

**Subject:** GBEB to SBCCA Integration Proposal  
**Date of Meeting:** 25 March 2026  
**Report of:** Chair, Greater Brighton Economic Board  
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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA) represents a significant shift in the regional governance landscape. As SBCCA becomes the primary body for strategic growth, infrastructure, investment and skills across Sussex — setting the strategic direction for regional development and coordinating activity across partners — clarity is required on the future role of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (the Board).
- 1.2 The Board has previously agreed in principle to [develop an Integration Plan](#) to ensure that the Board’s priorities, programmes, partnerships and assets are transitioned in an orderly and structured manner as SBCCA arrangements mature.
- 1.3 This report presents a first draft Board to SBCCA Integration Proposal (Appendix 1). The purpose of this report is to seek Board review, comment and endorsement of the draft proposal as the basis for engagement with the SBCCA.
- 1.4 The proposal serves two purposes:
- **A transition plan for the Board** – setting out how the Board should manage continuity of programmes, transfer assets and relationships, and provide a clear pathway to orderly dissolution.
  - **A proposal to SBCCA** – explaining why specific Board initiatives should be adopted, scaled or utilised within the new Combined Authority.

The intended audience is therefore both the Board and emerging SBCCA leadership.

- 1.5 Without a deliberate and structured transition, there are material risks including:
- Loss of programme momentum.
  - Fragmentation of established partnerships.
  - Duplication of strategy and evidence work.
  - Unclear ownership of commissioned activity and digital assets.
  - Erosion of institutional knowledge built since 2014.

The Integration Proposal is designed to mitigate these risks while enabling SBCCA to demonstrate early added value, build on delivery-ready programmes, and make the most of stronger regional collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and wider partners during its formative period.

- 1.6 The Board is asked to review and comment on the draft Integration Proposal and subject to any agreed amendments, to endorse it as the basis for engagement with SBCCA.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the Board notes and reviews the draft Board to SBCCA Integration Proposal (Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That the Board endorses the draft Integration Proposal, subject to any agreed amendments arising from discussion.
- 2.3 That the Business Managers are authorised to incorporate any agreed amendments and to use the endorsed Integration Proposal as the basis for formal engagement with SBCCA officers.
- 2.4 That the Board nominates one Board Member to support senior engagement with SBCCA leadership during the transition period and to act as a Board-level link between GBEB and the emerging Combined Authority.

## **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **The Role of the Greater Brighton Economic Board**

- 3.1 Since its establishment through the Greater Brighton City Deal in 2014, the Board has acted as a cross-boundary partnership focused on sustainable economic prosperity within the Greater Brighton functional economic area.

The Board brings together:

- Seven local authorities.
- Business partnerships.
- Universities and further education providers.
- South Downs National Park Authority.
- NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board.

- 3.2 Over more than a decade, the Board has developed a reputation as a collaborative convenor capable of coordinating cross-boundary programmes, securing investment and shaping regional economic priorities.
- 3.3 Through the Greater Brighton Investment Programme alone, the Board has secured over £160m in Local Growth Funding, unlocking approximately £2bn in private investment and delivering significant employment, housing and infrastructure outcomes.

- 3.4 Alongside its investment track record, the Board has developed programme capability, collaboration platforms, strategic partnerships and economic analysis in areas including energy transition, infrastructure resilience, skills alignment, food system resilience, creative industries strategy and investment and growth coordination.

### **A Changing Governance Landscape**

- 3.5 The formation of SBCCA will introduce a Combined County Authority covering the wider Sussex geography, with statutory responsibilities across transport, housing, economic development, environment and skills.
- 3.6 As SBCCA structures develop, thematic areas currently convened by the Board will increasingly sit within SBCCA's formal remit. In this context, the Board's role is expected to evolve and, in due course, conclude.
- 3.7 It is therefore essential that transition is managed deliberately and strategically, protecting the value created by GBEB, enabling SBCCA to build on existing foundations rather than duplicating effort, and maximising new opportunities for collaboration across the wider Sussex and Brighton geography.

### **THE INTEGRATION PROPOSAL**

- 3.8 The draft proposal (Appendix 1) sets out, for Board consideration and endorsement:
- The initiatives recommended for adoption, scaling or structured evidence transfer, together with the wider strategic partnerships and collaboration platforms that can help SBCCA maximise delivery and regional impact.
  - How those initiatives align to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence and how they support the development of SBCCA's key strategies and statutory plans.
  - Proposed integration approaches per initiative.
- 3.9 It recognises that SBCCA structures are still emerging and therefore proposes a phased approach:
- Spring 2026 – Draft integration offer agreed
  - Summer 2026 – Engagement with SBCCA leadership
  - Summer 2026 – Agreement in principle on adoption of priority programmes
  - January 2027 – GBEB agrees dissolution
  - March 2027 – formal transfer and closure

### **Scope of Transition**

- 3.10 The proposal identifies five principal initiatives proposed for structured transition into the SBCCA:

### **Economic Opportunities Review – Strategic evidence base**

A politically neutral, evidence-led assessment translating devolved powers into priority economic opportunities aligned to transport, skills, housing, infrastructure and climate. The proposal recommends that SBCCA recognise the Review as a foundational evidence base to inform the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan — reducing duplication and accelerating strategic prioritisation.

#### **Sussex Energy – Live Regional Programme**

The most operationally advanced initiative, with governance structures, commissioned work in progress and an emerging investable pipeline. The proposal recommends structured adoption and scaling within SBCCA, including continuity of minimum viable programme capacity to avoid loss of momentum.

#### **Inward Investment Desk – Service Design Blueprint**

A developed service model for coordinated inward investment activity. The proposal recommends refreshing and using this as the foundation for a Sussex-wide inward investment capability within SBCCA. This would enable SBCCA to articulate the regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton, aligning partner activity and supporting coordinated engagement with initiatives such as the Gatwick Airport Economic Zone and wider inward investment activity across the region.

#### **Food Systems – Evidence & Investment Modelling**

A completed evidence base and costed intervention pipeline. The proposal recommends transfer of this work to SBCCA as part of the regional economic, environmental and health evidence base, and alignment with the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships and the Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan. This approach builds on existing place-based food partnerships and explores the potential for a Sussex Food Board or similar regional forum to support engagement with the Combined Authority.

#### **Creative Industries Vision – Regional Strategy**

An agreed regional strategy (“Putting Talent First”), published in 2025. The proposal recommends formal adoption as the basis for a focused 12–24 month action plan and investment development.

- 3.11 In addition, the proposal recognises a range of wider initiatives that align to the Board priorities and have Board support (e.g. Sussex Six, Local Skills Improvement Plan, Made Smarter, Sussex Bay, the Get Sussex Working Plan, Civic University Agreement). These initiatives also closely align with SBCCA’s Areas of Competence and should be recognised as important strategic partnerships and collaboration platforms that can support delivery of Combined Authority priorities. This includes, in particular, the Civic University Agreement, which provides a strong basis for deeper collaboration between universities, colleges, business and the public sector across Sussex.
- 3.12 Note: The Economic Opportunities Review is currently subject to final Board sign-off. Any amendments arising from that process will be incorporated into the Integration Proposal prior to formal engagement with SBCCA.

## **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 4.1 One option would be to delay development of an integration plan until SBCCA structures are fully confirmed. This would risk reduced influence over programme transition and potential loss of momentum.
- 4.2 Alternatively, the Board could accelerate dissolution without a structured integration pathway. This would create significant risks around programme continuity, contractual arrangements, asset transfer and partnership confidence.
- 4.3 The proposed approach – endorsing a Board-led Integration Proposal and progressing structured engagement in parallel with SBCCA development – is considered the most prudent and strategically responsible course of action.

## **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 The Integration Proposal recognises the importance of maintaining inclusive engagement across transition, particularly through established partnership structures (e.g. Sussex Energy forums and the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships). Further engagement with SBCCA leadership and partners will need to take place to ensure a smooth transition of key programmes and initiatives.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

- 6.1 The creation of SBCCA marks a new phase in regional governance. The Board has a responsibility to ensure that its legacy of collaboration, programme development and investment coordination is transitioned in a structured and responsible manner.
- 6.2 The draft Integration Proposal provides a framework for:
  - Maintaining programme continuity.
  - Transferring programme assets, strategic evidence, knowledge and relationships.
  - Strengthening collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and wider partners under the Combined Authority model.
  - Enabling SBCCA to demonstrate early impact.
  - Achieving an orderly dissolution of GBEB at the appropriate stage.
- 6.3 The Board is invited to review and comment on the draft Integration Proposal and subject to any agreed amendments, to endorse it as the basis for formal engagement with the SBCCA.
- 6.4 To support effective transition to the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority, the Board is invited to nominate a member to support senior engagement with SBCCA leadership during the integration period. The purpose of this role is to provide visible Board-level support during the transition and to help ensure that the programmes, partnerships and strategic work developed by GBEB are appropriately recognised and considered within emerging Combined Authority structures.

The nominated member would support engagement between the Board and SBCCA leadership by:

- Supporting constructive dialogue with SBCCA political leadership during the transition period.
- Helping communicate the value and readiness of GBEB initiatives — including Sussex Energy, the Economic Opportunities Review, the Inward Investment Desk, Food Systems work and the Creative Industries Vision — as assets that can contribute to SBCCA's early priorities.
- Supporting consistent and coordinated messaging when engaging with SBCCA leadership and regional partners.
- Acting as a link between Board members and officers to ensure that engagement with SBCCA is appropriately informed by the Board's experience and that feedback is shared with the Board.

This role is intended to complement officer engagement and support a smooth and constructive transition of activity into the Combined Authority

6.5 The Board may wish to nominate a member with:

- Experience of place-based leadership or regional partnership working.
- An understanding of economic development, infrastructure, decarbonisation or growth-related programmes.
- Experience of championing or supporting delivery of local projects and an appreciation of how such projects can be supported and scaled through regional coordination and collaboration.
- The ability to engage constructively with regional partners and represent the collaborative ethos of the Board.

The role is intended to operate on a light-touch and time-limited basis, aligned with the transition to SBCCA, and will be supported by officers.

## **7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### Financial Implications:

7.1 None directly arising from this report. Future hosting, resourcing or contract transfer arrangements will be subject to further approval.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Modupe Oshin, BHCC Principal Accountant - Capital  
Date: 13/03/26*

### Legal Implications:

7.2 Any transfer of contracts, digital assets or formal programme responsibilities (including Sussex Energy commissioned work) will require agreement between relevant parties and appropriate legal arrangements.

*Lawyer Consulted: Siobhan Fry, Head of Legal, Commercial  
Date: 17/03/26*

### Equalities Implications:

- 7.3 Several of the initiatives proposed for integration support inclusive growth and economic resilience, including activity relating to fuel poverty, skills access and SME development. Maintaining continuity through transition helps avoid disruption to activity that may benefit vulnerable communities and smaller partner organisations.

### Sustainability Implications

- 7.4 Several initiatives proposed for integration, particularly Sussex Energy and Food Systems, directly contribute to decarbonisation, climate resilience and sustainable economic development. Structured transition will ensure that environmental and sustainability objectives continue to be embedded within regional growth and infrastructure planning under SBCCA.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

DRAFT GBEB to SBCCA Integration Proposal

