

GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

11.00am 25 MARCH 2026

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sankey (Chair) Cox, Eggleston, Jones, Gardner and Lury

Business Partners: Tim Slaney, Prof Rusi Jaspal, Prof. Debbie Keeling, Dean Orgill, Dan Power, Andrew Swayne

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1a Declarations of substitutes

1.1 There were none. .

1b Declarations of interests

1.2 There were none.

11c Exclusion of the press and public

1.3 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Board considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

1.4 **Resolved-** That the press and public not be excluded.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

2.1 The item was deferred to the next meeting.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

3.1 The Chair provided the following Communications:

"Good morning everyone and thank you for joining today's meeting. Thank you to Arun for hosting us.

Before moving on, I would also like to recognise a long-standing member of this Board. Dean Orgill, Chair of the Brighton & Hove Growth Board, is stepping down and today will be his final meeting with us. Dean has been part of this partnership since the early days of the Greater Brighton Economic Board and has played an important role in strengthening the collaboration between the public and private sectors across the city region. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank Dean for his commitment, insight and support over the years and we look forward to working with the Growth Board's new Chair once appointed.

Before we move into the main agenda items, I'd like to begin with a few updates that reflect the significant progress being made across our region.

Firstly, an important milestone has been reached in the devolution journey for Sussex and Brighton. The Statutory Instrument was laid in Parliament in February starting the final stage in formally establishing the Sussex & Brighton Combined County Authority. We expect the new authority to be created later this spring.

It is worth noting that Sussex and Brighton is one of the leading areas within the Devolution Priority Programme to reach this stage, placing the region in a strong position as an early mover on devolution. The devolution programme continues at pace, led by the constituent councils. Ministers have confirmed their commitment to transferring significant powers and funding to the new authority, including a £1.14 billion long-term investment fund, alongside early funding of £30.4 million over the next two years and £9 million in capacity funding to support the establishment of the authority.

Taken together, this provides a strong platform to move quickly into delivery and turn these new powers into tangible outcomes on the ground.

Turning to the Sussex Energy mission, it is encouraging to see real momentum building behind the regional collaboration.

Today marks the formal start of the Solar Site Identification and Prioritisation work, with advisors now appointed and beginning work to identify and prioritise potential solar sites across Sussex. This is an important step in developing a pipeline of investable renewable energy projects for the region.

This momentum is also reflected nationally. Just yesterday, Government confirmed the Future Homes Standard, which will see the majority of new homes built with solar panels and clean heating as standard, alongside new measures to expand access to technologies such as plug-in solar. This provides clear national policy alignment with the direction of Sussex Energy — accelerating clean, homegrown energy, reducing bills and strengthening energy security.

We have also seen a major milestone in the delivery of low-carbon infrastructure with phase one of the Worthing Heat Network now live, supplying buildings including Worthing Town Hall and the Connaught Theatre through a new town-centre heat network. This first phase alone is expected to reduce emissions by around 3,000 tonnes of CO₂ each year. Sussex Energy was proud to support the launch events and sustainability showcase in Worthing, which brought together partners from across the region and demonstrated the breadth of practical energy transition activity already underway.

Alongside this, the Greater Brighton Economic Board has written to Great British Energy to express support for a proposal from Sussex's community energy organisations seeking £33 million of investment over four years to deliver 88MW of new community-owned renewable energy capacity across Sussex. This reflects the strength of Sussex's community energy sector and the role it can play in ensuring the benefits of the energy transition are felt locally.

Taken together, these developments show that Sussex Energy is moving beyond strategy into visible delivery, building the partnerships, project pipeline and regional profile that will help position energy as a key investment priority for the new Combined County Authority.

With that context, I will now turn to the agenda and provide a short introduction to each of the papers before us today”.

4 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES STUDY

4.1 The Board considered a report and presentation from Litchfields detailing the finding of the Economic Study they had undertaken.

4.2 Matters raised in discussion included logistical constraints of the transport system in the South East region and the need for a strategic transport strategy including an integrated transport system. Board members also referred to potential regional enhancement relating to the Local Government Reorganisation and Mayoral Combined Authority.

4.3 Resolved-

- 1) That the Board agrees with the seven key opportunity areas outlined in 3.11.
- 2) That the Board agrees that the Economic Opportunities Review be included within the Integration Proposal.

5 PAPER - GBEB TO SBCCA INTEGRATION PROPOSAL

5.1. The Board considered a report that sought approval of a Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority Integration Proposal.

5.2. The Board welcomed the proposal noting that it would be determined by the pace and speed of the Combined Authorities Plan.

5.3. Resolved-

- 1) That the Board notes and reviews the draft Board to SBCCA Integration Proposal (Appendix 1).
- 2) That the Board endorses the draft Integration Proposal, subject to any agreed amendments arising from discussion.
- 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.
- 4) That the Board nominates Councillor Eccleston 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.

6 GBEB OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS 2026/27

6.1 The Board considered a report that sought endorsement of the preparatory steps needed to support the operational aspects of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (“the Board”) in 2026/27.

6.2 Resolved-

That the Board:

- 1) Agrees the annual budget as set out in Table A;
- 2) Agrees on the future of the Board by no later than 24 June based on criteria outlined in [3.1], covering the period 1 October - 31 March 2027;
- 3) Agrees to release tranche 2 of the agreed budget in Table 3.1 if members agree to extend the Board;
- 4) Agrees that if members agree to dissolve the Board, the Lead Authority will make arrangements for dispensing with all liabilities (including employment liabilities) and that all associated costs will be apportioned across the Local Authority Members;
- 5) Agrees the proposed member contributions detailed in Table B and Part 2 of this report;
- 6) Note that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2026/27;
- 7) Agree the process set out at sections 3.13 to 3.18 by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2026/27.

7 GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR 2026/27 (EXEMPT CATEGORY 1)

7.1 As per the Part One minutes.

The meeting concluded at 12.45pm