

7. COASTAL WEST SUSSEX AND GREATER BRIGHTON LOCAL STRATEGIC STATEMENT

REPORT OF: HEAD OF ECONOMIC PROMOTION & PLANNING
Contact Officer: Claire Tester
Email: Claire.testers@midsussex.gov.uk Tel: 01444 477322
Wards Affected: All
Key Decision: Yes
Report to: Council
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Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is inform Members about the purpose and content of the Coastal west Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement (LSS) and ask Council to endorse the document as part of its duty to cooperate work on the District Plan.

Summary

2. This report provides the background to the Council's membership of the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board; the purpose of an LSS; and summarises the content of the statement that the Council is being asked to endorse.

Recommendations

3. **That Council formally endorses the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement.**
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Background to the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Partnership

4. In October 2013 Mid Sussex District Council joined the Greater Brighton City Deal, which involves Brighton & Hove City Council, Adur & Worthing Councils and Lewes District Council. The Greater Brighton partners were already part of a Strategic Planning Board with Arun and Chichester Councils and the South Downs National Park Authority, so in September 2014 Mid Sussex District Council also became a member of this Strategic Planning Board.
5. In summary, the Board has the following aims and objectives:
 - i) *The Strategic Planning Board will identify and manage spatial planning issues that impact on more than one local planning area within Coastal West Sussex and the Greater Brighton area.*
 - ii) *The Strategic Planning Board will support better integration and alignment of strategic spatial and investment priorities in the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton area, ensuring that there is a clear and defined route through the statutory local planning process, where necessary.*
6. Membership of the Strategic Planning Board contributes to this Council meeting its 'duty to cooperate' with neighbouring local authorities when producing planning documents such as the District Plan. The District Council is also a member of the Gatwick Diamond Initiative, which is a similar partnership with its neighbours to the north.

Local Strategic Statements

7. Local Strategic Statements (LSSs) are a way of local authority partners identifying their strategic cross-boundary development and infrastructure issues and how they intend to address them. They are informal, non-statutory documents that can be used to guide local plans and demonstrate how the duty to cooperate has been met.
8. In March 2012 this Council endorsed an LSS for the Gatwick Diamond area. This statement is about to be reviewed and will be the subject of a future report.
9. In 2013 the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board endorsed its own LSS. However, at the time this District Council was not a member of the Board and the LSS didn't cover the Mid Sussex area. Since that time, not only Mid Sussex but also Horsham District Council has joined the Strategic Planning Board, and therefore it was considered important to update the LSS to reflect the change in geography and other changes to national and local planning policy since 2013.
10. Whilst LSSs are primarily planning documents, both the Gatwick Diamond and Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton statements also identify and promote the economic ambitions and priorities of the local authorities. They were important influences on the Strategic Economic Plan produced by the Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership in 2014 and have been proved a useful tool in supporting bids for additional funding for infrastructure.

The Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement 2015-2031

11. The refreshed Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton LSS 2015-2031 is appended to this report. It sets out four strategic objectives:
 - a. Delivering Sustainable Economic Growth
 - b. Meeting Strategic Housing Needs
 - c. Investing in Infrastructure
 - d. Managing Environmental Assets and Natural Resources
12. These objectives are largely the same as in the original LSS and are supported by bullet points indicating how the local planning authorities will seek to achieve them. They are considered to be appropriate objectives in line with national policy and the approach set out in the Mid Sussex District Plan.
13. Objective 2, 'Meeting Strategic Housing Needs', states that local planning authorities will work proactively together and with their partners to narrow the gap between the planned provision in the area and objectively assessed needs. It is acknowledged that there will be a need to develop a strategy for doing this in the longer term (post 2025) and that this will need to be the subject of a future review of the LSS.
14. The LSS Refresh also identifies nine spatial priorities, where major development and infrastructure investment will be directed. These are:
 1. Shoreham Harbour and Brighton Airport
 2. Chichester City / Tangmere / Bognor Regis
 3. Littlehampton
 4. Worthing's Key Town Centre Sites
 5. Greater Brighton City Region
 6. Brighton – Seafront and Brighton City Centre
 7. Burgess Hill
 8. Newhaven

9. Rural Sussex

15. These priorities identify the major development areas proposed in local plans and the strategic level infrastructure needed to deliver them. They are not intended to cover the entire infrastructure requirements but rather to identify those elements that might require additional support through such mechanisms as the Local Growth Fund. Including specific reference to these items of infrastructure is intended to support bids for any such funding. For Burgess Hill the spatial priority is as follows:

“Mid Sussex District Council will work with its partners to maximise the opportunities of the Burgess Hill Growth Area, supporting delivery of a revitalised town centre; 5,000 new homes both within and on the edge of the town; a new business park; and a new science and technology park. This development will need to be supported by:

- New transport infrastructure, including a sustainable transport package to improve access within Burgess Hill, a new cycle link between Burgess Hill and Haywards Heath, construction of a new northern link road and A2300 corridor improvements between Burgess Hill and the A23;
- New community infrastructure including two primary schools, a secondary school, neighbourhood facilities and a centre for community sport;
- Improvements to wastewater treatment capacity and odour management; and
- Ultrafast broadband to premises for new housing, employment and retail development”.

16. Also of relevance to Mid Sussex is the Rural Sussex spatial priority, which states:

“The local authorities and the South Downs National Park Authority will work together with partners to ensure that the rural parts of the sub-region benefit from long term sustainable growth through:

- Supporting delivery of affordable housing;
- Improving connectivity between the priority sectors of the rural economy, including tourism, leisure, agriculture and horticulture;
- Identifying priority infrastructure needs to support rural businesses, including home-workers, particularly in relation to communications infrastructure which improves accessibility to the main employment centres within the sub-region;
- Facilitating a good supply of small business, retail and community facilities to support the sustainability of rural communities;
- Supporting existing and proposed land management and land based businesses that protect and enhance the landscape character of the countryside;
- Identifying priority infrastructure needs to support rural businesses, including home-workers, particularly in relation to communications and digital infrastructure which improves accessibility markets and customers.
- Safeguarding mineral sites and areas with potentially economically viable minerals from alternative forms of development to ensure a steady supply of minerals for use in construction and industrial purposes
- Improving access to the South Downs National Park particularly by sustainable modes of transport from key gateway locations”.

17. Both of these spatial priorities are considered to be consistent with the Mid Sussex District Plan and the Mid Sussex Economic Development Strategy. Their inclusion will demonstrate that the local authorities are working cooperatively on these matters and will support bids for grant funding to support investment in these areas.

Conclusion

18. It is considered that endorsing the refreshed Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement 2015-2031 will support the Council's growth ambitions at Burgess Hill and the policies within the District Plan and Economic Development Strategy. It will also help to demonstrate that the Council has met its duty to cooperate in the production of the District Plan and intends to continue good partnership working on strategic planning issues into the future.
19. The Strategic Planning Board will be considering the LSS at its meeting on 18th January, which is after the report deadline for this Council. If any amendments are made to the LSS by the Board then these will be tabled at Council.

Policy Context

20. The District Plan is being developed to reflect the area's Sustainable Communities Strategy. The 'Mid Sussex Sustainable Communities Strategy' has a vision of:

"A thriving and attractive District, a desirable place to live, work and visit. Our aim is to maintain, and where possible, improve the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our District and the quality of life for all, now and in the future."

This vision is underpinned by four priority themes that promote the development of sustainable communities:

*"Protecting and enhancing the environment
Promoting economic vitality
Ensuring cohesive and safe communities
Supporting healthy lifestyles"*

21. The District Plan is based on the above vision and themes, and is intended to be the implementation tool for achieving the planning aspects of this vision. The LSS has very similar strategic objectives to the Sustainable Communities Strategy and shows how the Council will work with its partners over a wider area.

Other Options Considered

22. There is an alternative option of not endorsing this LSS. However, this would be likely to damage relationships with other partners and could be a risk to the District Plan's examination prospects.

Financial Implications

23. There are no financial implications of this report.

Risk Management Implications

24. Strategic Risk 2 for this year is "Failure to resubmit a District Plan ... which meets community needs and aspirations, protects Mid Sussex from inappropriate development", and which "meets the tests of legality and soundness at examination." It is considered that the endorsement of this LSS will support the District Plan at examination by helping to demonstrate how we have met our duty to cooperate with coastal neighbours.

Equality and Customer Service Implications

25. There are considered to be no equality or customer service implications.

Other Material Implications

26. There are no other material implications.

Appendix

- Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Local Strategic Statement 2015-2031