

# COASTAL WEST SUSSEX & GREATER BRIGHTON STRATEGIC PLANNING BOARD

## Terms of Reference

October 2013

### 1. Aims and Objectives

**(1) 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.<sup>1</sup>**

- 1.1 Local authorities are required by law through the Duty to Cooperate to '*engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis*' on planning matters that impact on more than one local planning area ('strategic planning matters'). The duty is further amplified in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which sets out the key 'strategic priorities' that should be addressed jointly<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.2 The Strategic Planning Board ('the Board') is responsible, on behalf of the CWS and Greater Brighton Authorities, for identifying the sustainable development issues that impact on more than one local planning area and agreeing how these should be prioritised and managed (covering the whole local plan cycle from plan-making, through to delivery and monitoring)
- 1.3 As part of this process, the Board should review existing 'strategic priorities' being progressed through the current local plans and identify areas which are likely to be vulnerable in the legal tests applied under the Duty to Cooperate.

**(2) 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.**

- 1.4 In order to maximise development potential and investor confidence in the wider CWS area there should be a clear strategic planning vision which helps integrate spatial and infrastructure investment priorities. The Board will be responsible for developing the vision and will work jointly with the economic and regeneration Coastal West Sussex Partnership (CWSP) to integrate this with long term investment priorities and ensure that these are aligned with other public and private sector investment plans.
- 1.5 The Board will also work closely with the CWSP on any work that is already underway and is relevant to the Board's strategic planning role. Of immediate priority, the Board will support the CWSP in developing an investment framework which builds on the priorities set out in the report 'Developing an Employment and Infrastructure Study'<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton area covers the local planning areas of Adur, Arun, Chichester, Worthing, the South Downs National Park, Brighton and Hove and Lewes.

<sup>2</sup> 'Strategic priorities' that local planning authorities have a duty to cooperate on are defined in Paragraph 156 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

<sup>3</sup> Parsons Brinckerhoff, February 2012

## **2. Membership and Accountabilities**

- 2.1 The Strategic Planning Board provides a forum for local authorities to manage issues that impact on more than one local planning area, developing the necessary evidence base and ensuring wider corporate and other relevant matters are fully taken into account. Although there is a clear emphasis on reaching a common approach on key strategic policies, the Board is an advisory body, therefore any decisions on taking forward outputs from its work programme (e.g. shared evidence or research) will be the responsibility of individual local authorities and the statutory planning process.
- 2.2 Core membership of the Board will comprise representatives from Adur, Arun, Chichester, Worthing, Lewes, West Sussex County Council, Brighton & Hove City Council, and the South Downs National Park. Each Authority will be invited to contribute to the work programme and to consider strategic planning issues that impact on the wider area. Others may be invited to attend on an occasional basis if an issue being considered is likely to have a significant impact on the authority's planning area. Each constituent authority will be represented on the Board by the relevant holder of the planning portfolio to ensure confidence of authority and commitment to resources.
- 2.3 Regular feedback and briefings to the constituent members' political and corporate leadership should be used as a way of ensuring wider ownership and support for the Board's work as it progresses. There should also be appropriate liaison between the local authority representatives of both the Board and the CWSP.
- 2.4 The Chairman of the Board will be appointed on a rotating basis which should be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure fair and equal opportunities amongst the constituent member authorities. Given the potential close working between the Board and the CWSP, the chairman should have a place on the CWSP Board to provide a link between the two bodies.

## **3. Ways of Working**

- 3.1 Refer to Diagram in Annex 1 for details of working arrangements. The Strategic Planning Board will agree a work programme, including steering and management arrangements for each project, on an annual basis. This could include setting up 'task and finish' groups for specific projects, either reporting directly to the Board or on a shared basis with the CWSP. The Board will meet four times a year at times to best suit the forward work programme. Additional meetings may be called if workload justifies. In the interests of transparency, notes of the Board's meetings will be publically available.
- 3.2 The CWS Development and Infrastructure Group and the CWS Officer Group will work on behalf of the CWS Strategic Planning Board and the CWS Partnership Board to provide either direct advice or support or to deliver agreed projects.
- 3.3 Good project management principles should be applied, such as risk management, particularly around political sensitivities and funding, and keeping the work programme

under review to ensure that it is meeting the agreed objectives and the identified priorities remains relevant.

#### **4. Key relationships**

- 4.1 **CWS Partnership:** The Board will work closely with the CWSP to ensure the long term integration of strategic planning and investment priorities. The technical work, including appropriate support structures, for any joint projects will be agreed at an annual meeting of the two bodies. An early initial joint meeting should be used to agree how to take forward any immediate shared objectives, particularly related to those identified in Paragraph 1.5. Local authority Leaders and Chief Executives should be invited to attend this initial meeting to ensure corporate buy-in for the priorities and work programme.
- 4.2 **Coast to Capital LEP:** The LEP plays a key support role on economic development and regeneration and is responsible for major funding streams, such as the Growing Places Fund. It is also identified in Local Planning Regulations as a body that local authorities need to take account of in meeting its 'duty to cooperate' obligations. Although the C2C LEP's role in strategic planning has yet to be determined, any support provided to the local authorities is likely to use the existing local partnership areas, such as Coastal West Sussex. Through the CWSP, the Board should ensure regular liaison with the LEP Board and provide advice on strategic planning and investment priorities for the CWS area, particularly through the preparation and delivery of a strategic planning and investment framework.
- 4.3 **West Sussex Joint Planning Board:** The JPB is an established forum for all West Sussex Authorities to come together and discuss planning issues of common interest. This will provide a useful forum for the Board to share and learn from good practice, to receive updates on common policy or legislative changes, and to contribute to the management of the wider strategic planning issues i.e. strategic infrastructure needs and priorities beyond the CWS area.
- 4.4 **Other Key Partners:** A number of key bodies and organisations will be necessary to support the work of the Board either through direct support/advice or through joint projects. Most of these will be subject to the legal requirements of the 'duty to cooperate' and may well already be involved in the other partnerships mentioned above. Key bodies include the Environment Agency, Highways Agency, Homes and Communities Agency. Private sector infrastructure providers, particularly utility companies, will also be key partners particularly in terms of ensuring alignment between investment plans and priorities.

#### **5 Technical Support**

- 5.1 The Board will be supported by an officer group with representatives from each of the constituent authorities. The group will act as a steering group for each identified project and will establish suitable technical support and project management arrangements for each. This may involve the use of 'task and finish' groups and could include the use of external expertise e.g. from key statutory bodies identified in Paragraph 3.6 above or the use of consultants. The group will therefore also be responsible for any necessary joint procurement arrangements. Where joint projects with the CWS Partnerships are

commissioned, appropriate joint steering and technical arrangements should be established with clear lines of responsibility and accountability.

- 5.2 A representative of the officer group will attend the Strategic Planning Board meetings and provide regular progress updates on the work programme to the Chairman. A representative(s) of the officer group will also be identified as the main liaison with key partners.
- 5.3 In establishing the new support arrangements, the opportunity should be taken to identify where key skills and expertise lie within the local authorities and partners, and share these where it is practical to do so. The identification of 'lead' experts can be used to develop a relationship with other organisations on behalf of the partners.
- 5.4 The officer group will work closely with the CWSP's Development and Infrastructure Group and will establish joint working arrangements where required to support any Strategic Planning Board/CWS Partnership projects.

## **6. Review**

- 6.1 It is important to keep arrangements flexible to respond to changes in planning policy, changes in priorities and work programmes and to move forward from plan policy development stages to implementation which may require changes to.

## ANNEX 1: Proposed working arrangements in Coastal West Sussex & Greater Brighton area

