

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 39

Subject: Greater Brighton Economic Board – Admission of New Member to the Board

Date of meeting: 25 September 2025

Report of: Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Sussex Chamber of Commerce wrote to the Chair of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) formally requesting to join the Board.
- 1.2 At the Greater Brighton Economic Board meeting on 9 July 2025, a decision was agreed that the Sussex Chamber of Commerce should become a constituent member of the Board, joining the Greater Brighton Business Partnership.
- 1.3 The main aim of the Greater Brighton Economic Board is for members to work together, and with external stakeholders, to promote and create the conditions for sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity, whilst at the same time transitioning the region towards net zero. This closely aligns with the Council Plan, particularly Outcome 1 (A city to be proud of). The Greater Brighton Economic Board plays a key role in growing a diverse and sustainable regional economy and the Board’s work includes identifying and capitalising on the economic opportunities that devolution will bring. Partnership working is a vital aspect of the Board’s success.
- 1.4 This report seeks approval from Cabinet to enable the Sussex Chamber of Commerce to become a member of the Greater Brighton Economic Board. Each local authority member of the Joint Committee is seeking equivalent approvals from their relevant decision-making bodies.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees that the Sussex Chamber of Commerce joins the Greater Brighton Economic Board as a member of the Business Partnership.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that these changes to the membership and the consequent changes to the Heads of Terms are dependent on the decision of all the local authorities represented in the Joint Committee agreeing that the new member be appointed.

- 2.3 That Cabinet agrees to amend the Board's Heads of Terms to include Sussex Chamber of Commerce as a member of the Board and delegates the Director of Governance and Law to amend the Council's constitution to reflect these amendments once they have been formally approved by all the constituent authorities.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 The Greater Brighton Economic Board was founded in April 2014 as part of the Greater Brighton City Region's City Deal with Government.

- 3.2 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, South Downs National Park Authority and NHS are represented. Meetings of the Board comprise concurrent meetings of the GBEJC and GBBP.

- 3.3 The following bodies are 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 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

- 3.4 GBEJC comprises the bodies specified in paragraphs 3.3(i) to (vii); and GBBP comprises the bodies specified in paragraphs 3.3 (viii) to (xiv) and subject the approval of the constituent members, Sussex Chamber of Commerce will be added to the GBBP.

- 3.5 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 October 2019 respectively. NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board joined the GBBP in January 2025.

- 3.6 To ensure a consistent approach to new members, the Board agreed to give consideration 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?
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 The Chamber has expressed an interest in becoming a formal member of the Board, which is significant as the region moves towards establishing a Strategic Mayoral Authority. It would also forge a stronger connection between the Board and the local business community.

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

- 3.9 Sussex Chamber of Commerce has a vision “to support and drive sustainable economic growth and champion key issues in Sussex”.
- 3.10 As the largest business membership organisation 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.
- 3.11 The Sussex Chamber's priorities are:
- Global Britain – open 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 processes and skilled employees.

3.12 Its vision and priorities are aligned with the Board, having a focus on economic development, the environment, climate change and infrastructure.

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

3.13 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?

3.14 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, it helps represent the business voice in government. Sussex Chamber also has links with over 75 global British Chambers, providing businesses with essential links locally, regionally and internationally.

3.15 Sussex Chamber celebrated 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?

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

Governance

3.17 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 to sit on the Greater Brighton Programme Board.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 The only alternative option is for the Board's membership to remain as it is currently. For the reasons outlined in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.17, the Greater Brighton Economic Board took the decision to extend membership to the Sussex Chamber of Commerce.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The Board was consulted on the membership request from the Sussex Chamber of Commerce and took the decision to extend the membership. The governance committees of constituent Board members are being consulted given the required change to the Heads of Terms.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this information report.

Name of finance officer consulted: Ishemupenyu Chagonda
Date consulted (30/07/25):

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The GBEJC which forms part of the Board is a joint committee established pursuant to Section 102(1)(b) of the Local Government Act 1972. Cabinet has authority to approve the extension of membership of the Board together with the amendment to the Heads of Terms (subject to approval from the constituent members of the Board) to include Sussex Chamber of Commerce as a GBBP member under Part 2E Section C paragraph 1.5(k) of the Constitution.

Name of lawyer consulted: Siobhan Fry
Date consulted (31/07/25):

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 As set out in this paper, the Board has agreed to invite the Sussex Chamber of Commerce to take up membership of the GBBP. Sussex Chamber is the accredited voice of business in Sussex and was established 80 years ago. As such it is recognised that Sussex Chamber will add an important representative business voice to the Board.
- 8.2 In terms of managing risk, the greatest issue is that not all of the constituent authorities agree to amend the Heads of Terms (as set out in this report's recommendations). As the matter has already been considered and agreed at the Greater Brighton Economic Board, it is considered that this risk has been suitably mitigated.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 Extending the Board's membership to the Sussex Chamber of Commerce will broaden the diversity and focus of the organisations represented, as the Board is comprised largely from public sector bodies. The Sussex Chamber of Commerce works with all businesses, regardless of sector or ownership and recognises the importance and value of Sussex's diverse economic base. Ensuring all business voices are represented is an important part of the Sussex Chamber of Commerce joining the Board.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 In July 2024 the Board launched Sussex Energy, a mission to achieve energy neutrality in Greater Brighton and wider Sussex area by 2040. The mission will help Board members and wider stakeholders transition towards green energy and realise their net zero ambitions. The Sussex Chamber of Commerce also has ambitious targets linked to net zero and have already been involved in shaping the Sussex Energy work. As a membership organisation, the Chamber will be able to be a strong advocate for the work of Sussex Energy through its extensive business network.

11. Conclusion

- 11.1 Cabinet is asked to note the benefits afforded by the Sussex Chamber of Commerce joining the Board, and accordingly approve the extension in membership by agreeing the change to the Board's Heads of Terms.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

1. Heads of Terms for the Greater Brighton Economic Board