

## Greater Brighton Economic Board to Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority: Integration Proposal

### 1. Executive Summary

This Integration Proposal serves two purposes: (1) **a transition plan for GBEB**, setting out how its priority programmes, partnerships and assets should be transferred in an orderly way; and (2) **a proposal to the emerging Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA)**, explaining why and how these initiatives should be adopted. The audience is therefore both the GBEB Board and SBCCA leadership.

As SBCCA becomes the primary regional body for growth, investment and infrastructure, GBEB's role becomes time-limited. Without a structured transition, there is a risk of lost momentum, fragmented partnerships, duplicated evidence and reduced partner confidence. This document sets out a practical integration approach to retain existing value and enable early impact, while SBCCA's governance, operating model, funding and external relationships continue to develop. The proposal can be refined as those arrangements crystallise.

The proposal is not only about transfer. It is also about creating the conditions for stronger regional collaboration under the Combined Authority model. By bringing together delivery-ready programmes, strategic evidence, universities, colleges, businesses, local authorities and wider sector networks within a single regional framework, SBCCA has the opportunity to build on foundations already laid by GBEB and enable collaboration at a scale that has previously been more difficult across a fragmented geography.

The proposal focuses on five initiatives that collectively provide both delivery capability and strategic evidence to support SBCCA's statutory and strategic responsibilities. Alongside these five priority initiatives, the proposal also highlights the importance of wider strategic partnerships — particularly the Civic University Agreement and collaboration between higher and further education institutions — as fundamental enablers of innovation, skills development, place leadership and inclusive growth across Sussex. Analysis undertaken for this proposal also shows that these initiatives align closely with the Strategic Authority Areas of Competence set out in the Devolution White Paper, demonstrating how existing GBEB work can support the Combined Authority's emerging responsibilities. Each initiative contributes — in complementary ways — to the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan.

Initiative	Prosperity Strategy	Local Growth Plan	Spatial Development Strategy	Local Transport Plan	Integration Recommendation
<b>Economic Opportunities Review</b> – Evidence-led, politically neutral assessment translating devolved powers into priority actions	Defines long-term economic narrative and priority opportunities	Provides sequenced sector interventions and investment logic	Identifies implications for employment land, housing and infrastructure	Frames connectivity as productivity enabler; highlights key constraints	Recognise as foundational evidence base to inform all four SBCCA strategies and statutory plans.
<b>Sussex Energy</b> – Live regional programme with governance, active commissions and emerging investable pipeline	Positions clean energy and resilience as economic foundations	Provides delivery-ready green infrastructure pipeline and green jobs growth	Informs renewable deployment, grid capacity and energy-growth alignment	Supports electrification, EV readiness and energy-transport integration	Adopt and scale within SBCCA with clear sponsorship and minimum viable resourcing.
<b>Inward Investment Desk</b> – Coordinated inward investment service design blueprint	Strengthens regional competitiveness and investor proposition	Builds shared investor pipeline and retention model	Identifies priority employment sites and cluster locations	Provides intelligence on infrastructure and connectivity needs of investors	Refresh and establish as the foundation for a Sussex-wide inward investment capability, with SBCCA setting the regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton. This would align partner activity and support coordinated engagement with

Initiative	Prosperity Strategy	Local Growth Plan	Spatial Development Strategy	Local Transport Plan	Integration Recommendation
					Government and parliamentarians (e.g. Gatwick AEZ, APPG).
<p><b>Food Systems</b> – Evidence base and costed intervention pipeline recognising food as economic infrastructure that supports community wealth building, improves public health, strengthens resilience, reduces environmental impacts, and supports growth.</p>	<p>Frames food as economic and resilience infrastructure</p>	<p>Supports SME growth, procurement reform and local supply chains</p>	<p>Informs planning for food hubs, rural enterprise and distribution</p>	<p>Encourages shorter supply chains and logistics resilience</p>	<p>Transfer the evidence base to SBCCA and align with the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships and the Sussex &amp; South Downs Local Food Plan, ensuring food system priorities inform regional economic, health and resilience strategies while building on existing partnerships.</p>
<p><b>Creative Industries Vision</b> – Agreed regional strategy (“Putting Talent First”)</p>	<p>Positions talent-led creative economy as identity-shaping growth driver</p>	<p>Guides cluster development, skills alignment and investment focus</p>	<p>Informs creative corridors, workspace and cultural infrastructure geography</p>	<p>Highlights need for strong inter-town connectivity and sustainable travel</p>	<p>Adopt as basis for focused 12–24 month action plan and targeted investment development.</p>

Collectively, these initiatives provide SBCCA with:

- A consolidated economic evidence platform;
- Delivery-ready programme pipelines;
- Mechanisms for strategic coordination of regional growth activity, including stronger collaboration across local authorities, universities, colleges, businesses and sector networks;
- Spatial and infrastructure alignment logic; and
- Early, visible opportunities for regional impact.

The intended outcomes are continuity and acceleration of priority programmes, stronger regional collaboration across public, academic, business and community partners, transfer of knowledge and partnerships, early demonstrable wins for SBCCA, and a clear pathway to GBEB's orderly dissolution once integration is secured.

## 2. Context

### The Greater Brighton Economic Board

#### Establishment & Purpose

The Board is a formal Joint Committee and was established through the Greater Brighton City Deal with Government in 2014. The main remit of the Board is to help nurture sustainable economic prosperity, by co-ordinating economic development activities and investment at City Region level, and by joining together places and working collaboratively to build on the area's economic assets and unblock its barriers. In bringing together, in a partnership of the willing, seven local authorities, business partnerships, two universities, a college group, a National Park, and recently NHS Sussex, the Board has occupied a unique position within the local governance landscape.

#### Operating Model

The Board is comprised of two parts: the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee (GBEJC) and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership (GBBP). Board meetings have operated as concurrent meetings of both the GBEJC and GBBP. The Board meets in public for four, 2-hour meetings per annum, with additional ad-hoc closed meetings as required. Given their democratic mandate, the Chair of the Board is one of the members of GBEJC, and is elected annually by GBEJC. Chairs can serve more than one term, up to a maximum of four consecutive years.

The budget is agreed by the Board annually, usually in the spring meeting. The Board is funded solely from partner contributions, which after the cost of the two dedicated Business Managers, other support costs (Communications, Finance, Democratic Services & Legal), and ancillary costs, leaves modest budget for the work programme.

Since the Board's inception, Brighton & Hove City Council has acted as Lead Authority, meaning that it hosts the two Business Managers and provides the support services outlined in the previous paragraph. The Business Managers are a dedicated resource to support the strategic and operational effectiveness of the Board. In addition to overseeing governance and coordination - including setting meeting agendas, preparing committee papers and monitoring the budget – the Business Managers play a central role in shaping and driving the Board's priority programmes. This includes initiating and developing cross-boundary workstreams, designing and commissioning programme activity, coordinating multi-partner collaboration, and translating Board priorities into deliverable action plans. They also provide strategic policy insight, responding to Government policy announcements and consultations e.g. Levelling Up White Paper, Devolution.

The Board is supported by the Programme Board, which comprises officers from each of the member organisations and the two Business Managers. The Programme Board's primary function is to help drive the work and agreed actions of the Board. Panels and task-and-finish groups are convened when required to oversee elements of work programme.

## **History & Success**

Through the Greater Brighton City Deal Agreement, the Board created the Greater Brighton Investment Programme. Since 2014, over £160m of Local Growth Funding has been secured which has unlocked around £2bn of private sector investment, created 24,000 jobs, built 18,000 homes and delivered 750,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment floor space.

The Investment Programme was designed to raise the City Region's productivity, and deliver sustainable economic prosperity by unlocking sites, developing infrastructure and creating space and support for high-value businesses to start-up and grow and thereby reduce reliance on lower-value industries. The Investment Programme contained a number of projects which varied in both their geography and type, including £48m secured through Housing & Infrastructure Fund to unlock 6,000 new homes and in July 2018 Homes England announced that it had purchased 176 hectares in Burgess Hill to unlock the delivery of 3,500 homes at Brookleigh which are being delivered.

As some of the early projects started in 2015, most reached the delivery phase some time ago. These include the Advanced Engineering Centre at the University of Brighton, flood defences in Newhaven, the Construction Trades Centre at Greater Brighton Metropolitan College, the BTN BikeShare scheme, Plus X, Circus Street and the Adur Tidal Walls flood defences in Shoreham.

While still relatively new at the time of the City Deal, the Board established a recognised regional partnership bringing together public, academic and business organisations to address shared economic challenges across the City Region. It is a united partnership that has a detailed understanding of its functional economic area (and the barriers and challenges to increased productivity) and has the ability to shape priorities and target interventions across the City Region.

Whilst the City Deal has meant that the City Region and Board have been formally recognised by Government, the Board has also grown in standing and reputation at a more local level. Crawley and Arun were not original members of the Board but joined in 2018 and 2019 respectively. NHS Sussex Integrated Care Board joined at the start of 2025.

With sustainable economic prosperity being the main focus of the Board, through 2018 and 2019 whilst climate emergencies were declared locally and nationally, the environmental and economic resilience theme became more prominent in the Board's thinking and it began to take a more active role in convening regional partners around the energy transition. This was a few years ahead of the Covid-19 pandemic, so the Board was ahead of the curve when identifying economic resilience as a key priority.

The establishment of the Greater Brighton Infrastructure Panel in 2018 created a formal mechanism for cross-boundary collaboration on energy, water and wider infrastructure resilience. From this platform, ambitious energy and water plans were developed and a Hydrogen Working Group was formed, bringing together local authorities, industry, academia and infrastructure partners to explore the region's potential role within emerging hydrogen markets. In parallel, in 2020 the Board Members agreed [10 pledges](#)<sup>1</sup> on the environment, to accelerate the region towards net zero.

This work culminated in the launch of Hydrogen Sussex in 2021. Hydrogen Sussex quickly built a network and momentum, and supported by the Board, led on the development of a regional Hydrogen Strategy in 2023. The strategy assessed the feasibility of hydrogen production, distribution and demand within the Greater Brighton area, including opportunities linked to industrial clusters such as Shoreham Port and wider clean growth ambitions.

While national hydrogen demand projections and investment conditions have since evolved — with market deployment progressing more slowly than originally anticipated — the programme demonstrated the Board's ability to:

- Convene complex multi-sector partnerships across administrative boundaries.
- Commission robust technical and economic analysis.
- Position the region within national clean growth policy discussions.

Importantly, this experience laid the foundations for a broader, systems-based approach to the energy transition. It highlighted both the opportunities and limitations of single-technology strategies and reinforced the need for a more integrated regional mission encompassing generation, demand reduction, flexibility, skills and investment.

### **Key GBEB Initiatives for Integration**

Through its convening role and commissioned work, the Board has developed and supported a range of initiatives over recent years. These initiatives reflect evolving national policy priorities — including clean growth, creative industries, skills, food system resilience and economic productivity — and demonstrate how the region has proactively responded to the direction of travel set out in Government strategy.

The following summarises those initiatives and their alignment with national policy frameworks. A subsequent section then considers how each initiative relates to the proposed Areas of Competence, strategies and statutory plans for the Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority. In the final section, each initiative is broken down into its objective, what GBEB has delivered, the current regional position and the integration recommendation for the SBCCA.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://greaterbrighton.com/work-here/net-zero/gb10/>

### *Economic Opportunities Review*

The Economic Opportunities Review was commissioned by the Greater Brighton Economic Board at a pivotal moment for the region, as Sussex entered the Government's Devolution Priority Programme and preparations began for the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA).

The purpose of the work was to assess Greater Brighton's economic strengths, structural challenges and future opportunities in light of emerging devolved powers and funding. It responds directly to the English Devolution White Paper<sup>2</sup> and the transition towards a Mayoral Combined County Authority model, recognising that responsibilities for transport, skills, housing, regeneration and climate will increasingly sit at the strategic regional level.

The Economic Opportunities Review provides the analytical and strategic bridge between GBEB's existing programme of work and the emerging SBCCA framework. It reframes Greater Brighton's priorities in the context of devolution and sets out a politically neutral suite of interventions aligned to the SBCCA's areas of competence.

Drawing on stakeholder engagement, economic analysis and national policy review, the document:

- Clarifies how devolved powers can be translated into tangible economic opportunities;
- Identifies priority interventions across transport, skills, housing, economic development and climate;
- Highlights cross-cutting synergies between infrastructure, sector growth, natural capital and clean energy; and
- Provides a sequenced framework for short, medium and long-term action.

For the Combined Authority, the Review offers a consolidated evidence base and opportunity framework that can inform early strategic prioritisation and investment decisions, reducing duplication of analysis and accelerating the development of region-wide plans.

It is not a statutory strategy nor a fixed programme of delivery. Rather, it is a structured starting platform from which SBCCA can refine priorities, align resources and maximise the economic and social benefits of devolution.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

*Sussex Energy*

In July 2024 the Board launched the [Sussex Energy Mission](#), an ambition to achieve energy neutrality across Sussex by 2040 — producing enough zero-carbon energy locally to meet regional demand.

The experience of coordinating Hydrogen Sussex demonstrated the value of structured regional collaboration around energy transition themes and directly shaped the design of the Sussex Energy Mission. It is underpinned by a broad partnership of local authorities, public bodies, higher education institutes, business groups and community energy organisations, providing a collaborative platform to move from strategic alignment to delivery.

Since its launch, Sussex Energy has established governance arrangements, delivery workstreams and is establishing a pipeline of investable projects, creating the operating architecture required to accelerate implementation. This provides a strong foundation for SBCCA to build on as it develops its investment, infrastructure and growth priorities — particularly given that the South East net zero economy already contributes £13.1bn GVA and is among the UK’s strongest performing regions. Net zero roles in the South East generate around £136,570 GVA per FTE, significantly above regional averages, and businesses in the region attracted £5.6bn in private investment (2022–24) — averaging c.£1.16m per net zero business. The South East also recorded the highest regional growth in net zero business activity between 2023–24 (11.7%), reinforcing the sector’s trajectory as a major growth opportunity. 2.8% (123,900 FTE jobs) of the South East’s employment is supported by the net zero economy, equating to c 23,000 jobs in Sussex and Brighton using population-scaled estimates.<sup>3</sup>

Nationally, energy security, clean power and green growth sit at the centre of Government’s economic and infrastructure agenda, including the ambition to deliver a clean power system by 2030<sup>4</sup>, expand the clean energy workforce<sup>5</sup>, strengthen domestic supply chains and unlock private capital into low-carbon infrastructure — supported by the establishment of Great British Energy as a publicly owned clean energy investment vehicle<sup>6</sup>.

Recent and emerging policy frameworks further reinforce this direction, including the Local Power Plan<sup>7</sup> (supporting community energy scale-up), the Government’s response to the Heat Network Zoning consultation<sup>8</sup>, the forthcoming Warm Homes Plan<sup>9</sup> (with implications for retrofit, electrification of heat and energy system readiness), and the expected Future

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<sup>3</sup> <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2025/uk-net-zero-economy-grows-10-in-a-year-finds-new-report>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-power-2030-action-plan>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/clean-energy-jobs-plan/clean-energy-jobs-plan-html>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.gbe.gov.uk/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.gbe.gov.uk/local-power-plan>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/proposals-for-heat-network-zoning-2023/outcome/heat-network-zoning-consultation-2023-summary-of-government-response>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/warm-homes-plan>

Homes Standard<sup>10</sup>, which is expected to embed higher energy performance requirements in new development.

Sussex Energy directly aligns with — and provides a delivery platform for — these priorities through its focus on accelerating renewable generation, heat decarbonisation, green skills development and the creation of delivery-ready local energy investment pipelines.

By developing investable regional energy propositions and structured cross-boundary coordination across the Sussex & Brighton geography, Sussex Energy positions the region to attract public and private capital, strengthen local energy resilience and ensure the economic benefits of the clean energy transition— including jobs, supply chain development and community energy participation — are realised across Sussex.

### *Inward Investment Desk*

In 2020, GBEB commissioned Breeze Strategy to explore the case for establishing a Greater Brighton Inward Investment Desk, responding to evidence that the area was underperforming in attracting investment despite strong assets including connectivity, talent and quality of life. The work set out a proposed lean operating model focused on two priorities—retaining and expanding existing investors and targeting new investment— supported by a clearer “pitch for place”, stronger partner coordination, and a more data-led approach to building an investor pipeline.

While produced in the immediate post-Brexit, post-COVID context, the report provides a structured blueprint for how a coordinated inward investment function could operate at scale.

The analysis and delivery model remain pertinent as the Combined Authority considers how to organise and resource its strategic economic development function and inward investment functions. The work offers an evidence base and practical framework that could inform a future Sussex-wide approach to investment promotion, business growth and regeneration under devolved arrangements. In this context, the SBCCA would be well placed to articulate the overarching regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton — helping to align and inform the activity of partners such as the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone (AEZ) and supporting coordinated engagement with Government and parliamentarians, including through the APPG for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway.

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<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation/the-future-homes-and-buildings-standards-2023-consultation>

### *Greater Brighton Food Systems*

In 2022, GBEB commissioned a [Food Systems Scoping Report](#)<sup>11</sup> examining resilience, infrastructure and economic opportunity, establishing the foundations for coordinated cross-authority action and a potential Greater Brighton Food Plan.

Alongside this commissioned work, GBEB convened a Food Systems Task and Finish Group, bringing together stakeholders from across the Greater Brighton area including universities, colleges, local authorities, food partnerships, businesses and community organisations. The group provides a cross-sector forum to explore how food systems relate to economic resilience, health, climate and local supply chains, and has helped shape the evidence base and collaborative approach described below.

In 2023, this was followed by a [Food Systems Investment Costings Project](#)<sup>12</sup>, which developed indicative costings and outline business cases for a pipeline of interventions including a dynamic procurement system, regional food hub model, training and circular economy support, Community Supported Agriculture expansion and large-scale community composting.

Since then, Food Partnerships across Sussex have strengthened collaboration, advancing a [Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan \(2025\)](#)<sup>13</sup> and forming a Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships providing a Sussex-wide platform for coordination, shared learning and engagement with emerging with regional policy and devolution discussions. The development of the Local Food Plan coincides with the Government's establishment of the Food Strategy Advisory Board<sup>14</sup> in 2025 to shape a national food strategy focused on improving public health, strengthening food security and resilience, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting economic growth. The Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan reflects many of these same priorities, providing a locally grounded framework aligned with emerging national direction.

Together this work — the evidence base, costed interventions and the convening of the Food Systems Task and Finish Group — puts SBCCA in a strong position to engage with emerging national food strategy and shape a Sussex-wide approach to food system resilience and economic opportunity. Clear opportunities for regional collaboration and investment have been identified as well as the readiness of existing networks of businesses, communities and councils to act.

### *Creative Industries Vision*

The Creative Industries are a success story for the United Kingdom. Over the past decade they have grown at 1.5 times the rate of the wider economy. They currently contribute over

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<sup>11</sup> <https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s180511/Greater%20Brighton%20Food%20Scoping%20APX.%20n%201.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> [https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s191886/Greater Brighton Food Plan APX. n 1.pdf](https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s191886/Greater%20Brighton%20Food%20Plan%20APX.%20n%201.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.sustainweb.org/assets/sussex-and-south-downs-1756380615.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/food-strategy-advisory-board>

£125bn per annum to the UK economy. That makes them bigger than the UK’s life sciences, automobile and aeronautical sectors combined. It is not a surprise then, that The Creative Industries are one of the UK Government’s eight priority growth-driving sectors and are positioned as central to national growth through the [Industrial Strategy](#)<sup>15</sup>. The ambition is to increase business investment in the sector from £17bn to £31bn by 2035 by improving skills pipelines, improving access to growth finance for SMEs, accelerating innovation, increasing trade and exports and supporting the growth of creative clusters across the UK.

Against this backdrop, the GBEB and Coastal West Sussex [Creative Industries Vision; “Unleashing the Potential”](#)<sup>16</sup>, was agreed in late 2025. Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex’s creative industries comprise 10,225 companies and a workforce of 54,428 people. In addition, around 21,000 creative freelancers live and work in our region, meaning that over 10% of employment in the region is within the Creative Industries. *Unleashing the Potential* sets out a clear regional proposition and evidence base for targeted support to sustain and grow the sector. It focuses on “Putting Talent First” and identifies practical areas for action aligned with national priorities —strengthening creative corridors and local clusters, improving routes into creative careers and skills, and supporting scale-up, innovation and investment readiness—so the sector can continue to drive jobs, productivity and place-based economic value across Greater Brighton and Coastal West Sussex.

## Devolution

### A New Devolution Framework

The [Devolution White Paper](#)<sup>17</sup>, (December 2024) sets out the Government’s plans for large-scale public service reform through a “devolution by default” approach, transferring powers from Westminster to new local Strategic Authorities so regional leaders can drive growth and prosperity.

Established Mayoral Authorities will receive a consolidated Integrated Settlement covering housing, regeneration, local growth, transport, skills, retrofit and employment support, replacing multiple funding streams. Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority has been included in the Devolution Priority Programme, enabling the region to work with Government to establish new governance arrangements and secure devolved powers and funding.

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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69256e16367485ea116a56de/industrial\\_strategy\\_policy\\_paper.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/69256e16367485ea116a56de/industrial_strategy_policy_paper.pdf)

<sup>16</sup> [https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s210792/Unleashing the Potential Greater Brighton Creative Industries Vision APX. n 1.pdf](https://democracy.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s210792/Unleashing%20the%20Potential%20Greater%20Brighton%20Creative%20Industries%20Vision%20APX.%20n%201.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/english-devolution-white-paper-power-and-partnership-foundations-for-growth/english-devolution-white-paper>

Strategic Authorities will have a defined list of 'Areas of Competence', set out in law. These are designed to strengthen, not detract from, the functions and roles of other public bodies, such as NHS England, Environment Agency or Local Authorities. Proposed Areas of Competence:

- Transport & local infrastructure
- Skills & employment support
- Housing & strategic planning
- Economic development & regeneration
- Environment & climate change
- Health, wellbeing & public service reform
- Public safety

### **GBEB Initiatives Alignment to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence**

The Board's programme activity over recent years — including both current priorities and previously commissioned work — aligns closely with the proposed Areas of Competence for Strategic Authorities set out in the Devolution White Paper.

Analysis undertaken as part of this Integration Proposal demonstrates that GBEB's initiatives collectively support multiple areas of competence, particularly economic development and regeneration, transport and infrastructure, skills and employment support, housing and strategic planning, and environment and climate change. In several cases, initiatives also contribute to wider objectives around health, wellbeing and public service reform.

This alignment reflects the cross-cutting nature of the Board's work. Many initiatives have been developed specifically to address the interaction between infrastructure, skills, sector growth, energy transition and spatial development — themes that sit at the heart of the Combined Authority model.

A detailed mapping of each initiative against the Strategic Authority Areas of Competence is provided in [Appendix A](#). This analysis demonstrates how the Board's existing programme activity can support the Combined Authority's future responsibilities and highlights where established initiatives may provide delivery platforms or evidence bases for regional policy development.

In summary, the analysis shows that:

- **Economic Opportunities Review** provides an overarching evidence base linking transport, housing, skills and sector development to regional productivity and prosperity.
- **Sussex Energy** supports environment and climate responsibilities while also enabling infrastructure investment, skills development and economic growth.

- **Inward Investment Desk** contributes to economic development by strengthening the region's ability to attract and retain investment aligned with strategic priorities.
- **Food Systems work** demonstrates how food infrastructure can contribute simultaneously to economic resilience, environmental outcomes and public health.
- **Creative Industries Vision** supports sector growth, skills pathways and place-based economic development.

Taken together, these initiatives illustrate how GBEB has already been operating in a way that reflects the integrated, cross-sector approach expected of a Strategic Authority. The analysis therefore provides a useful foundation for considering how existing programmes and evidence can inform the development of SBCCA's future strategies and priorities.

DRAFT

**GBEB Initiatives Alignment with SBCCA Strategies & Statutory Plans**

	<i>Prosperity Strategy</i> <i>What are we trying to achieve, why, and what does success look like?</i>	<i>Local Growth Plan</i> <i>How will we become more prosperous?</i>	<i>Spatial Development Strategy</i> <i>Where will we focus growth and investment?</i>	<i>Local Transport Plan</i> <i>How will we plan and deliver transport to support growth and connectivity?</i>
<b><i>Economic Opportunities Review</i></b>	Articulates the region’s long-term economic narrative, assets and structural challenges.	Provides prioritised sector opportunities, pipeline interventions and sequencing logic.	Identifies spatial implications for employment land, housing, transport and energy infrastructure.	Frames transport as an economic growth enabler and identifies priority connectivity interventions.
<b><i>Sussex Energy</i></b>	Positions clean energy, resilience and energy security as foundational to long-term prosperity and climate leadership.	Provides delivery-ready clean energy infrastructure pipeline; supports green jobs, supply chain growth and inward investment.	Informs energy spatial planning, renewable deployment, grid capacity and integration of energy infrastructure with housing and growth areas.	Supports transport decarbonisation (EV infrastructure, electrification readiness), grid capacity planning and alignment between energy and transport infrastructure investment.
<b><i>Inward Investment Desk</i></b>	Strengthens regional competitiveness narrative and investor proposition.	Provides coordinated model for attracting and retaining investment; builds shared investor pipeline.	Identifies priority employment locations, cluster sites and infrastructure needs attractive to investors.	Provides intelligence on investor transport and connectivity requirements (road, rail, airport, digital infrastructure) to inform prioritisation.

	<b>Prosperity Strategy</b> <i>What are we trying to achieve, why, and what does success look like?</i>	<b>Local Growth Plan</b> <i>How will we become more prosperous?</i>	<b>Spatial Development Strategy</b> <i>Where will we focus growth and investment?</i>	<b>Local Transport Plan</b> <i>How will we plan and deliver transport to support growth and connectivity?</i>
<b>Food Systems</b>	Frames food as economic infrastructure supporting resilience, local wealth retention and public health.	Offers costed interventions (food hubs, procurement reform, CSA expansion) supporting SME growth and supply chain development.	Supports planning for food infrastructure, growing space, distribution hubs and rural enterprise areas.	Encourages shorter supply chains and local distribution models that reduce freight emissions and improve logistics resilience.
<b>Creative Industries Vision</b>	Positions the creative economy as a talent-led, identity-shaping growth sector.	Guides sector action planning, cluster development, skills alignment and investment priorities.	Informs creative corridors, clusters, workspace planning and cultural infrastructure geography.	Highlights need for strong inter-town connectivity and sustainable transport links to support creative corridors, labour mobility and visitor economy growth.

## A Changing Governance Landscape: Transitioning to the SBCCA

Work has begun on the establishment of the SBCCA. As the strategic authority for Sussex and Brighton, SBCCA will be well placed to articulate a clear regional narrative and priority outcomes for growth and investment, and to align partner, government and parliamentary engagement around those priorities. It also creates a significant opportunity to strengthen collaboration across the Sussex and Brighton geography — enabling universities, colleges, local authorities, businesses, community organisations and wider partners to work through a shared regional framework in a way that has previously been harder to achieve consistently.

Following the decision by the government to delay the election of a new mayor they also confirmed the intention to move forward with the creation of a Mayoral Strategic Authority in 2026. It is anticipated that the new SBCCA will be created in March 2026 but will take time to become fully established. As devolution for Sussex and Brighton gathers pace, the role for the Board becomes less defined, as the areas of focus for the Board will be increasingly led by the SBCCA as the primary governance structure for developing and growing the region's economy.

Given the likelihood that the role and purpose of the Board will eventually be subsumed within the SBCCA advisory structures, the Board is seeking an orderly dissolution. Part of the process of dissolving the Board in an orderly manner includes preparation and delivery of this integration plan.

Preparation of the Integration Plan, and then actioning it, is crucial. Without a clear plan for integration through the transition period there will be a number of significant risks for which there will be limited mitigation. These risks include the slow-down or discontinuity of key activities and programmes, resulting in a loss of delivery. Since the Board's inception since 2014 it has gathered significant experience and expertise in sustainable economic prosperity and this knowledge will be pertinent to the new SBCCA once established. The Board's experience, expertise and good practice needs to be captured so that it is not lost. Likewise, over the last 12 years the Board has established a successful coalition of the willing, through developing strong relationships. Within the Board membership, as well as with wider stakeholders and partners. The integration plans needs to ensure that these relationships, built around trust and goodwill, continue beyond the life of the Board. Below are some suggested milestones for the Integration Plan project:

- Spring 2026 – Draft integration offer agreed by GBEB Board
- 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

### 3. Integration Proposal

#### Overview

The following sections set out proposed approaches for transferring or embedding GBEB initiatives within the emerging Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority (SBCCA).

These initiatives are at different stages of maturity and require different forms of integration. Some represent live, delivery-enabling regional programmes (e.g. Sussex Energy). Others provide completed evidence bases or strategic frameworks (e.g. Food Systems, Economic Opportunities Review) intended to inform future SBCCA policy and investment decisions.

Each proposal is structured consistently to clarify:

- **Objective** – the purpose of integrating the initiative into the SBCCA.
- **What GBEB has delivered** – assets, governance or evidence created.
- **Current regional position** – status at the point of transition.
- **Integration recommendation** – the proposed role for SBCCA.

## Economic Opportunities Review Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Strategic evidence base and policy foundation*

### Objective

To support long-term economic growth and inclusive prosperity across Sussex by identifying the region's key economic strengths, structural challenges and priority opportunities within the context of devolution.

The Review translates the powers, funding and responsibilities associated with the emerging SBCCA into a clear set of evidence-led economic opportunities — helping to increase productivity, attract investment, support job creation and reduce spatial inequalities, while aligning growth with infrastructure, skills, housing and climate objectives.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

The Economic Opportunities Review provides:

- A comprehensive assessment of Greater Brighton within the wider Sussex economic context, including productivity challenges, sectoral strengths and spatial constraints.
- A structured interpretation of the Devolution White Paper, clarifying how devolved powers across transport, skills, housing, regeneration and climate can be deployed to drive economic impact.
- A prioritised suite of short, medium and long-term economic opportunities, linked to measurable outcomes such as job creation, investment leverage and productivity uplift.
- A cross-cutting framework demonstrating how transport, skills, housing, energy, innovation, natural capital and collaboration with universities and colleges must be aligned to generate sustained growth.
- A clear articulation of Sussex's strategic assets — including international gateways, sector clusters, clean energy capacity and natural capital — as foundations for future prosperity.

The Review reframes existing GBEB priorities within the devolved landscape, ensuring that established work (including the Sussex Energy Mission and sector-based initiatives) is positioned to contribute directly to regional growth under SBCCA.

## Current Regional Position

The Economic Opportunities Review has been commissioned and developed during a period of institutional transition as Sussex prepares for the establishment of the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority.

As SBCCA begins to develop its core strategies — including the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy and Local Transport Plan — there is an opportunity to draw on this existing analysis and stakeholder engagement as an early evidence base, reducing duplication and enabling faster strategic prioritisation.

## Integration Recommendation

It is recommended that SBCCA formally recognise the Economic Opportunities Review as a foundational evidence document to inform:

- The articulation of long-term prosperity ambitions;
- The prioritisation of investment within the Local Growth Plan;
- The spatial alignment of housing, employment land and infrastructure within the Spatial Development Strategy; and
- The integration of connectivity priorities within the Local Transport Plan.

In particular, SBCCA should draw upon the Review's priority opportunities and actions, including:

- Embedding the Sussex Energy Mission as a flagship cross-cutting programme aligned to spatial planning, infrastructure sequencing and green skills pathways;
- Unlocking strategic employment land and modernising premises to support high-value sector growth;
- Raising productivity through targeted support for priority clusters (including advanced manufacturing, quantum technologies, creative industries and the visitor economy);
- Developing a coordinated investment prospectus to attract public and private capital into infrastructure, energy and innovation projects;
- Leveraging major capital projects (e.g. offshore wind, airport expansion, port investment and housing growth) to maximise local supply chain capture and skills development;
- Delivering a long-term, affordable and infrastructure-aligned housing strategy through the Spatial Development Strategy; and

- Strengthening east–west connectivity and integrated transport interventions to unlock labour markets and regeneration.

The Review is not a statutory strategy nor is it intended as pre-determining mayoral priorities. Instead, it serves as a structured starting point — providing the SBCCA with an existing body of economic analysis and stakeholder engagement.

This should help accelerate policy development, reduce duplication of evidence work, and focus early investment on interventions that deliver measurable improvements in productivity, resilience and prosperity across Sussex.

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## Sussex Energy Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Live regional programme – Structured adoption & scaling*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to adopt and scale an established, cross-boundary clean energy programme that is already developing investable pipelines, regional coordination structures and delivery-ready workstreams — ensuring continuity through transition and accelerating early regional impact on clean energy, infrastructure and inclusive economic prosperity.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

Since launching the Sussex Energy Mission in July 2024, GBEB has established the foundations for a coordinated regional energy programme across Sussex, including:

#### 1. A delivery-enabling governance structure

- Sussex Energy Partner Group coordinating programme priorities and commissioned work
- Sussex Energy Forum connecting the wider regional practitioner network
- Sussex Energy Communications Working Group coordinating messaging and engagement

#### 2. A cross-sector regional partnership

Bringing together local authorities, universities and FE partners, NHS Sussex, business networks, community energy organisations, the Greater South East Net Zero Hub and infrastructure stakeholders. Supports alignment of organisations working on the energy transition and helps unblock issues that affect delivery.

#### 3. A recognised programme platform

- Established Sussex Energy brand and communications presence
- Established mechanisms for cross-authority alignment and partner collaboration.
- Foundations for developing a regional clean energy investment pipeline.

Together these elements provide a practical regional coordination platform supporting energy infrastructure development, investment mobilisation and delivery-ready project pipelines.

### Current Regional Position

Sussex Energy has moved beyond convening into active programme development.

Key workstreams currently underway include:

- **Strategic coordination** – a draft Sussex & Brighton Energy Briefing developed jointly by upper-tier authorities, with wider regional testing and pipeline development activity planned.
- **Funding & finance** – a regional Funding & Investment Strategy commission (in procurement) to shape future investment models and strengthen the regional proposition.
- **Solar Across Sussex** – a commissioned programme (in procurement) to identify, prioritise and aggregate solar opportunities, with a follow-on site owner engagement-focused phase planned.
- **Communications & engagement** – an active Sussex Energy LinkedIn presence, practitioner forum, website content, news articles, events participation, comms working group and a developing comms calendar and content library.
- **Regional energy map** – an online, filterable project map in development to improve pipeline visibility and coordination.

Governance structures are embedded, commissions are progressing and partner engagement is active. The programme is transitioning from partnership-building into structured pipeline development and investment readiness.

Maintaining this momentum through the SBCCA transition is critical to avoid delay, duplication or loss of partner confidence.

### **Integration Recommendation**

Given that Sussex Energy is an active, delivery-enabling programme, the recommended approach is:

- **Adopt Sussex Energy as a recognised SBCCA strategic programme**, to build on progress to date in establishing regional energy coordination that supports sustainable economic growth.
- **Provide a defined “landing zone” within SBCCA structures**, including named political and senior officer sponsorship.
- **Secure minimum viable programme resourcing<sup>18</sup>** to maintain coordination, partner engagement, pipeline management and commissioned work oversight. Continuity of the existing programme lead function would help maintain momentum, partner relationships and oversight of commissioned work through transition.
- **Retain existing partnership forums**, aligning them with SBCCA governance while preserving their functionality and trust.

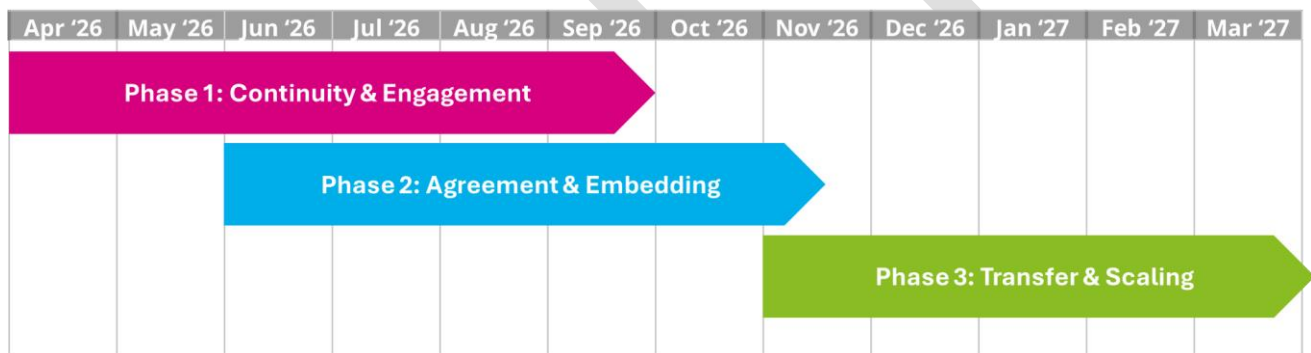
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<sup>18</sup> Resourcing will form part of Phase 1 discussions with the SBCCA to agree the final integration model.

- **Ensure continuity of live commissions and contract administration** during transition.
- **Maintain digital and communications continuity**, including stewardship of Sussex Energy’s LinkedIn presence, website and communications working group, to preserve a visible and coordinated regional voice.
- **Ensure coordinated engagement during SBCCA set-up**, with structured working at officer, senior officer/strategic and political levels, to align Sussex Energy with emerging governance arrangements, maintain confidence among partners and secure early positioning as a delivery-ready regional programme.

This approach preserves existing value, reduces transition risk and enables SBCCA to demonstrate early, tangible progress on regional energy and infrastructure priorities.

GBEB proposes a phased integration model, enabling Sussex Energy to continue delivery while SBCCA structures mature.



**Phase 1: Continuity & engagement (Apr '26 – ‘Sep 26)**

**Aim:** Keep delivery moving; secure SBCCA sponsorship; minimise disruption.

- GBEB continues to convene Sussex Energy.
- Formal SBCCA engagement route established at:
  - officer level.
  - senior officer level.
  - political leadership level.
- GBEB & SBCCA collaborate to produce an SBCCA-ready Sussex Energy Integration Offer:
  - What exists now (workstreams, governance, pipeline).
  - Early-win projects and what SBCCA action unlocks.
  - Resource and governance options for SBCCA adoption.
  - Contract hosting, website and practical transition requirements.

**Phase 2: Agreement & embedding (Jun '26 – Nov '26)**

**Aim:** Agree how Sussex Energy “lands” in SBCCA.

- Secure an agreed SBCCA home for Sussex Energy:
  - portfolio alignment (climate/environment + infrastructure/growth).
  - named senior responsible officer (SRO).

- Agree governance and how existing partner infrastructure is retained.
- Agree and put in place a minimum viable resourcing model to support Sussex Energy coordination, programme management, commissioned work package administration and delivery of early-win projects as it transitions into SBCCA structures.

**Phase 3: Transfer & scaling (Nov '26 – Mar '27)**

Aim: Formalise adoption and scale delivery.

- Sussex Energy becomes an SBCCA-embedded programme (with continuity of brand and partner networks).
- Resourcing is reviewed and scaled as Sussex Energy moves from programme development into delivery and investment mobilisation.
- SBCCA uses outputs (investment strategy, solar pipeline, mapping tool) to inform:
  - Local Growth Plan.
  - Spatial Development Strategy inputs (where relevant).
  - future investment/prospectus activity.
- GBEB dissolves once transfer arrangements are secured.

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## Inward Investment Desk Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Service design adoption for establishing a regional inward investment function*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to establish an effective, region-wide inward investment capability that provides strategic coordination for investment promotion across Sussex and Brighton by building on GBEB's 2020 "Inward Investment Desk" service design — updating it for today's policy and market context — so Sussex can compete more strongly for business investment, expansions and high-growth relocations that support productivity, good jobs and inclusive growth. In practice, this would enable SBCCA to provide strategic coordination for the region's inward investment activity — articulating a clear Sussex and Brighton investment proposition and helping align the efforts of local, regional and national partners around shared priorities.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

GBEB commissioned and developed (2020) a practical blueprint for a lean, inward investment "desk" model, including:

- **A defined service remit** spanning two core functions (business retention & expansion; investor attraction) supported by place product development, partnership leverage and place promotion.
- **A targeting framework** (priority audiences and personas) focused on high-potential opportunity segments (e.g., tech entrants, recent UK entrants not yet rooted, UK high-growths, existing foreign-owned investors).
- **A proposed delivery structure and governance approach** (small specialist team; partner-enabled comms support; transparent pipeline reporting).
- **An outline action plan** for virtual-first lead generation, research and intelligence processes, CRM-style pipeline management, and consistent "pitch for place" messaging (as a practical asset for partners).

*(Note: the report was written in 2020 and was framed around "post-Brexit / post-COVID" recovery conditions. The core service design and disciplines remain useful, but assumptions, market signals, tools and national policy have moved on and would need an update before implementation.)*

## Current Regional Position

- The work is a service design and delivery plan rather than an operational service; it is not a standing, funded regional function.
- Partner organisations continue to undertake elements of inward investment and business support activity, but there is no single, dedicated Sussex-wide inward investment desk with shared intelligence, proactive targeting and consistent pipeline management across the area. This work will inform the Gatwick region work, ensuring Sussex priorities can be clearly articulated and promoted more widely via mechanisms such as the Gatwick Region to create continuity and build on the existing approach.
- With devolution and the formation of SBCCA, there is an emerging opportunity to create a coherent regional “front door” for investors and to align local delivery with a single regional proposition and priority sectors/corridors.
- Currently, there is significant inward investment and advocacy activity already underway across Sussex, including the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone (AEZ) programme and the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway. These initiatives are strengthening the region’s profile, external relationships and investor narrative. As the strategic authority, SBCCA is well placed to articulate the overarching regional investment narrative and priority sectors for Sussex and Brighton, including through more coordinated engagement with Government and parliamentarians. This direction can then inform and strengthen the work of wider partners — with initiatives such as the Gatwick AEZ amplifying the regional proposition internationally and the APPG supporting national political engagement and advocacy.

## Integration Recommendation

Given SBCCA’s role in convening regional growth activity and building an investment proposition, the recommended approach is:

- **Adopt the Inward Investment Desk model as a starting point**, and commission a light-touch **refresh/update** of the 2020 plan (scope, target audiences, tools, resourcing options, governance, KPIs, alignment with Gatwick Region activity) so it reflects current investor behaviour, national policy and Sussex priorities.
- **Embed the function within SBCCA’s economic growth / inward investment capability** (or equivalent), establishing a clear “home”, accountability and reporting.
- **Agree the operating model with local partners** so the desk complements and enhances (not duplicates) existing inward investment activity. SBCCA would provide the strategic coordination function — setting the overall regional investment narrative, priority sectors and investor targeting for Sussex and Brighton — while

partner organisations help amplify and deliver this proposition. This includes local authority economic development teams, Newhaven Enterprise Zone, the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone and the APPG for the Southeast and Gatwick Diamond Growth Gateway. Through this approach, messaging, targeting, investor engagement and government advocacy can be aligned and mutually reinforcing.

- **Stand up minimum viable capability first** (e.g., a small team/lead function plus shared comms and CRM/pipeline processes), then scale if early results justify expansion.
- **Smarter Investor Targeting** - creating new research and intelligence tools that provide a pipeline of opportunities and engaging with prospects in a professional manner.
- **Avoid starting from scratch on place narrative:** draw on the Greater Brighton “Pitch for Place” content and assets to inform Sussex and Brighton place propositions, updating and tailoring them to current context and SBCCA priorities. Messaging will need to deliver greater consistency and clarity in novel ways that support the primary aim of successful engagement with investors.
- **Use the desk as a devolution ‘early win’ mechanism:** a visible, practical function that demonstrates SBCCA’s role in coordinating regional growth activity and converting collaboration into measurable outcomes (pipeline, projects landed/expanded, jobs, investment).

## Food Systems Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Evidence transfer & strategic alignment with existing regional partnerships*

### Objective

To ensure that the evidence base and investment modelling commissioned by GBEB informs future SBCCA strategy, while recognising and working with the existing Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships rather than duplicating or displacing established networks.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

- [Food Systems Scoping Report \(2022\)](#) assessing resilience, infrastructure and economic opportunity across the Greater Brighton area, in the context of food insecurity, supply chain fragility and climate transition. The scoping work provides the foundations for a potential Greater Brighton Food Plan and an approach to collaborative action across local authorities.
- [Food Systems Investment Costings Project \(2023\)](#) developing indicative costings and outline business cases for interventions including:
  - Dynamic procurement systems.
  - Regional food hub model.
  - Circular economy training and business support.
  - Community Supported Agriculture expansion.
  - Large-scale community composting.
- Greater Brighton Food Systems Task and Finish Group, convened by GBEB, bringing together stakeholders from across the sector including universities, colleges, local authorities, food partnerships, businesses and community organisations. The group provides a cross-sector forum to explore how food systems relate to economic resilience, health, climate and local supply chains, and has helped shape collaboration across the region.

This work provides:

- A structured evidence base.
- A costed pipeline of potential interventions.
- An economic framing of food systems as infrastructure supporting productivity, resilience and local supply chains.

### Current Regional Position

Sussex and Brighton have a strong network of place-based food partnerships bringing together local authorities, public health, community organisations, farmers, food businesses

and education providers to address issues including food insecurity, healthy diets, sustainable farming and local food economies.

These food partnerships collaborate through the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships, which provides a coordinated Sussex-wide voice for food and enables collaboration, shared learning and alignment across the food system.

The partnerships have developed the [Sussex & South Downs Local Food Plan](#)<sup>19</sup>, which sets out shared priorities across the region for improving food access, supporting sustainable farming, strengthening local food economies and improving health and environmental outcomes.

The Alliance has expressed an ambition to establish a Sussex Food Board — an overarching stakeholder forum bringing together partners from across the food system to help ensure food remains visible within regional governance and policy discussions as devolution progresses.

The existing Greater Brighton Food Systems Task and Finish Group should be considered a useful foundation for this wider regional collaboration.

This evolving landscape means there is already an active network of delivery organisations and strategic partners to take forward food system priorities across Sussex.

### **Integration Recommendation**

Given the existence of an active network of food partnerships and regional collaboration through the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships, the recommended approach is:

- Transfer GBEB-commissioned scoping and costings outputs to SBCCA as part of the economic, environmental and health evidence base for regional strategy.
- Recognise the Sussex Alliance of Food Partnerships as a key delivery and engagement partner representing place-based food partnerships across Sussex.
- Engage with the Alliance and wider stakeholders to explore the potential establishment of a Sussex Food Board or similar regional forum, helping ensure food systems are considered within economic growth, health, climate and community resilience agendas.
- Avoid duplication of governance structures by building on existing partnerships and networks.

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<sup>19</sup> <https://www.sustainweb.org/assets/sussex-and-south-downs-1756380615.pdf>

## Creative Industries Vision Integration Proposal

*Integration Type: Strategy adoption as a basis for action planning.*

### Objective

To enable SBCCA to adopt and operationalise the agreed regional Creative Industries Vision (“Unleashing the Potential”, 2025) as a shared framework for inclusive growth, investment and skills development—using it to shape early priorities, coordinate partners across the new authority footprint, and build a credible delivery and funding approach without restarting the evidence base.

### What GBEB Has Delivered

GBEB has agreed a clear regional proposition for the creative economy, providing a strong platform for SBCCA to build from:

- **A published regional vision and narrative (2025):** A coherent case for why the Creative Industries matter to the Greater Brighton & Coastal West Sussex economy and identity, and why coordinated support is needed now (in a period of devolution and rapid sector change, including AI).
- **A unifying strategic goal – “Putting Talent First”:** A simple, place-based ambition to make the area *the best place in the UK for anyone, whatever their background, to build a fulfilling career in the Creative Industries.*
- **A practical organising framework for sector growth around three integrated areas of focus:**
  - **Creative Corridors** (North-South towards Gatwick/London; East-West along the coast).
  - **Clusters of Excellence** (supporting place-based sub-sector strengths).
  - **Open Boundaries** (working beyond administrative boundaries where it unlocks scale/innovation).
- **A defined set of recommended actions / themes:** including talent pipelines, stronger routes into creative careers, support for creative entrepreneurs and scale-up, better coordination of local assets, and the identification of “tentpole” opportunities to aggregate investment and impact (e.g., Createch/virtual production, industry tourism).
- **An evidence-led picture of the regional ecosystem:** headline scale, spatial patterning, strengths and challenges—helping SBCCA avoid duplication and move faster into delivery design.

## Current Regional Position

- The Vision has been agreed and provides a shared direction across partners, with strong alignment to national growth priorities and the opportunities presented by devolution.
- Delivery mechanisms are not yet formed at a regional level (i.e. no regional action plan, prioritised investment programme, or confirmed governance/resourcing model to take the recommendations forward).
- There are significant existing assets already active across the area (local authority cultural/creative programmes, universities/FE provision, business networks, sub-sector clusters, Createch capability), but activity remains unevenly distributed and not consistently coordinated across the region—one of the core issues the Vision seeks to address.

## Integration Recommendation

Given this is an agreed strategic vision (rather than a live programme), the recommended approach is for SBCCA to embed and activate it through early strategic and delivery decisions:

- Adopt the Vision as SBCCA's shared framework for Creative Industries growth, using "Putting Talent First" as the anchor narrative and outcome focus.
- Translate the Vision into a concise SBCCA Creative Industries Action Plan aligned to the delivery of the wider Local Growth Plan, prioritised for the first 12–24 months—focusing on a small number of high-leverage actions aligned to the Vision's structure (corridors, clusters, open boundaries).
- Use the Vision to guide early investment and partnership choices, including identification of 1–2 "tentpole" opportunities suitable for pooled funding, inward investment propositions, or external bids (e.g., Createch / virtual production ecosystem; industry tourism and major sector events to attract investors, buyers and global partners to the region).
- Enable place-based delivery while maintaining a single regional direction: empower local clusters/sub-sectors to develop locally appropriate activity, while SBCCA provides the convening capacity to connect towns, institutions and industry where scale adds value.
- Align skills and careers infrastructure to "Putting Talent First": Use the Vision to shape structured collaboration between SBCCA, FE and HE institutions, careers hubs and employers — improving visibility of creative pathways, strengthening employer-led provision, supporting inclusive entry routes and freelancer development, and making better use of regional academic and training assets.

- Maintain and use the Vision as an advocacy tool: to support engagement with government, funders and industry by presenting a coherent regional offer and evidence base, reducing the need for repeated “reinvention” of the case for support.

This approach allows SBCCA to move quickly from vision to delivery design—retaining the value of the GBEB/Coastal West Sussex work while creating a practical programme pathway that fits Combined Authority structures and investment planning.

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## Wider Sussex Initiatives

The table below summarises a number of partner-led initiatives that the Board has supported, and how each aligns with the statutory Areas of Competence of the Combined Authority. While these are not the primary focus of the integration proposal, they represent important collaboration platforms and strategic partnerships that can help SBCCA maximise regional impact through stronger joint working across local government, higher and further education, business, community and sector networks. These programmes are delivered by external organisations and networks, but collectively contribute to the region's economic resilience, skills development, environmental ambition and inclusive economic prosperity. Setting out this alignment helps clarify where the Combined Authority may wish to recognise, engage with or amplify existing activity, without creating duplication or assuming direct delivery responsibility.

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Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
<a href="#">Sussex Bay</a> <sup>20</sup>	Partnership restoring 100 miles of Sussex coastline and waterways; aiming to build a £50m nature recovery fund by 2050.	Aligns environmental recovery with long-term economic resilience; strengthens Sussex's coastal identity; unlocks blended finance for nature recovery; supports sustainable tourism, fisheries and coastal enterprise.	Environment and climate change – large-scale habitat restoration and carbon sequestration. Economic development and regeneration – supports sustainable coastal and visitor economy. Public safety – natural flood and erosion mitigation. Skills and employment support – Enhances sustainable fisheries while developing green skills in coastal restoration, marine research and environmental monitoring, supporting maritime employment, apprenticeships and collaboration with FE/HE providers.	Recognise as strategic environmental partner; align with climate, coastal infrastructure and regeneration priorities.
<a href="#">Sussex Six</a> <sup>21</sup>	Business-led initiative encouraging hospitality/retail to stock more Sussex produce.	Strengthens local SME supply chains and local economic multipliers.	Economic development and regeneration – boosts local producers and independent businesses. Skills and employment support – supports agri-food and hospitality employment.	Support through business engagement and SME growth programmes; consider supporting to spread across Sussex as a low cost economy boost, business support and good news story.
<a href="#">Made Smarter</a> <sup>22</sup>	Digital adoption support for	Increases productivity and competitiveness of	Economic development and regeneration – drives productivity and innovation.	Embed within wider regional economic development and productivity work; ensure

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.sussexbay.org.uk/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://sussexfoodanddrink.org/sussex-six-campaign/>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.madesmarter.uk/>

Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
	manufacturing SMEs.	regional manufacturing base.	Skills and employment support – upskilling workforce in digital and advanced manufacturing.	Sussex firms access national Made Smarter support.
<a href="#">LSIP (Local Skills Improvement Plan)</a> <sup>23</sup>	Employer-led skills planning framework identifying priority sector needs.	Aligns skills provision with business demand.	Skills and employment support – core statutory alignment of skills to labour market need. Economic development and regeneration – supports priority growth sectors.	Align with emerging Combined Authority skills and employment priorities.
<a href="#">Get Sussex Working</a> <sup>24</sup>	Employment and support programme focused on reducing economic inactivity and increasing long-term employment through a whole system approach.	Tackles economic inactivity and workforce participation.	Skills and employment support – employment pathways and inclusion. Health, wellbeing and public service reform – links to economic inactivity and wellbeing outcomes.	Align with devolved employment support and wider economic inclusion priorities.
<a href="#">Civic University Agreement</a> <sup>25</sup>	Joint commitment between Sussex universities and local partners to support economic, social and environmental	Provides a platform for place-based collaboration between FE, HE, business and public organisations on shared regional priorities, and a strong foundation for deeper	Economic development and regeneration – innovation, R&D and knowledge transfer. Skills and employment support – graduate retention and higher-level skills.	Work with universities and colleges as core strategic partners in the development and delivery of SBCCA priorities, building on the Civic University Agreement to strengthen collaboration on innovation, skills, inclusive

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.futureskillssussex.co.uk/>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/about-the-council/how-the-council-works/partnership-work/get-sussex-working-plan/>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/25767455.sussex-universities-launch-civic-university-agreement/>

Initiative	What It Is	Why GBEB Supports It	Areas of Competence Most Strongly Supported	Recommended SBCCA Approach
	change across Sussex.	Sussex-wide partnership working under SBCCA.		growth, decarbonisation and place-based economic development.

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## Appendix A

### GBEB Initiatives Alignment to Strategic Authority Areas of Competence

The Board’s programme activity over recent years — including both current priorities and previously commissioned work — aligns closely with the proposed Areas of Competence for Strategic Authorities. The table below summarises how key GBEB initiatives support these areas and why they are strategically relevant within a devolved regional context.

#### *Economic Opportunities Review*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Transport &amp; Infrastructure Planning</b>	Identifies connectivity constraints as barriers to productivity and recommends targeted interventions: A27/A259 upgrades, improved east-west rail to unlock labour markets, mass transit development and active travel integration. Provides an economic rationale for the Local Transport Plan and alignment with the Spatial Development Strategy.
<b>Skills &amp; Employment Support</b>	Recommends a future-ready skills ecosystem aligned to sector growth supporting lifelong learning, strengthened employer engagement, and integration of the Get Sussex Working Plan into mainstream delivery to promote inclusive pathways. Links green skills, digital capability and major capital projects to inclusive labour market participation.
<b>Housing &amp; Strategic Planning</b>	Positions housing affordability and employment land supply as economic growth issues. Supports preparation of the Spatial Development Strategy by aligning housing, strategic sites, infrastructure sequencing and grid capacity with long-term productivity and workforce retention. Recommends adopting a strategic approach to unlock constrained sites and embedding affordability at the heart of housing delivery across the region.
<b>Economic Development &amp; Regeneration</b>	Identifies priority growth sectors (e.g. advanced manufacturing, quantum technologies, creative industries, visitor economy) and recommends repositioning the visitor economy as a driver of inclusive growth, embedding sectoral strengths within the Local Growth Plan, development of an investment prospectus, supply chain capture from major projects, port-led clean growth and town centre renewal.
<b>Environment &amp; Climate Change</b>	Embeds the Sussex Energy Mission as a coordinated framework to improve energy security and create new pathways for regional prosperity. Supports

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
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renewable deployment, grid coordination, green skills pathways and nature-positive development aligned with spatial planning and economic priorities to deliver maximum benefit to the region, balancing environment protection with the needs of a sustainable economy in line with a future Local Growth Plan.

*Sussex Energy*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
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**Environment & climate change**

Coordinates regional decarbonisation, accelerating renewable generation, heat decarbonisation and energy resilience in line with national net zero objectives. Supports community and local authority investment models that retain energy revenues within Sussex rather than exporting value externally. Renewable generation and storage assets can provide long-term income streams for local authorities and businesses alongside carbon reduction benefits.

Energy system planning also has important synergies with wider climate adaptation and resilience priorities — including energy security during extreme weather events — and with energy spatial planning and nature recovery strategies, where renewable deployment, grid infrastructure and land use planning must be coordinated to balance environmental protection, biodiversity net gain and infrastructure delivery.

**Economic development & regeneration**

Develops a pipeline of investable low-carbon infrastructure projects, supports supply chain growth and positions Sussex as a clean energy investment location (estimated c.24,000 jobs linked to net zero transition).

**Transport & local infrastructure**

Increasing renewable electricity generation and electrification of heat and transport require strengthened grid capacity, smart network management and coordinated regional planning. Energy infrastructure is therefore a foundational enabler of housing growth, EV rollout and wider infrastructure readiness.

**Skills & employment support**

Supports development of net zero skills pathways (retrofit, renewables, engineering, project development) and strengthens local supply chains by increasing demand.

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Informs Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP), heat decarbonisation strategies, retrofit programmes and integration of energy infrastructure into spatial plans.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Contributes to fuel poverty reduction, warm homes, decarbonisation of public estate and NHS estate partnerships, improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities.

*Inward Investment Desk*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Attracts external capital, relocations and business expansions; strengthens productivity, diversifies the economic base and improves regional competitiveness. Offers opportunities to build on existing sector specialisms in line with development of Local Growth Plan.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Drives new job creation, supports higher-value employment opportunities and links inward investors with local skills providers and workforce pipelines.
<b>Transport &amp; local infrastructure</b>	Investor engagement provides intelligence on infrastructure requirements (sites, connectivity, utilities), informing prioritisation of enabling infrastructure investment.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Identifies demand for employment land, workspace and cluster infrastructure, supporting coordinated spatial and economic planning as required through SDS and Local Growth Plan.

*Food Systems*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Strengthens SME growth, short supply chains and rural enterprise; supports local procurement models and anchor institution purchasing models; the

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
	visitor economy; and embeds community wealth building by retaining food spend within the Sussex economy.
<b>Environment &amp; climate change</b>	Promotes sustainable production, shorter supply chains, regenerative agriculture and reduced food-system emissions, supporting climate and biodiversity objectives.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Addresses food insecurity and diet-related health inequalities; supports preventative public health through improved access to affordable, nutritious food.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Integrates food infrastructure (growing space, distribution hubs, markets, composting) into spatial strategies and land-use planning.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Strengthens land-based, hospitality, processing and food-sector skills pathways, supporting workforce development and progression routes.

*Creative Industries Vision*

Areas of Competence Supported	Why it supports this Area
<b>Economic development &amp; regeneration</b>	Strengthens a fast-growing regional sector; supports cluster development, inward investment and productivity uplift through innovation and IP-led growth.
<b>Skills &amp; employment support</b>	Promotes sector-specific skills pathways, freelance career support and stronger links between industry and education providers.
<b>Housing &amp; strategic planning</b>	Informs planning for creative workspace, cultural infrastructure and cluster development; supports protection and development of employment space.
<b>Transport &amp; local infrastructure</b>	Creative corridors and cluster connectivity rely on effective transport links and digital infrastructure, supporting labour mobility and collaboration.
<b>Health, wellbeing &amp; public service reform</b>	Cultural participation and creative activity contribute to wellbeing, social inclusion and community cohesion.

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