

ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO AND DECISION OF CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE ON 1 SEPTEMBER 2021

**SUBJECT: FEEDBACK REPORT FROM OUTSIDE BODY –
GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD**

REPORT AUTHOR: Denise Vine – Group Head of Economy
DATE: August 2021
EXTN: 01903 737846
AREA: Directorate of Place

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This is a feedback report on the recent meeting of the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

No recommendations – Feedback Report

1. BACKGROUND:

- 1.1 Greater Brighton became a formally recognised City Region in March 2014, following the area's success in securing a City Deal Agreement with Government. A key commitment in the City Deal Agreement was the establishment of a legally constituted Economic Board. It comprises the Greater Brighton Economic Joint Committee and the Greater Brighton Business Partnership.
- 1.2 The City Region membership comprises the local authorities of Adur, Brighton & Hove, Crawley, Lewes, Mid Sussex and Worthing - the Greater Brighton Joint Committee; and, the Greater Brighton Business Partnership comprising; Adur & Worthing Business Partnership, Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership, Coastal West Sussex Partnership, Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership, the South Downs National Park Authority, Gatwick Airport Ltd, the University of Brighton, Greater Brighton Metropolitan College and the University of Sussex.
- 1.3 Greater Brighton is currently home to 830,000 people, 525,000 of whom are of working age and it provides 360,000 jobs. Greater Brighton has 35,500 active businesses and generates over £21bn in gross value added (GVA), and therefore has a crucial part to play in driving growth across the LEP region and wider south east.

- 1.4 Key assets of the City Region include an international airport, a major road and rail transport corridor to London, two universities, and unique natural capital including the coast, South Downs National Park and the UNESCO Biosphere.
- 1.5 The overarching aim of the Board is to protect and grow the economy by co-ordinating economic development activities and investment at City Region level. By joining together places and working collaboratively to build on the area's economic assets and unblock its barriers, the City Region will be able to fulfil its economic potential to become one of the United Kingdom's top performing urban economies.
- 1.6 To that end the Board has been successful, as it has helped to secure over £160m in Local Growth Funds (LGF) through several funding rounds to support projects across the City Region. A further £48m has been secured from the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to unlock the development of key strategic sites where progress has stalled.
- 1.7 Since 2014 the Board made good progress in creating a strong brand that is recognised by Government, investors and key stakeholders. Through the Board's activities there has been an increased profile for the City Region. This has helped the region to engage with Government.
- 1.8 In October 2018 ADC requested to become a member of the Great Brighton Economic Board and in June 2019 ADC formally accepted the invitation to join the Board and become a constituted member. The council's application set out the benefits to ADC of becoming a member which included:
- Arun would have an active involvement and engagement with the LEP in relation to the production of their future investment priorities and strategies and aligning pipeline projects to strategic priorities.
 - Arun exhibits strong economic and functional relationships with Greater Brighton and membership would give scope to explore coordinated investment.
 - Arun's membership of the Board would provide funding opportunities to central government funds or to Local Enterprise Partnership to support local pipeline projects.
 - Membership could also pave the way for other local partners to become formally involved in the work of the Board, such as the University of Chichester which has strong links and growth plans in Arun and would complement existing higher education partner members.
 - Build a stronger strategic level influence with central government to push for transport infrastructure improvements.
- 1.9 The Board meets quarterly with the Leaders of the member Council's and Chief Executive's. A monthly programme Board meeting is also supported by the Group Head of Economy.
- 1.10 At the last meeting of the Board on 20 July 2021 the key items discussed were:

- Crawley Recovery Focus – a presentation from Crawley BC regarding the impact of the closure, due to the COVID 19 lockdown, on Gatwick airport and the Crawley community. They also set out the interventions planned to assist the towns recovery.
- Greater Brighton Recovery: Where next? The Board wishes to play a leading role in economic recovery in the region post-pandemic. It is recognised that the 2019 Five Year Priorities may need refreshing. Carbon neutrality is becoming increasingly important, issues and opportunities surrounding Britain's exit from the European Union are becoming clearer, and the COVID-19 pandemic has seen public spending to support businesses and jobs soar. The Board has recommended research is commissioned to provide a snapshot of the City Region economy as it emerges from the pandemic, to outline the shape of recovery and identify stress points. These findings will be used to re-focus the purpose and ambition of the partnership. A report outlining how partners can pool resources and work collectively to deliver outcomes that benefit all members will be ready to go to the 1st February 2022 Economic Board meeting.
- Greater Brighton Low Carbon Economy Blue/Green Print - The Board has strategic commitment and allegiance with the GB10 Pledges and recognises that transitioning to a net zero carbon region is vital to sustaining and optimising the economy.

The Board has agreed to the development and production of a net-zero innovation led economy Investment Plan (Blue/Green Print) to use as a lobbying tool. This will have the ability to strengthen and align public investment with business investment, improve consumer confidence and outline the region's investment requirements to be leaders in the UK's green industrial revolution and transition to net zero. It will demonstrate that the Greater Brighton area can be an exemplar to government about how to decarbonise a small city, rural communities and coastal areas and will assist in future discussions with government and negotiations on funding.

It has agreed to attend, support and promote the events taking place across the region in the lead up to COP26 this November in Glasgow and has tasked officers to look at hosting a Greater Brighton led Climate Summit in October 2021 to showcase the work and current aspirations happening within the region as part of the preparation for COP26 and our collective action to address the climate crisis whilst promoting economic recovery.

- Creation of a Greater Brighton Retrofit Task Force - The Board have supported the establishment of a Greater Brighton City Region Retrofit Task Force to ensure the city-region's homes and buildings are fit for a zero carbon future. This work will be overseen by Lewes District Council and led by the University of Brighton. The Task Force not only builds on the region's strength in terms of ability to support immediate challenges, it helps to develop solutions that takes us beyond the 2030 plan for decarbonisation and identifies whole life cycle decarbonisation approaches.

The Task Force objectives are to:

- outline how public sector home and building improvements can take place on a mass scale across the region, while identifying opportunities to boost new skills, create good jobs, and drive investment in low-carbon industries.
- Identify and promote long-term changes to energy usage, increase private sector engagement with the whole-life cycle decarbonisation agenda.
- Future proofing our private and public buildings within the region.

These goals meet Greater Brighton’s carbon reduction targets by 2030 and support a sustainable economic recovery from the pandemic by creating the conditions and supply chain to support the wider decarbonisation agenda.

The Board acknowledged that this agreement is in principle whilst some of the detail continues to be worked through noting that local authority members will need to approve to proceed through their own processes. The Task Force will report back on emerging findings in April 2022, with the completed Asset Management Plan and Roadmap in October 2022.

- Greater Brighton Food Plan - The UK’s food system contributes to a large amount of economic activity. The Board have supported this proposal to proceed with scoping out a Greater Brighton Food Plan. Coast to Capital is one of the largest horticulture areas in the UK, employing upwards of 9,000 FTE jobs providing more than £1 billion of production. A food plan for the city region provides an opportunity to plan, support and build a sustainable and climate resilient economy. The proposed Plan will align with the current UK government (National Food Strategy) and international work to develop sustainable, resilient, healthy and fair food systems. The draft Food Plan will be presented to the Board in April 2022.
- Greater Brighton Investment Programme – Progress Update on the local Growth Fund (LGF) Growth Deal Rounds 1, 2 & 3.

2. PROPOSAL(S):

Feedback report

3. OPTIONS:

Not applicable

4. CONSULTATION: N/A

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		
Relevant District Ward Councillors		
Other groups/persons (please specify)		

5. ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail at 6 below)

	YES	NO
Financial		
Legal		

Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act		
Sustainability		
Asset Management/Property/Land		
Technology		
Other (please explain)		

6. IMPLICATIONS:

None

7. REASON FOR THE DECISION:

Feedback report

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

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