

June 2026

One voice for Sussex & Brighton

In this month's edition we reflect on this year's UKREIIF and look forward to our plans for next year; touch on the development of the region's Prosperity Strategy; welcome new members of staff and look ahead to our AGM in July 2026.

Mark's update

It feels like so much has happened since our last newsletter and yet we are still at the very beginning of the journey for Sussex & Brighton.

UKREIIF

The Strategic Authority, along with many local authority partners, attended UKREIIF in June – the UK's leading forum for real estate development and investment. Over 17,000 delegates attended which included councils, businesses and almost every single Mayoral authority. We joined as part of the Gatwick Airport Enterprise Zone and this worked well as a means of introducing and hosting us. However, next year we will attend as Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority alongside councils and other partners – comprehensively representing the region. We will be in touch with details soon and hope you will be able to join us.

AGM

On 1 July the Authority will hold its first ever AGM, and we are very pleased to be hosted in Crawley. It will be the first meeting of the Board since the recent elections, so we will be welcoming a number of new members. We are already planning our introductions and getting ready to roll out their induction programme.

After the formalities, we are planning a celebration since we weren't able to do so when we were officially formed in March. We are still finalising the plans for the day, but one thing is for certain - we will be launching the framework of our Prosperity Strategy.

Prosperity Strategy

The Prosperity Strategy, once adopted early next year, will set out the overarching ambition, aims and priorities of the Strategic Authority. An initial framework will be coming to our AGM and will set out the initial themes and direction of travel.

Over the next few months, after the launch of the framework, we will be carrying out a number of rapid policy sprint exercises, data gathering and working group discussions to develop it further. The aim is to gather as much information as possible, and involve as many stakeholders as we can, to ensure the strategy is strongly rooted in data and in our place. This will be a strategy for Sussex & Brighton.

And though we don't yet have a Mayor, and won't have one until 2028, we are ensuring that Sussex & Brighton continues to have a place at the table nationally. That's why we are lobbying to secure a place at Mayoral Council and are already contributing to the UK Mayors network of policy leads.

Heat Networks

The Strategic Authority, even at this nascent stage, is starting to show its value. Last week, we were able to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), as Sussex, to the Government on the expansion of local heat networks. If successful, the region could receive funding to set up new heat networks giving residents and businesses access to reliable, locally sourced and affordable heating.

Sussex already has two successful heat networks – one in Worthing and one in Crawley. The EOI proposes upgrading those two and adding another three to the region. Aside from the rapid work that went in to issuing the EOI, the formulation and submission of the proposal itself have demonstrated the power of working collaboratively across the councils and with SBSA. Together, we would use skills and expertise from the more mature sites to help authorities in Brighton, Newhaven and Eastbourne set up new networks more quickly and easily. A great example of partnership working benefitting the whole region.

A technological advancement

And finally, we've jumped a logistical and technological hurdle as we all now have laptops and official email addresses. Huge thanks to West Sussex County Council who not only provided our email addresses, laptops and phones but also sat on Teams with a number of us, going through step-by-step instructions to get them all to work. Not so much OK Boomer as OK Computer.



Mark Rogers

Interim Chief Executive

Who's who

Siobhan Bassford joined us at the beginning of May as our Interim Strategic Lead for Communications and Engagement. She joins us from the West Midlands Combined Authority where she was Director of Communications.

Nick Humfrey also joined us at the beginning of May as our Head of Inclusive Growth. He joins us on secondment from MHCLG where he was Head of English Devolution Strategy.

And we are looking forward to welcoming **Vinita Nawathe, Laura Wells** and **Jodie Yandell** who will be joining later this month as part of the Inclusive Growth team.

Vinita was previously Executive Director of Dorset LEP and Managing Director of the South West Observatory. She will join on 8 June as Interim Economic Policy Lead.

Laura joins us on secondment from Brighton & Hove City Council where she is currently Transport Strategy Manager. She will join on 22 June as our Transport Lead.

Jodie was previously Interim Director of Employment Skills & Inclusion at Liverpool City Region. She will also be joining on 22 June as our Interim Skills and Employment Lead.

Events and dates for your diary

10 June – Invest Crawley

16 June – Sussex Day Parliamentary Event

1 July – AGM and launch, more details to follow

Getting in touch

We now have an official enquiries email address – if you have any questions or know anyone who wants to sign up to our newsletter, get in touch at:

enquiries@sussexandbrighton-cca.gov.uk