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**Report reveals decade of economic recovery for West Sussex, urges local collaboration**

A report commissioned by the Coastal West Sussex Partnership offers stark warnings about the future of the local economy and urges a collaborative approach to combating the economic impacts of Covid-19.

The Covid-19 Impact Assessment for Coastal West Sussex, by Hatch, found the region’s challenges include a dependence on tourism, high populations of people self-employed in the creative/digital sector, and concentrations of older residents. The impact on young people, particularly those with fewer skills, was highlighted.

The report found that, in Worthing, 42% of businesses are in exposed sectors, and parts of Bognor Regis have around 60% of jobs in sectors unable to trade. In Arun and Chichester, 14-20% of registered jobs are self-employed.

Using Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) methodology, the report predicts a 11.2% loss in gross value added (GVA) for coastal West Sussex and that it will take the area’s economy nine years to recover from its lost GVA. For the West Sussex County Council area, recovery is expected to take slightly longer.

The report offers some optimism: an analysis suggested that the region is likely to face less severe economic impacts than the national average. And coastal West Sussex and the West Sussex County Council area are expected to face roughly the same drop in economic output as the wider Coast to Capital LEP. However, the report urges zero complacency in the local response.

Henry Powell, Chairman of the Coastal West Sussex Partnership, said: *“We have a pivotal role to play in the coordination of the local response to Covid-19, sitting at a key intersection between business, local government and education providers.*

*“We will continue to take a collaborative approach with like-minded organisations as we define our response to Covid-19. Our key areas of work, arising from the report, are to engage local partners, work together to find routes into employment for those made redundant, build more local resilience, for instance in supply chains, help develop the skills of local people, and help promote the region as safe to return for visitors when we are given the all-clear to do so from central and local Government.*

*“While the impacts of Covid-19 are expected to be felt in our communities long-term, local organisations now have an opportunity to come together like never before.”*

To read the report, please visit <https://coastalwestsussex.org.uk>.

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**Notes to Editors**

The Coastal West Sussex Economic Partnership is a business led partnership; championing economic growth and influencing political strategy and investment decisions through collaboration between the public and private sector.

For more information, please visit <https://coastalwestsussex.org.uk>.