Sussex & Brighton | Strategic Authority

November 2026

One voice for Sussex

In this month's edition: our draft Prosperity Strategy is open for consultation, our first strategic investment in homes people can afford, and the Board's decisions on our six Lead Members and a new Representatives Panel for district and borough councils.



The SBSA's Board at Plumpton College with the new Prosperity Strategy: (l-r) Cllr Jay Mercer, Joint Vice Chair of the SBSA and Leader of West Sussex County Council; Cllr Bella Sankey, Chair of the SBSA and Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council; Cllr Jacob Taylor, Deputy Leader of Brighton & Hove City Council; Cllr Nicholas Russell, Cabinet Member at West Sussex County Council; Cllr Pete Morley, Deputy Leader of East Sussex County Council; and Cllr Andy Woolley, Joint Vice Chair of the SBSA and Leader of East Sussex County Council.

From the Chair

On Monday we opened the consultation on our draft Prosperity Strategy, *Many places, One shared future*, and if you read only one thing in this newsletter, I hope it's the section on how to get involved. It is the first Prosperity Strategy for Sussex & Brighton. At its heart is the idea that everyone should have the opportunity to build a good life here, with affordable homes, good jobs and better transport.

Many of our challenges are regional, which is why it makes sense to tackle them together. A strategy for Sussex should be shaped by the people who live and work here. Please get involved before 18 January, and please share it with your colleagues, members, residents and networks so that as many people as possible have their say. It's one of the most exciting things we've done since the Authority was established.

It's also been a significant month for housing, which I'm particularly pleased to lead for the Board. On 11 November we considered our first ever strategic investment - a £7.6 million Housing Investment Programme to help more people get a home they can afford. Too many people across Sussex are being priced out of the places they grew up in. And a home you can afford affects everything else – the jobs and courses you can apply for, the school your children attend, whether you can strengthen and maintain family ties and how you get around. This is just the start, we plan to invest at a much greater scale in the years to come.

The Budget brought welcome news too, putting more investment decisions in the hands of local areas. From income tax to business rate retention to a future Good Growth Fund for Sussex. But fairness matters - areas preparing for a Mayor must not be left behind, and this is the point I am making to Government in recent ministerial meetings in my capacity as Chair. Sussex & Brighton has one of the strongest regional economies in the UK and with the right support we can fly. We have already done a great deal of work – we will keep making that case for all of us across Sussex.

Cllr Bella Sankey

Chair, Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority



From the Chief

It's November, which means the clocks have gone back and, in our case, a draft strategy has gone forward. Plenty has happened since the last edition, so I'll keep this brisk.

Have your say on the Prosperity Strategy – and help us spread the word

Our draft Prosperity Strategy, *Many places, One shared future*, is open for consultation. Please take a few minutes to have your say at www.haveyoursay.sussexandbrighton-cca.gov.uk before the consultation closes on 18 January 2027. Individuals, organisations and community groups can all respond – please share far and wide.

It is the first Prosperity Strategy for Sussex and the first strategy the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority has published since it was established in March. Our Board agreed it at their last meeting at Plumpton College near Lewes. Fittingly, the college is celebrating its centenary and, as the UK's national centre of excellence for wine education, was a fitting place to raise a (virtual) glass to a first.

It sets out a vision of prosperity where people, place and nature thrive together, through four pathways: connecting people and places, helping every generation build a future here, enriching our living landscape, and backing business across Sussex. In practice, that means faster east–west journeys, more affordable homes, clear routes into good jobs, local jobs from our strengths in quantum technology and life sciences, and care for our land, rivers and coast. You can read the Strategy and its companion Policy Prospectus, *Building prosperity together,* on our website.

Our first investment - homes people can afford

Earlier this month we set out our first ever strategic investment - a £7.6 million Housing Investment Programme. It will back projects that speed up homebuilding, unlock stalled sites and remove barriers to development. Councils across Sussex have already put forward several opportunities, and funding will be committed to projects by 31 March 2027.

Board members saw what this is designed to support at Silvertide Point in Shoreham-by-Sea, a Hyde Housing Association development where all 159 homes are affordable. As Madness put it "Our House, in the middle of our street" - we'd just like a lot more of them.

The Budget - welcome, with some questions

The Budget included £285 million nationally for 2027–28, covering Good Growth Funds for areas with a Mayor and funding to help other areas prepare for mayoral devolution, plus £150 million nationally to help strategic authorities build capacity. We welcome both, but these are national figures, not allocations to Sussex. Areas without a Mayor will receive growth funding at a lower rate, so we're asking Government to make sure allocations recognise the work already under way here and support progress before our first Mayoral election in 2028. We're still waiting to confirm what capacity funding we can access.

The Budget also invites areas to develop business rates retention zones, where eligible areas could keep 100% of qualifying business rates growth above an agreed threshold. That could keep more of our economic growth here, but we need to understand the conditions, including any sharing arrangements.

Shaping how we work

Finally, another announcement from our November Board. We agreed to introduce a Representatives Panel which is a new, formal route for the district and borough councils across Sussex to help shape our work. It is an advisory body made up of the Leader (or a nominated Cabinet Member) of each council, with the East Sussex and West Sussex Associations of Local Councils also taking part so parish and town councils have a voice. It will meet at least four times a year, in public. Its first meeting will act as a sounding board on the draft Strategy and nominate district and borough representatives to the Board (one each for East and West Sussex) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, for the Board to appoint on 9 December. Having those voices in the room matters ahead of some big decisions this winter.

Mark Rogers

Interim Chief Executive



Senior Leadership Team

The senior team at the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority is:

Interim Chief Executive – Mark Rogers

Executive Assistant to the Interim Chief Executive – Helen Newark

Interim Strategic Lead for Organisation Design and Development – Amanda Mays

Interim Strategic Lead for PMO – Rebecca Newby

Interim Strategic Lead for Governance, Legal and Compliance (Monitoring Officer) – Jodie Townsend

Interim Strategic Lead for Finance (Section 73 Officer) – Debbie Simpson

Interim Strategic Lead for Policy, Strategy and Investment – Steve Skelton

Interim Strategic Lead for Communications and Engagement – Siobhan Bassford

Interim Joint Chief of Staff – Stephanie Foster

Events and dates for your diary

- 17 November – first meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee
- 3 December – Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the draft budget
- 9 December – Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority Board (Brighton - venue TBC)
- 18 January 2027 – Prosperity Strategy consultation closes - have your say at www.haveyoursay.sussexandbrighton-cca.gov.uk/ps/consultation/

Getting in touch

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

You can also find out more, and keep up with our latest news, on our website at www.sussexandbrighton-cca.gov.uk and follow us on LinkedIn or befriend us on Facebook.