

## Brighton & Hove Growth Board

9<sup>th</sup> December 2025, 5:00pm – 7:00 pm

Platform9, North Road, Brighton



### MINUTES

<b>Attendees:</b>	Cllr Jacob Taylor	BHCC
	Mark Buchanan Smith	Ingka Centres/Churchill Square
	Sarah Springford	Brighton Chamber
	Kevan Smith	Brighton United
	Tom Willis	Shoreham Port
	Joanna Havers	University of Brighton
	Mohit Bajaj	Simplex Services
	Richard Freeman	Always Possible
	Victoria King	Plus Accounting
	Gavin Stewart	BHGB/Brighton BID
	James May	Sussex Cricket
	Peter Sharp	BHCC
	Sam Lucas	MHCLG
	Ana Christie	Sussex Chambers
	Vanessa Potter	SCTP
<b>Apologies:</b>	Dean Orgill	Mayo Wynne Baxter [Chair]
	Jessica Sumner	Community Works
	Razak Helalat	BlackRock Restaurants
	Alison Turner	FSB
<b>In Attendance:</b>	Jon Trigg	Platform9
	Kirsty Painter	Freedom Works

#### 1.0 Welcome, Apologies and minutes of last meeting

Gavin Stewart advised that Dean Orgill (Chair) given his apologies and that he'd been asked to undertake Chairing duties. GS welcomed everyone to the meeting. Four apologies were noted. The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

#### 2.0 Chairs Communications and conflicts of interest

No communications were shared.

Council representatives advised that they would step out during the later agenda item (Shoreham Port Onshore Wind Expansion) due to the item concerning an imminent planning application.

#### 3.0 Welcome from Jon Trigg – Platform9

Jon Trigg, Platform9 Managing Director gave the following update:

- The business included Platform9 and Freedom Works, both coworking spaces in the city
- They have been operating since 2006
- Now delivering 12 workspaces across Surrey, Sussex and Brighton and Hove
- Supporting 5,500 Businesses (from freelance/creative to large corporations)
- Focus on creating a collaborative business hub

- Currently delivering 5 business support programmes, creating networks and meaningful support.
- Focus is on a proactive approach, working with partners (B&H Chamber, Barclays Eagle Labs)
- Platform9 in Brighton currently occupies floors 5 and 6 of Vantage Point, from Jan 2026 they are taking on the whole building, this will:
  - Create a city centre hub
  - Deliver innovation space
  - Provide a Co-working café on 7<sup>th</sup> floor
  - Create a rooftop terrace for members

GS thanked JT who remained as an observer.

#### **4.0 Shoreham Port Onshore Wind Expansion**

CllrJT and PS left the room

Tom Willis, Shoreham Port CEO, presented the previously tabled paper on wind turbine expansion which outlines the proposals to erect 6 wind turbines on Basin Road South.

The highlights were:

- **Economic Role:** Shoreham Port, a Trust Port since 1760, has grown revenues by 51% since 2020, employing 210 colleagues and supporting 11,361 jobs through its supply chain impact.
- **EcoPort Leadership:** Certified as an EcoPort for 11 years, the Port leads climate action and collaborated on a Local Industrial Decarbonisation Plan to achieve net zero.
- **Emission Reduction Goal:** Research shows an 85% emissions cut is possible via electrification, requiring expanded renewable energy due to limited grid capacity.
- **Wind Expansion Proposal:** Plans to increase onshore wind turbines from 2 to 6 along Basin Road South, generating 6–8 MW to power e-HGVs, vessels, and port machinery.
- **Construction Supply Chains:** Handles 1.5–2 million tonnes of cargo annually, mainly timber, aggregates, and steel for regional construction projects, which could include key projects such as Gatwick's second runway.
- **HGV Traffic Impact:** Observational audit shows 769 weekday and 182 weekend HGV movements; growth of 25–35% expected with rising construction activity.
- **Air Quality Concerns:** NO<sub>2</sub> levels at Portslade entry point are "Extremely High for the UK," impacting local communities significantly.
- **Decarbonisation Challenges:** High costs and infrastructure gaps hinder e-HGV adoption; Sussex currently lacks zero-emission HGV charging facilities.
- **Initial Progress:** First four e-HGV chargers and an e-HGV trial will launch in Q1 2026, powered by solar and battery storage, but grid capacity is already strained.
- **Community & Economic Benefits:** Wind expansion will improve air quality, reduce noise, and create new jobs and skills in e-HGV maintenance, supporting regional growth.

#### **4.1 Group Discussion**

AC asked if there were effort being made to collaborate with other large logistic orgs in order for the whole region to be decarbonised. TW advised that they would be delighted for other hauliers to use the infrastructure, however, there were constraints with how

much power can be created and how many trucks would be able to be charged. In addition, there may be issues with local residents with an increase in HGV numbers. AC added that there would be a requirement for businesses to show their carbon footprint from the start of the haulage to the end point which will be an EU reg from Jan, this could provide a useful collaboration with businesses. TW added that if we don't innovate now, we will just receive all of the 'old' tech and none of the clean new equipment. But will still need to demonstrate net zero transportation. For example, Portsmouth has an HGV Clean Air Zone. Which is something we could consider in the future.

JH advised that the University was undertaking some work with E vehicles within the wider context of Green Zones. This includes;

1. Green Skills
2. Shoreham Port
3. Gatwick
4. Cooling Cells

JH added that there was a willingness to help move people to net zero.

TM added that once Gatwick expansion begins, it will become a drain on construction goods in the SE. There is nowhere in Sussex currently where you can service an e-HGV vehicle.

MB added that there was a huge opportunity to collaborate with training companies around green skills for projects like this.

JM added that construction at Gatwick will be a positive for the region, but it also needs to be a Sussex story.

JH added that Rampion was also a very good story in terms of green skills creation with new approaches being piloted which don't just have an economic impact.

TW left the room.

GS asked the group whether they wished to write a letter of support for proposals. A wide ranging discussion followed where members looked at:

1. The pillars by which we should assess applications/the supporting principles
2. Whether we should require an economic impact assessment
3. Whether the Growth board should make a value judgement on resident's views

The group agreed that in principle they were in support, however, it was agreed that rather than taking on the due diligence of assessing any Economic Impact work, that it should be taken as read that any such work would automatically come as part of the wider planning process and would be assessed by planning officers, the caveat being that any endorsement from the Growth Board was dependent on Planning Officers making a satisfactory judgment.

## **ACTIONS:**

**GS to draft a letter of support which will be shared to members for comment**

**GS to put an agenda point on next meeting for wider discussion on supporting principles for major planning applications**

Before moving on, SS posed a question for Jon Trigg, asking for his thoughts on how best to manage city centre empty workspace. JT advised that the current model for workspace was set up to fail with asset managers and pension funds not incentivised to put people in, adding that the rates system was also making things harder. JT advised that although it was hard to make employment space work, there needed to be more private operators, working collaboratively with the council, as well as other players such as the chamber and eagle labs to offer free support to businesses.

GS thanked JT who left the meeting.

## **5.0 Devolution Partnership Board**

Cllr JT advised the group on recent Governmental announcements around Sussex & Brighton and Hove Devolution:

- Mayoral Elections have been delayed until May 2028
- This is due to the complexity of Local Government Reorganisation happening in parallel to the creation of a MCCA
- There is no delay in the creation of the combined mayoral authority
- An informal partnership board has been created – this is a shadow board until the formal group is legally established
- This will include:
  1. 3 upper tier LAs with two reps from each
  2. Various reps from other areas (business etc)
  3. Focus will be on rapidly setting up wider governance
  4. Will turbo charge and front run the strategic planning piece for prosperity, growth and investment and to ask what the growth areas and investment cases are
  5. Funding had been confirmed at £38m, which is the minimum baseline for 30 years
  6. All the money won't be shared immediately
  7. The core investment fund should grow over time

AC added that the focus will be on the seven key areas outlined for **Mayoral Strategic Plans** in the UK:

1. **Transport and Infrastructure**  
Developing integrated transport systems, improving connectivity, and investing in infrastructure to support growth.
2. **Skills and Employment Support**  
Enhancing workforce skills, supporting training initiatives, and aligning education with regional economic needs.
3. **Housing and Strategic Planning**  
Delivering housing targets, managing land use, and ensuring sustainable development through strategic planning.
4. **Economic Development and Regeneration**  
Driving productivity, attracting investment, and revitalizing local economies through regeneration projects.
5. **Environment and Climate Change**  
Promoting green growth, decarbonisation, and resilience to climate impacts.

## 6. Health, Wellbeing, and Public Service Reform

Improving health outcomes, integrating services, and reforming public service delivery for efficiency.

## 7. Public Safety

Ensuring community safety and resilience through coordinated policing and emergency planning.

AC added that the strategy will look at big projects, but also the set-up so that we have vision and purpose. AC went on to say that we needed to know what Sussex stood for and that we still needed to come up with a vision. What we are doing in Brighton would need to be fed into the wider regional piece. There needs to be an understanding of how Brighton can support the work of Sussex. There is ongoing work with region wide policy sprints which will be ongoing at district and borough level as well as with businesses and communities.

AC added that the work and thinking of the Brighton & Hove Growth board would feed directly in to the wider Sussex piece through the B&H representatives on the Devolution Partnership Board.

### 6.0 City Region Identity Workshop

GS advised that the previous section had outlined the need for the Growth Board to understand where Brighton sits with the wider region. The board had been previously given some questions for a deep dive. These were:

- Given the city's [economic evidence base](#) and [Visitor Economy data](#), and taking in your own experience, what is Brighton and Hove's current unique economic offer and how can we best capitalise on this?
- What is our USP if we are promoting the city and seeking to attract inward investment to Brighton & Hove?
  - Supplementary Question – should we working collaboratively over a wider geography. E.g. Sussex /the Gatwick Economic Zone/others?
- How could Brighton & Hove's global recognition support development of the tourism economy, both within the city and within the Sussex regional context?

The Board split into four groups, the feedback was as follows:

#### Group 1

- We need to look at Brighton & Hove within the context of Sussex
- The things that we do in B&H will support the wider economy
- We have specialism in:
  1. Health
  2. Green energy/skills
  3. Digital sector (as an area of growth)
  4. Advanced Engineering
- All of the above will support skills in the growth areas
- We need to focus on two or three key areas
- We struggle to attract international businesses
- Businesses exist on the outskirts of B&H however, people still come to the city for its cultural benefits
- The USP is connectivity, quality of life, green space and coast
- We need to look at the city, but promote Sussex and the city for inward investment.

## Group 2

- The USP
  1. Super Fusion
  2. Never Normal
  3. Known as a place that thinks differently
  4. Catches innovation

We need to own this.

There are interesting anchor pillars with:

1. Universities
  2. Healthcare
  3. Ports
  4. Green Tech
- We need to work out the role of B&H in Sussex – partnership means more than just land for housing – we need to create more of a narrative with the rest of Sussex.
  - There is a degree of resentment from the rest of Sussex towards Brighton & Hove and there is a need to build relationships
  - B&H is a great place to live, work and play
  - We need to think specifically about what the transport issues look like
  - The SDNP Eco Report highlights that it's not Brighton & Hove v's that environment (the SDNP is an economic success in its own right).
  - Within the visitor piece there is no real Sussex brand (we need a clear brand)

## Group 3

- B&H has a very youthful offer/age demographic – where do we hear from these people?
- There is an enthusiasm for growth, jobs and affordable homes
- We are in the premier league in terms of football, food and nightlife
- Connectivity is key
- Need to work collaboratively
- Transitional population (tourists/unis etc) but we need to capitalise on that
- We need to connect with the people who leave and retain them
- There is no big food market for Sussex – we need to feed into the Buy local - buy Sussex idea
- We need a worldclass venue for music to grow that whole sector
- Need to unlock the potential of the Brighton Centre

## Group 4

- USP – it's a great place to live and work
- Brighton & Hove is a small city
- There is a strong knowledge economy
- There needs to be more opportunity for young people to feed into the strategy
- Are we giving the creative and tech sector the support they need to grow?
- There needs to be a focus on how we tell our story
- We need to work in collaboration with tech companies to promote Sussex produce
- Celebrate the unique nature of the retail in the city (The Lanes and the North Laine)
- We have excellent tourism figures, however, we need to encourage high value tourism and embed Brighton & Hove within the Sussex Visitor Strategy
- Promote Sussex as a multi-destination destination – highlighting the 'gems' from each area.

GS thanked the group for their thoughts and advised this would help with wider thinking on future strategic work.

## **7.0     City Project Focus**

Cllr Taylor introduced the topic by saying that the board could look at the big strategic picture (as above) but it could also look at quick wins. Cllr Taylor asked if the board could:

- Campaign on skills
- Help pull together a shop local campaign
- Support mentoring for young people in setting up a business

Cllr Taylor advised that these were only initial ideas, but asked the group to come forward with ideas that we, as a group, might be able to take some action on which could focus on local economic activity.

### **ACTION:**

**GS to prepare (will support from BHCC) a short survey to share with the group to gather feedback.**

## **8.0     Future Events Update**

GS advised that planning was still underway for an event in March 2026 at the Sallis Benney. More details to follow.

## **9.0     AOB**

JM raised the issue of lack of contract for the Executive Director from the 31<sup>st</sup> Dec 2026. PS advised that internal discussions were ongoing at the City Council but as of yet, no announcement can be made. The group will be updated soon as more information is available.

AC advised that there would be further engagement with businesses from Jan 2025 on the LSIP.  
[More information available here.](#)

**Date and Time of Next Meetings: TBC**