a place to support and grow the local economy whilst making it even more attractive and accessible to residents and visitors. As the city's leading destination, attracting over 12million visitors a year, there is an opportunity to consider new creative interventions on the seafront to identify new attractions and improve the offer to visitors. This will help ensure that the city continues to be vibrant, inclusive and successful.
- 3.3 It is proposed to establish a new Seafront Development Board, chaired by The Rt Hon Lord Bassam of Brighton, leveraging his extensive experience in local government and national regeneration policy. The Board will not have decision making powers in relation to Council functions and responsibilities, but will advise the Council, through reporting to Cabinet, on the matters within its Terms of Reference. The Board will work closely with the council, key stakeholders, residents and local businesses. The Board will be supported by a range of council officers and teams, taking a 'One Council' approach to its work.
- 3.4 The Board remit includes:
- **Vision for the Seafront:** Develop a long-term place vision for the future of Brighton & Hove's seafront to propose for adoption by Cabinet.
  - **Strategic Oversight:** Ensure seafront development maximises economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits and is aligned with local and national policies, plans and strategies. Oversee and inform development of new strategies and plans for the development of the seafront.
  - **Leading Placemaking:** Ensure a placemaking approach is taken to development of the seafront, considering urban design principles and improvements to the public realm.
  - **Infrastructure Improvement:** Oversee and monitor regeneration, maintenance and transport programmes & projects.
  - **Commercial Activation:** encourage private sector led initiatives to modernise and develop the seafront, whilst preserving and restoring heritage assets.
  - **Stakeholder Engagement:** Take a collaborative approach to the Board's work, engaging with key stakeholders including businesses, public bodies, the voluntary sector and residents.
  - **Inclusivity and Health & wellbeing:** Ensuring the seafront continues and enhances its role in supporting both mental and physical health and

wellbeing. Supporting development that is accessible and inclusive for all.

- **Zero Carbon ambition:** Promote environmentally sustainable development and improvements to the seafront.
- **Ambassadors for the Seafront:** Promote and act as positive advocates for the seafront and related development projects, including campaigns and promotional activities

- 3.4 The Board will act as an advisory and oversight body, working closely with the council, local businesses, community groups, and regional partners. Its formation aligns with the Council's corporate priorities for inclusive economic growth, sustainable development, and community wellbeing.
- 3.5 Draft Terms of Reference for the Board are attached in Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The Board's work is likely to include the following areas in its initial meetings:
- Vision for the seafront
  - Updates on key projects
  - Options for the future of Black Rock
  - Next phases of Madeira Terrace restoration
  - Seafront maintenance including railings and shelters

### **Recruitment of Board members**

- 3.7 The selection process for Seafront Board members is designed to ensure that the board is composed of individuals who possess the necessary skills, experience, and commitment to effectively oversee and guide proposals to the Council regarding the development of the seafront area'. The Board will aim to appoint members from a range of backgrounds in recognition of the diversity of the city it serves.
- 3.8 The role of Board members will include considering the areas and infrastructure around the seafront, making connections with businesses and other developments and learn from other seafront towns and cities. Becoming a board member will involve attending up to four meetings per year, reading relevant background materials and attending other events such as site visits and openings as well as actively connecting, partnering and promoting the vision and growth through local, national and international networks.
- 3.9 The first step in the selection process was to identify potential candidates who have the qualifications and experience relevant to the responsibilities of a Seafront Board member. This was achieved through:
- Recommendations from current councillors, officers, stakeholders, and community leaders.
  - Public announcements and press releases inviting applications from interested individuals.

- Reviewing the profiles of individuals who have previously expressed interest in similar roles.
- 3.10 This process resulted in 91 applications from candidates with a wide range of backgrounds and experience. These applications are currently being reviewed and shortlisted. The shortlisted candidates will go through a further process with applicants reviewed to ensure the final Board membership contains a broad range of complementary skills and experiences. The demographics of shortlisted applicants will also be compared with the wider community and steps taken to ensure the panel is broadly representative of the wider community where possible. Proactive steps, including reaching out to groups, individuals and organisations will be taken to ensure that the Board has a diversity in its membership.
- 3.11 The high number of applicants present an opportunity to engage a wider selection of candidates in the Board's work in addition to those appointed as Board members, for example advising on a particular specialist area such as marketing, tourism or urban design. This could be achieved through specific workshops, attendance at relevant meetings or stakeholder panels.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 Option 1: Do Nothing. Continuing without a dedicated board risks a lack of strategic leadership, missed investment opportunities, and limited stakeholder engagement. This could slow progress on key regeneration projects and reduce the city's ability to attract external funding.
- 4.2 Option 2: Establish the Seafront Development Board (Recommended). A dedicated board brings focus, expertise, and credibility. It enables the council to harness local passion, business acumen, and national experience to deliver a seafront that meets the needs of all stakeholders.
- 4.3 Option 3: Council-led Approach. A purely council-led approach may lack the breadth of expertise and stakeholder buy-in required for success. The scale of ambition and investment needed makes partnership working essential.

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The Board will work closely with seafront business, other organisations and stakeholders, as well as visitors and residents. This will build on the wide range of existing consultation and engagement that has been extensively undertaken in relation to seafront policies, initiatives and projects (e.g. Hove Beach Park, the King Alfred Centre and Madeira Terraces).

#### **6. Financial implications**

- 6.1 The creation of the board has no direct financial implications for the council, with any administrative resources expected to be met from within existing resources. However, for any investment proposals resulting from the work of the board the council's financial regulations and procedures will need to be

followed, the board does not have the powers to approve budgets and spend on behalf of the council.

- 6.2 Business cases should be submitted outlining the relevant capital and revenue implications associated with them and where required seek cabinet approval to proceed.

Name of finance officer consulted: Craig Garoghan      Date consulted 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2025

## **7. Legal implications**

- 7.1 The establishment of the proposed Board is an Executive function and the appointment of elected Members to other bodies is a Cabinet function, therefore this report is appropriate for decision by Cabinet. As set out in the report, the Board does not have any delegated decision making powers and is established as an Advisory Board to the Council.

Name of lawyer consulted: Elizabeth Culbert      Date consulted: 13<sup>th</sup> June 2025

## **8. Risk implications**

- 8.1 The Board will help monitor and mitigate key risks in relation to the city's seafront.

## **9. Equalities implications**

- 9.1 The council will take steps to understand the demographic profile of Board members and how it compares to the wider city. Steps will be taken to ensure that the board has representatives from a range of backgrounds and reflects the diversity of background and lived experience in the city.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

- 10.1 Ensuring that improvements and developments on the seafront are sustainable and in-line with the council's carbon reduction commitments will form a key element of the Board's work.

## **11. Health and Wellbeing Implications:**

- 11.1 The seafront is an important location for leisure, recreation and sporting activities and plays a key role in the health and wellbeing of the city's residents and visitors.

## **Other Implications**

## **12. Procurement implications**

12.1 Council Standing Orders and public procurement regulations should be followed for any procurement activities associated with the work of the Board.

12.2 Steps should be taken to ensure any potential conflicts of interest between Board members and procurement activities are declared and managed.

**13. Crime & disorder implications:**

13.1 The seafront is a place where a wide range of activities take place, however it can also be a place where crime and anti-social behavior occurs. Projects underway and further development of the seafront should improve the public realm and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behavior.

**14. Conclusion**

14.1 The creation of the Seafront Development Board will provide an opportunity to provide a renewed focus on the iconic seafront and facilitate significant development and improvement for this key area of the city.

**Appendices**

1. Draft Terms of Reference