

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 51

Report title: Get Sussex Working Plan

Date of meeting: Cabinet 16th October

Report of: Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Youth Services

Contact Officer: Corporate Director Families Children & Wellbeing

Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The Get Sussex Working Plan (GSWP or the 'Plan') is a pan Sussex response to the UK Government's Get Britain Working white paper. It aims to reduce economic inactivity and increase long-term employment to 80% by 2035.
- 1.2 Endorsement of the GSWP is sought as a strategic framework for employment and skills integration across Sussex.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Cabinet formally approves the Get Sussex Working Plan
- 2.2 That Cabinet approves continued participation in the already established and informally constituted Partnership Group to oversee delivery of the Plan until such time as new governance structures may be set up, should a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) be established.

3. Context and background information

- 3.1 In November 2024 the Government issued a Get Britain Working White Paper. Its purpose is to create a whole systems approach to addressing ill health, reduce economic inactivity and unemployment in recognition of the interconnectivity between health and employment.
- 3.2 As Sussex was on Devolution Priority Programme the Department for Work & Pensions requested we develop a pan Sussex Get Sussex Working Plan to foster economic growth through a healthier, more inclusive workforce.

- 3.3 Local Get Britain Working Plans are intended to tackle six key issues identified in the Get Britain Working White Paper:
- too many people are excluded from the labour market – especially those with health conditions, caring responsibilities or lower skill levels
 - too many young people leave school without essential skills or access to high-quality further learning, an apprenticeship or support to work so that they can thrive at the start of their career
 - too many people are stuck in insecure, poor quality and often low-paying work, which contributes to a weaker economy and affects their health and wellbeing
 - too many women who care for their families still experience challenges staying in and progressing in work
 - too many employers cannot fill their vacancies due to labour and skills shortages, holding back economic growth, driving up reliance on overseas labour, and undermining living standards
 - there is too great a disparity in labour market outcomes between different places and for different groups of people
- 3.4 The local response to the Get Britain Working Plan is the Get Sussex Working Plan (GSWP). The GSWP is a strategic, over-arching document which is live and evolving. It will be delivered and reviewed over the coming decade. The GSWP has been developed and will be delivered in a period of major change for skills and employment, including the move under the new Mayoral Combined County Authority. It has been developed collaboratively between Brighton & Hove City Council, East Sussex, and West Sussex County Councils in alignment with the Devolution Priority Programme, at the request of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 3.5 The GSWP was led by an officer working group with representation from each local authority. A pan Sussex Partnership Group was also established to steer the development of the plan. The Partnership Group included the DWP, Sussex Chamber of Commerce (the Employer Representative Board for the Local Skills Improvement Plan (LSIP), and Public Health. As per DWP requirements, the GSWP has been formally endorsed by the DWP Regional Office and the Integrated Care Board.
- 3.6 The GSWP is consistent with Our Council Plan – A Better Brighton and Hove for all – a healthy city where people thrive.
- 3.7 The GSWP (Appendix 2) is informed by data, evidence and stakeholder engagement. It sets out an over-arching vision, and six ambitions. It also sets out arrangements for governance, review and monitoring, and an

implementation plan comprising of pan-Sussex and Brighton and Hove actions.

- 3.8 To inform the GSWP, data mapping, policy analysis (Appendix 3) and stakeholder consultation was commissioned. (Appendix 4) The consultation included engagement with over 200 stakeholders, including employers, VCSE, education providers, NHS, DWP, adults and young people.

- 3.9 The GSWP sets out a vision for Sussex and six ambitions.
Vision

‘A dynamic Sussex workforce, enabled by integrated support across employment, health, post – 16 education and skills. All residents are empowered to aspire, to develop the skills they need now and for the future; and to access meaningful employment that improves lives, addresses inequalities, and enables businesses to thrive’.

Ambitions

1. Build a skills and employment infrastructure
 2. Address needs of diverse resident groups
 3. Develop inclusive workforce strategies with employers
 4. Respond to place-based needs
 5. Embed employment and skills in decision-making
 6. Upskill the workforce to boost growth
- 3.10 The Implementation Plan (Appendix 5) identifies short and where possible medium, and long-term actions to support each ambition and 7 key performance indicators to measure progress.

Key Performance Indicators

KPI 1: Employment rate (16–64)

KPI 2: NEET rate (16–17) x

KPI 3: Economically inactive over-50s (excluding students

KPI 4: Population holding Level 3 qualifications (19+)

KPI 5: Integrated referral processes between health and employment services (pilot)

KPI 6: Coordinated approach to employer support and engagement

KPI 7: Facilitate and enable anchor institutions to actively contribute to inclusive economic growth and inclusive employment

- 3.11 It is proposed that the Get Sussex Working Partnership Group will continue to oversee the implementation, monitoring, and ongoing evolution of the GSWP, liaising with local partnerships, until such time as new governance structures may be set up, should a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) be established..

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 In alignment with the Devolution Priority Programme in preparation for the Mayoral Combined County Authority, there was an expectation that a pan

Sussex plan would be developed. Therefore, Brighton and Hove needed to be a partner in the development of the GSWP plan, and it would not be possible to deliver on the plan in an alternative model.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 The GSWP was co- created by BHCC, East and West Sussex County Councils, led within the council by our Skills and Employment Team. Extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted across Sussex.
- 5.2 In Brighton and Hove, 4 stakeholder group meetings were held as part of the consultation prior to the plan being developed, with representatives from across the council, further education and independent training providers, the voluntary sector and employability service providers.
- 5.3 One to one meetings were held with Hangleton and Knoll Project and Brighton Chambers of Commerce. A survey was conducted through the Your Voice platform. This included feedback from members of the Growth Board. We also engaged with young people, facilitated by our Youth Employment Team and adults facilitated by a local training provider.
- 5.4 Once drafted the GSWP was shared with stakeholders, CLT and the lead member for Families, Children and Wellbeing and further feedback was obtained via the Your Voice Portal. Across Brighton and Hove and Sussex the overwhelming response was incredibly positive. Feedback was considered and incorporated into the Plan. A summary of all stakeholders involved in contributing to the plan is provided in Appendix 6.
- 5.5 A Get Sussex Working Partnership Group was established in line with DWP guidance on membership, to oversee the development and endorsement of the Plan. The Group was made up of representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions, Employer Representative Body for the Local Skills Improvement Plan Sussex Chamber of Commerce, Public Health representatives from the three public health authorities, and West Sussex County Council, East Sussex County Council and Brighton & Hove City Council economy and skills officers. The guidance also stated the Integrated Care Board (ICB) should be a member. The meeting was Chaired on rotation by each local authority.
- 5.6 Due to significant change, the ICB involvement has been via the Sussex Workwell Board, Skills East Sussex, and the West Sussex Economic Growth Board rather than direct membership of the Partnership Group. Both the ICB and DWP have endorsed the Plan.
- 5.7 The Plan will be submitted to the DWP by 30th September as required.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The GSWP has been developed utilising funding from the DWP to East and West Sussex County Council as Accountable Bodies. No additional funding has been made available for its implementation. Actions focus on delivering

programmes with known funding (e.g. Connect to Work) or on activities where there is no cost (e.g. sharing best practice in employer engagement). Where aspirational activities for the longer term are included, these are recorded as 'subject to funding' in the Implementation Plan, with no obligation to deliver them unless funds are forthcoming. There is no financial risk to the Council however, the impact of the plan is contingent on securing new and additional long-term funding streams.

Name of finance officer consulted: Hannah Birch
Date consulted (30/09/25):

7. Legal implications

- 7.1 The GSWP has been developed in accordance with Guidance published by the Department for Work and Pensions: [Guidance for Developing local Get Britain Working plans \(England\) - GOV.UK](#) This Guidance stipulates that upper tier local authorities are accountable for leading the development and submission of the Local Get Britain Working Plan, where (as here) there is no Mayoral Combined Authority currently in place. It has been agreed with the DWP that East Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council and West Sussex County Council will ensure endorsement of the Plan and action plan through local advisory arrangements that will include representation from the voluntary, community, and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, education and skills providers, employer and business representative organisations and other relevant local stakeholders.

No grant agreement has been signed by this Council with the DWP and no legal implications have been identified as being associated with the GSWP, which is mandated by the DWP. Cabinet is the correct body to approve the recommendations.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson Date consulted 07/10/2025

8. Risk implications

- 8.1 The rollout and impact of the Mayoral Combined County Authority is not yet fully known or worked through. However, this work will feed through into the Devolution Board and any risks will be flagged, monitored and addressed through that piece of work.

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 This work identifies the numerous delivery strands across Sussex to support those with long term economic inactivity into work, through one combined plan. The implementation of the combined plan may impact on future delivery (subject to national policy and funding). If service developments change, new EIA's will be completed to ensure equality implications are addressed. The plan at present does not impact on delivery service.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 The plan is to reduce economic inactivity and support people into work which should have positive social and economic impacts.

11. Other Implications

Public health implications:

- 11.1 Good work improves health and wellbeing and protects against social exclusion.

12. Conclusion

- 12.1 This plan is a requirement of the Department for Work and Pensions and supports the Governments Get Britain Working Plan. By working pan Sussex, we begin to align the work into the MCCA geography, should a new Mayoral Combined County Authority (MCCA) be established. We are also able to utilize expertise and knowledge across the councils, supporting more people back into employment.

Supporting Documentation

1. Appendices

- 1. Get Sussex Working Partnership Group - Terms of Reference
- 2. Get Sussex Working Plan
- 3. Data mapping and policy analysis
- 4. Stakeholder consultation report
- 5. Get Sussex Implementation Plan
- 6. Get Sussex Working Stakeholders