

# GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

10.00am 21 APRIL 2020

## VIRTUAL MEETING

### MINUTES

**Present:** Councillors Humphreys (Chair) Ash-Edwards, Lamb, Nicholson, Mac Cafferty, Platts and Walsh

**Business Partners:** Sue Baxter, Trevor Beattie, Prof Debra Humphris, Nick Juba, Clare Mason, Dean Orgill, Andrew Swayne, Caroline Wood

### PART ONE

#### 27 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 27a Declarations of substitutes

27.1 Caroline Wood was present as substitute for Henry Powell.

27.2 Sue Baxter was present as substitute for Prof Adam Tickell.

##### 27b Declarations of interests

27.3 There were none.

##### 27c Exclusion of the press and public

27.4 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.

27.5 **RESOLVED-** That the press and public not be excluded.

#### 28 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

28.1 **RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 January 2020 be approved and signed as the correct record.

#### 29 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

“The intention for some time has been to launch the Greater Brighton Energy and Water Plans at this meeting and work has continued to ensure that these plans were ready for today. However, given the unprecedented times we are in we have decided to not publish these plans now and instead launch them when this Board next meets in its usual format. Furthermore, the launch of the plans was to be supported by a highly active communications campaign and resources within the Greater Brighton Communications Team. At this point we feel the priority of our individual teams should be ensuring that Greater Brighton residents and businesses have the reliable and current information they need to help them through the Covid-19 pandemic. However, that does not mean work on the plans is not continuing in the background and Ian McAulay and Geoff Raw (Chair and Vice Chair of the GB Infrastructure Panel) have begun discussing the emerging projects with Coast to Capital and how best to link these with the Local Industrial Strategy for the region.

Another item that was intended for this meeting was the unveiling of the Pitch for Place narrative for the City Region. Adam Breeze started work on this at the end of 2019 and was due to present the narrative for agreement at this meeting. As for the Energy and Water Plans, we will look to present the Greater Brighton narrative the next time this Board meets alongside the proposal for the Greater Brighton Inward Investment Desk.

As we meet virtually because of the coronavirus pandemic, we are concerned for our families, friends, communities and the effects it is having on our region. Our businesses and employers are facing a challenge the likes of which we have never experienced. The Greater Brighton Economic Board has a key role to play in supporting businesses during and following this crisis. Our Local Authorities are working hard to administer the various Government Grant schemes, to ensure that funds are distributed quickly and efficiently to businesses that desperately need this funding. We are also signposting businesses to other support mechanisms, so that businesses can access all the support that they are entitled to. In addition to the Government schemes Coast to Capital have made available a further £2m to help small businesses and social enterprises based in the LEP area.

Local Authorities are also working to support our residents, particularly those that are most vulnerable. An example of this can be seen in Crawley, where the Council have set up a major Distribution Centre at the K2 leisure centre. This is a huge effort, supported by supermarkets and local businesses, focused on getting food supplies to the vulnerable.

Our business partners and city region businesses have also been supporting businesses and residents in these difficult times. The South Downs National Park have produced an interactive map to illustrate which businesses are trading through the crisis, so that residents can search and find suppliers, deliveries and support local to where they live. Again, this is particularly important to those that are most vulnerable.

Colleagues at Ricardo are helping the NHS effort to combat Covid-19 by creating bespoke face shields for NHS healthcare staff and key workers in the care home sector. To ensure the equipment can get to frontline staff that need them as quickly as possible, Ricardo's Technical Centre in Shoreham has been repurposed as assembly lines and logistics centres for the face shields.

These are just some of the examples of how we are working decisively to overcome the current challenge posed by the pandemic. As we emerge from the current crisis will

continue to work together to ensure that we provide businesses and employers with the necessary platforms upon which they can best recover”.

### **30 GREATER BRIGHTON OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS 2020/21 AND ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

- 30.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that set out its Operational Arrangements for 2020/21 and the Annual Report for 2019/20.
- 30.2 Councillor Platts sought the Board’s view and comment on how it would approach the next year and a Covid Recovery Plan. Councillor Platts stated that the Covid outbreak had and would continue to cause massive economic shock that might entail working in different ways. Councillor Platts relayed that Brighton & Hove would be happy to play a strong leadership role if that was acceptable to the Board.
- 30.3 Councillor Nicholson welcomed the opportunity for the Board to engage early on the matter and how actions could be accelerated.
- 30.4 Councillor Lamb stated that focus was needed on support the residents of the region as well as the business sector. Councillor Lamb noted that the regional economy was centred on the expansion of Gatwick Airport that stood against Board members carbon neutrality aims. Councillor Lamb added that the region was well-placed to invest in technology and green focussed growth and there was opportunity to radically change structures and priorities in that direction.
- 30.5 Councillor Mac Cafferty relayed his agreement with the comments made adding that the cultural sector should not be overlooked. Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that the Board should quickly develop a recovery strategy and that partnership would be key in a time of a lot of uncertainty.
- 30.6 Prof Humphries endorsed the suggestions made on the economic recovery plan and noted that Universities were expecting a £6.3bn shortfall in funding relating to the foreign student programme and were lobbying government for support. Prof Humphries stated that reskilling and higher education funding could help society and help economies regenerate.
- 30.7 Councillor Ash-Edwards detailed the challenge that would be forthcoming and explained that it was critical that businesses be provided adaptation support as some SME’s might not survive a second lockdown.
- 30.8 Claire Mason agreed with the call for an economic recovery strategy and noting that the Local Industrial Strategy contained very good data and could be updated to reflect to new circumstances.
- 30.9 Jonathan Sharrock stated that the region would be one most economical affected by the Covid 19 outbreak and explained that Coast to Capital LEP were beginning to speak to partners and stakeholders and would shortly set out its proposed response.

30.10 Nick Hibberd stated that officers would take the points raised in the discussion away and start work on a simple recovery outline that would be followed by a recovery plan ensuring that fed into the Local Industrial Strategy. Nick Hibberd stated that partnership had to be central to any plan and proposals could be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

30.11 **RESOLVED-**

That the Board:

- 1) Agree and secure the budgetary contributions sought to fund the cost of running the Board and delivering its workplan in 2020/21;
- 2) Note that Brighton & Hove City Council shall continue to act as Lead Authority for the Board in 2020/21 and 2021/22;
- 3) Agree the process set out at sections 3.16 to 3.18 by which the Chair of the Board shall be nominated for 2020/21;
- 4) Approves the 2019/20 Annual Report and Board members submit the report to their respective organisations.
- 5) Note the date by which the Lead Authority must be notified of all named substitutes and instruct any necessary actions within their respective organisations;
- 6) Note the date by which the Lead Authority must be notified of all nominations to the Greater Brighton Call-In Panel and instruct any necessary actions within their respective organisations;
- 7) Note that the Annual Report will be drafted for presentation to the Board at its final meeting in the 2020/21 municipal year;
- 8) Agree to extend the current communications contract with the Adur & Worthing Communications Team by another year with an update on the second year's activities provided at the July 2020 Board Meeting

**31 FUTURE HIGH STREETS FUND - NEWHAVEN TOWN CENTRE**

31.1 The Board considered a report of the Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board that provided an update on Lewes District Council's submission to the Future High Streets Fund and its fit with the strategic objectives of the Greater Brighton Economic Board.

31.2 Councillor Nicholson welcomed the report proposals and detail as a step forward for Newhaven that were part of a range of measures to reduce deprivation, unemployment and inequality in the area.

31.3 **RESOLVED-**

- 1) That the Board notes and endorses the emerging proposals contained with Lewes District Council's submission to the Future High Streets Fund for Newhaven town centre.
- 2) That the Board produce a letter of support for the proposals if requested by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

The meeting concluded at 11.00am

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

