

Innovation and partnership: driving a bright future for Coastal West Sussex

Five key themes that will help meet the challenges of the pandemic and Brexit – and grasp the opportunities ahead



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Introduction.

Intro from Caroline Wood, Director, Coastal West Sussex Partnership

This white paper has been created for the Coastal West Sussex Partnership to bring into focus the challenges and emerging opportunities for the economy of Coastal West Sussex as the country comes out of the pandemic.

It aims to give the CWS Partnership and our partners a clear purpose, an insight into the innovation and flexibility of our business community - even in turbulent times – and an understanding of what is achievable if we all continue to work together in future.

The valuable insights included will help us, as a partnership, make the right connections and interventions to ensure the region's coastal economy can prosper long beyond the impacts of the pandemic and Brexit.

As part of that process, we have identified five key themes on which to build the future of the Coastal West Sussex region. Themes which, with the right support, can take us forward into a brighter future.

These are:

- 1 | Digital and physical infrastructure - improving connectivity across and beyond the coastal area
- 2 | Space - making the best use of land to provide good quality homes and employment space
- 3 | Skills – raising aspirations to learn new skills for the jobs of the future
- 4 | Promotion of the region (including culture and the visitor economy) to attract visitors, investors and new businesses to the area
- 5 | Sustainable growth – promote, encourage and enable activities that help address the climate change crisis

There is no doubt these themes and goals have been challenged in recent times, by the economic and health impact of Covid-19 and the political and practical challenges of Brexit. The retail and visitor economy sectors in particular have been badly hit and there are few businesses which have not felt the pain in one way or another.

There are also, however, some remarkable stories of how our businesses have survived through being flexible, innovative and able to move quickly – thanks in part to the willingness of our local councils to do everything in their power to help.

This is one of the special characteristics of our region and deserves to be celebrated. Businesses in the Coastal West Sussex region are wanted, valued and appreciated – and given every chance and opportunity to grow.

That's something we need to shout about as we seek new investment and funding, together with our collective determination to reduce our impact on the environment and put sustainability at the core of the region's future plans.

Chapter One.

In detail: the five themes underpinning an exciting future for Coastal West Sussex

1 | Infrastructure – digital and physical

The arrival of Ultrafast (Gigabit) Broadband

Why Adur & Worthing looks to Singapore, Korea and Japan

Ultrafast (1 gigabit) broadband connectivity is now available in Worthing and will be increasing its presence along Coastal West Sussex. Businesses and residents are describing it as a potential game changer.

Currently available to 20,000 householders and soon to be rolled out across the region, the project has seen councils across our region work together for several years and now sees the Adur & Worthing region ahead of many major cities in the UK, with ambitions to be a world leader in digital connectivity.

Having access to ultrafast Wi-Fi can reduce our

impact on the environment by giving people the tools required to work from home and build a business where they live, reducing the need to travel and subsequently, their carbon footprint. Ultrafast broadband may also change the way we work; companies may rely less on a city based head office and instead, embrace a hub and spoke model, bringing both environmental and personal benefits.

This next-generation connectivity has the potential to revolutionise coastal communities, making them more attractive places to live, giving people the freedom to live and work more flexibly and helping develop thriving digital economies.

Over 200 public-sector sites have been identified along the coast enabling Local Authorities to build new gigabit-capable services, an investment of £3.5million. The Full Fibre Programme is focused on three priorities: developing the network within and between key towns; enabling the extension of the network into rural areas, and as developing

infrastructure to accelerate future technologies.

Alex Bailey, Chief Executive at Adur & Worthing Councils, explains the vision:

How did the project come about?

We looked around the world at what the economic game-changers were. It was clear that ultra-fast gigabit connectivity (via dark fibre) was vastly influential in the investment and future success of places such as Korea, Singapore and Japan. The rest of the world were playing catch up.

In the UK it wasn't happening fast enough, in part because of the near monopolistic primacy of incumbent broadband suppliers. Frankly, it paid them to stick with much slower broadband products. In our research we came across a number of challenger companies who were trying to do something about that and hatched a plan.

As Adur & Worthing we weren't big enough in

scale to attract their attention on our own, so over the course of two-and-a-half years we worked closely with West Sussex County Council (and all of the Districts and Boroughs in the County) and went to the market to seek one commercial partner able and willing to build out Ultrafast connectivity in all of our urban areas across West Sussex. The successful contractor (CityFibre) have now started work in the west of Worthing. It will take them three to four years to build out the whole of the area, but they are stepping up their speed dramatically.

The result is that West Sussex is now able to install Ultrafast broadband ahead of many major cities (for example Brighton or Newcastle-Upon-Tyne) and in terms of the CityFibre investment is only the 13th place in the UK so far to receive significant investment. For Adur & Worthing, CityFibre will be spending somewhere between £20-£30million putting Ultrafast fibre into sewers, drains and under pavements to connect us up.

The challenge (and opportunity) for the A27...



By Henry Powell, Chairman,
Coastal West Sussex Partnership

Our number one objective for our local road network is to decrease the travel time from Brighton to Portsmouth to be on a par with other regional hubs. For instance, you can drive from Exeter to Plymouth, a similar distance, on a dual carriage way through a national park in 45 minutes, so that's a benchmark. Our typical journey is an hour and 10 minutes.

There are currently three perennial obstacles along the A27: Worthing, Arundel and Chichester. But what has been important to boost our morale is that we have made a leap forward at Arundel where a bypass route has been recommended by Highways England, which avoids building in the South Downs National Park.

Negotiations continue around a Chichester bypass, too, and Chichester District Council, as part of its Local Plan Review 2035, aims to improve the A27. But we must be ambitious and make sure that any new route reflects and supports travel patterns long into the future.

What does it mean for the region?

It's a strong exemplar of what can be done working together. It's also perhaps a different way of thinking about building infrastructure for the economy of this century (rather than the last). Not just buildings or roads or rail but digital infrastructure.

What about free public Wi-Fi and Internet of things technology

Our plans are advanced for free Ultrafast public Wi-Fi across Adur & Worthing which we call **Citizen Wi-Fi**. We go live in 2021 and anybody will be able to log onto free Ultrafast Wi-Fi. We believe this will have a significant impact on a number of elements of our economy (visitor, retail etc.).

A deal has also been struck to build the sensors necessary for **Internet of Things** investment, which could tempt innovators from all over the world to test their products in Adur & Worthing before going to market. What you begin to create is a 'testbed' for industries who may wish to bring products and services here to try out. After all, there aren't many places with free public Wi-Fi, gigabit technology and IoT infrastructure.

Can digital transformation change the area on its own?

On its own, no, but it's a significant part of what we need to do. Individuals and companies are attracted here for a number of reasons: space to expand, good access to skills and talent, good schools and universities, high quality affordable housing, strong community offer, vibrant cultural scenes, strong transport link, for example. It all fits together.

Families and businesses are already moving here from places like Brighton and London. But it would be wrong to say we are seeking to just compete with Brighton, we're not. Brighton has its own unique attractions, offers and selling points. However it doesn't yet have the same digital connectivity we are building here or the free public Wi-Fi. As part of the Greater Brighton Economic Board we work symbiotically with Brighton & Hove to seek to develop the economy of the whole of the urban coastal strip.

But as genuine innovation space, I would like us to be rivalling some of the towns in Korea, California and Japan. That's the level of ambition we are looking to.

Innovation projects

Launch of the Innovation South Virtual Campus

A new virtual campus to address the lack of provision of accessible training in an online environment in the Coastal West Sussex region launched January 2021.

Supported by the University of Chichester the *Virtual Campus* will cover skills such as computer programming, digital marketing, project management, IT project management and offer a wide range of courses which businesses are able to access for free.

"This is an exciting project and one we would love to see expand. We would love to see organisations sponsor further developments," said Dave Cooper of the University of Chichester.

Extracting heat from the sewers

Sewers contain a lot of untapped energy, predominately methane – and now methods are being developed to extract it. Worthing Borough Council is working alongside Southern Water on a project which sees various government bodies buying the energy created for public sector buildings with the potential to then supply significant reduced green heat to local residential areas.

Robotics and remote sensing in horticulture

Growers in West Sussex are experimenting with robotics for fruit picking, in collaboration with universities, as they look to limit their reliance on seasonal workers in a post-Brexit world.

Arundel-based Fargo has also developed remote sensing technology for the detection of pre-symptomatic disease in plants, bringing benefits for the business and for the environment due to less wastage.

Enterprise Centre and Ravenna Point, Chichester

Chichester District Council has recently completed 2 projects that can offer space to new and growing businesses in the Chichester area.

The Enterprise Centre, is a £6M project funded by Chichester District Council which opened in 2018 to provide flexible working space, meeting rooms and workshops at affordable rents - and is aimed at start-ups and SMEs. Currently there are 70 diverse businesses on site and its popularity is growing.

Ravenna Point is even newer and was completed in 2019. It consists of six industrial units offering large, modern facilities and is already close to being fully let.

The Track, Bognor Regis

West Sussex County Council has invested in the growth of the creative and digital sectors in Coastal West Sussex through the creation of The Track in Bognor Regis, a shared and collaborative workspace with ultrafast fibre connection within Bognor Regis railway station.

The county council is leasing two formerly vacant retail spaces in the station and has redeveloped them according to plans by internationally renowned designer Wayne Hemingway, with the assistance of a Local Growth Fund grant through Coast to Capital. The project has created over 420m2 of employment space.

The Track opened in September 2020 and offers co-working space, project rooms, and offices as well as networking events and business support. The council has appointed Town Square Spaces to operate The Track and deliver services to members and the local business community. During the Covid 19 restrictions, support and engagement activities are being delivered online by Town Square, but The Track will be open to members as soon as restrictions are lifted.

2 | Space

Finding more space for businesses which are growing in the Coastal West Sussex region, and for businesses looking to move here, is an ongoing challenge.

Local Authorities and partners across the Coastal West Sussex region are always looking for ways to increase and develop new commercial space; encouraging existing businesses to stay and grow whilst attracting new businesses to move to the area. The pandemic has made people rethink their work-life balance, and realise the benefits of living and working locally. Reducing the need for long commutes has obvious environmental and well-being advantages so we need to make sure there is the space for companies to operate.

Here we talk to David Martin, Partner and Head of Sussex Coast at national independent property advisors SHW, to discover the current picture for commercial space.

What are the specific challenges in Coastal West Sussex for commercial space?

“What we are short of is land for development, especially in the industrial sector which often heads to Crawley instead. So, it’s good to see councils are now focusing on solving that issue.

“Rents here are not sufficient to justify building new premises without an end user in place, but the flip side is that rents are far more affordable than in London or Brighton, and so businesses are taking up space here. The biggest recently was in Worthing where the Inland Revenue took 80,000 sq. ft. It’s a pre-let situation but nevertheless shows confidence in the region.”

What would you like decision makers to do?

“We need to identify sites where business can come and grow. We need greenfield sites where a company can take 50,000 sq. ft – but know if they need 100,000 sq. ft in future it’s possible.

“Rolls Royce was probably the last big company to move into our region and they started off with 300,000 sq. ft in Chichester and then built another 100,000 sq.ft on top in the space of three years.”

Has the commercial property industry been impacted negatively by the pandemic?

“It’s been very tough for retail but the flip side is that a lot of retailers have focused on internet sales and been successful – and so they need bigger premises as a result

“Equally, a lot of the bigger manufacturers had to deal with the problem of social distancing, which meant they could no longer produce what they needed in the space they had. A good example is The Body Shop who took on a building of 100,000 sq. feet in Worthing to use as a warehouse, resulting in more space at its Littlehampton base. Increased internet sales mean they are now a retailer and a distribution company.”

New commercial space in the pipeline

Decoy Farm

Backed by Coast to Capital, a vacant household waste site (over 7 acres) which stopped operating in 1979 is being turned into a nine-hectare industrial and business space by Worthing Borough Council.

The site had been left undeveloped for years due to significant contamination but will now be transformed to provide 34,000 square metres of commercial floorspace, creating over 2,200 jobs. The aim is to develop flexible unit spaces so they can be subdivided or merged to provide for a range of uses and for businesses to have flexibility built into their accommodation needs.

Ford Strategic Site

Arun District Council received a Masterplan Document in December 2020 for a strategic development site at Ford and is now asking members of the public to submit their views.

The Landings at Ford Airfield aims to deliver 1500 homes, as part of a plan that also delivers other infrastructure such as schools, a community hub, sports pitches, public spaces and will offer up to 9000 sqm of employment floorspace with potential for further commercial space.

Brighton City Airport, Shoreham

Planning consent has been granted for 260,000 sq. ft of new commercial space on land in Shoreham, which also includes tenants Brighton City Airport. The site is already popular with a mix of aviation and non-aviation businesses – and interest is expected to be high.

3 | Skills

Dave Cooper, Professor of Management and Economic Development, Head of Business School, University of Chichester, believes that skills will play a vital part in the regeneration and future success of the region.

Here he explains why.

What would you pick out as the biggest challenges for the economic future of the region?

“There’s no doubt in my mind that our emphasis should be on skills. By that I mean not just in schools and colleges, but also the workplace. We need to up-skill our workforce to be ready for the future.

“Beyond that there’s a need for cultural regeneration. People moving here are older and want to live by the sea but there’s a tiredness about some of the region, especially Bognor, Littlehampton and parts of Worthing and Lancing, it needs reinvigorating. It’s about place and investment in place.”

How would you sum up the importance of digital skills to the future of Coastal West Sussex?

“I think they are absolutely crucial. There’s a latent capability in the area, spreading west from

Brighton. The conversations we’ve been having around developing a creative digital competence in Worthing are exciting and I can see that becoming more and more important.

“Even the manufacturing organisations we have in the region are in the advanced manufacturing space. You are getting a merge of electronic, mechanical and computer-based systems. It’s all about automation and computing skills.”

How do you think the pandemic, and the complications of dealing with Brexit, have changed the needs of students in Coastal West Sussex?

“It’s not so much changed as exacerbated needs that were already there, because finding a job is tough. So, the need to equip young people with digital skills has never been greater. It’s the one field where jobs are open to them and where there is a skills shortage.

“We have found that courses for digital skills, and especially digital marketing, are oversubscribed at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.

“The need for people to work from home has also made businesses realise they need more digital skills and apprenticeships can fill that gap.”



Digital culture and content which can inspire change

One of the most exciting aspects of our region is the emergence of an exciting digital culture and content offering.

At the University of Chichester's Tech Park in Bognor Regis there is a compelling creative and digital offer providing study in computer **games, film, video, animation** and now **e-sports**, which is already a multi-billion-dollar industry.

In fact, Bognor Regis is only the second place in the UK where you can study e-sports and that makes it incredibly attractive. We need to encourage students to stay in the region after university and build businesses here.

With the University at one end of the coastal strip, the vibrancy and digital content creativity of Brighton at the other and a cluster of video and sound production companies centred on Worthing, there is a game-changing opportunity to build something special.

The world of creative media production is changing beyond recognition and coalescing around a single digital hub. The region is in a position to take a strategic lead in virtual production and the underlying creative digital sector.

Creating clusters or hubs for creative sectors is a well-established route to innovation and sustainable opportunity development. However, combining this approach with embracing the Esports cafes/culture would be unique. Ideally both would occupy the same building to create a natural intersection for fostering education, collaboration and opportunity. Establishing them in visible town centre spaces, utilising redundant space, can act as a focus for renewal and tourism.

To explore this creative media production opportunity further is a unique partnership that brings together the CWS Partnership, Local Authorities, University of Chichester, Wired Sussex and private sector businesses.

Skills for horticulture

There are some worrying skills gaps in the horticultural industry to tackle, according to Richard Hopkins, Managing Director of Fargo.

"It's not just the one we always hear about in terms of seasonal pickers and packers after Brexit," said Richard. Of course, that is a significant threat to the industry because if you can't pick your crop there's no point growing it. But there is also a need for STEM skills as well as leadership and management, HR and other business skills, energy management, supervisory skills, technology and digital business growth."

4 | Promoting Coastal West Sussex as a place to visit, live and do business

Broadcasting what makes Coastal West Sussex such an exciting place to live, work and visit, in a bid to encourage investment, is a key part of the partnership's role.

Here, businesses from across CWS describe what's special about the region, what's happening in their sector, what challenges are being experienced because of the pandemic and what we need to shout about...

The visitor economy: Interview with Jo Williams, Partnership manager, Experience West Sussex Partnership

What's new and what opportunities could there be ahead for the visitor economy in Coastal West Sussex?

"The growth of **wine tourism** for Sussex and the South East is a big opportunity and still in its infancy. Sussex should look to Margaret

River in Western Australia, as to what could be realised in 10-20 years.

"In terms of markets, there is a big opportunity to maximise international markets that already enter the UK through Gatwick, Newhaven and Ashford. By providing appeal to these audiences and increasing bed nights in West Sussex before they move on elsewhere could deliver additional spend and jobs. **Markets include Asia and North America** as well as **Europe** and **London** for short breaks."

Are there any opportunities arising from the pandemic?

"West Sussex offers an array of accommodation to capitalise on **multigenerational travel**, a trend that has been growing but is set to be massive post-Covid restrictions. Self-catering, single unit properties and camping/ glamping, for instance.

"There's also an opportunity to showcase what West Sussex can deliver for weekend breaks, staycations and extended breaks whilst people **work remotely** to maximise their time away. We also plan a marketing campaign to push the region as a **dog friendly** destination."

How heavily has the visitor economy been hit by Covid and what can be done to revive it?

"Covid's impact on tourism, aviation, events and the visitor economy has been tough - and all these sectors are vital, not just to the West Sussex economy and the area's attractiveness for inward investment, but to everyone's way of life.

"The Tourism Alliance, which represents the visitor economy sector as a whole, has submitted a request to the Treasury calling for short term immediate support and also to ensure consumer demand is there when operations restart.

"This would include continued and wider business rates relief, rent protection and a dedicated tourism resilience fund. Collaboration, communication and partnership amongst all support partners here is critical if those recovery plans are to be effective."

How difficult is it to make future plans for growth when so many businesses in the sector are fighting for their lives?

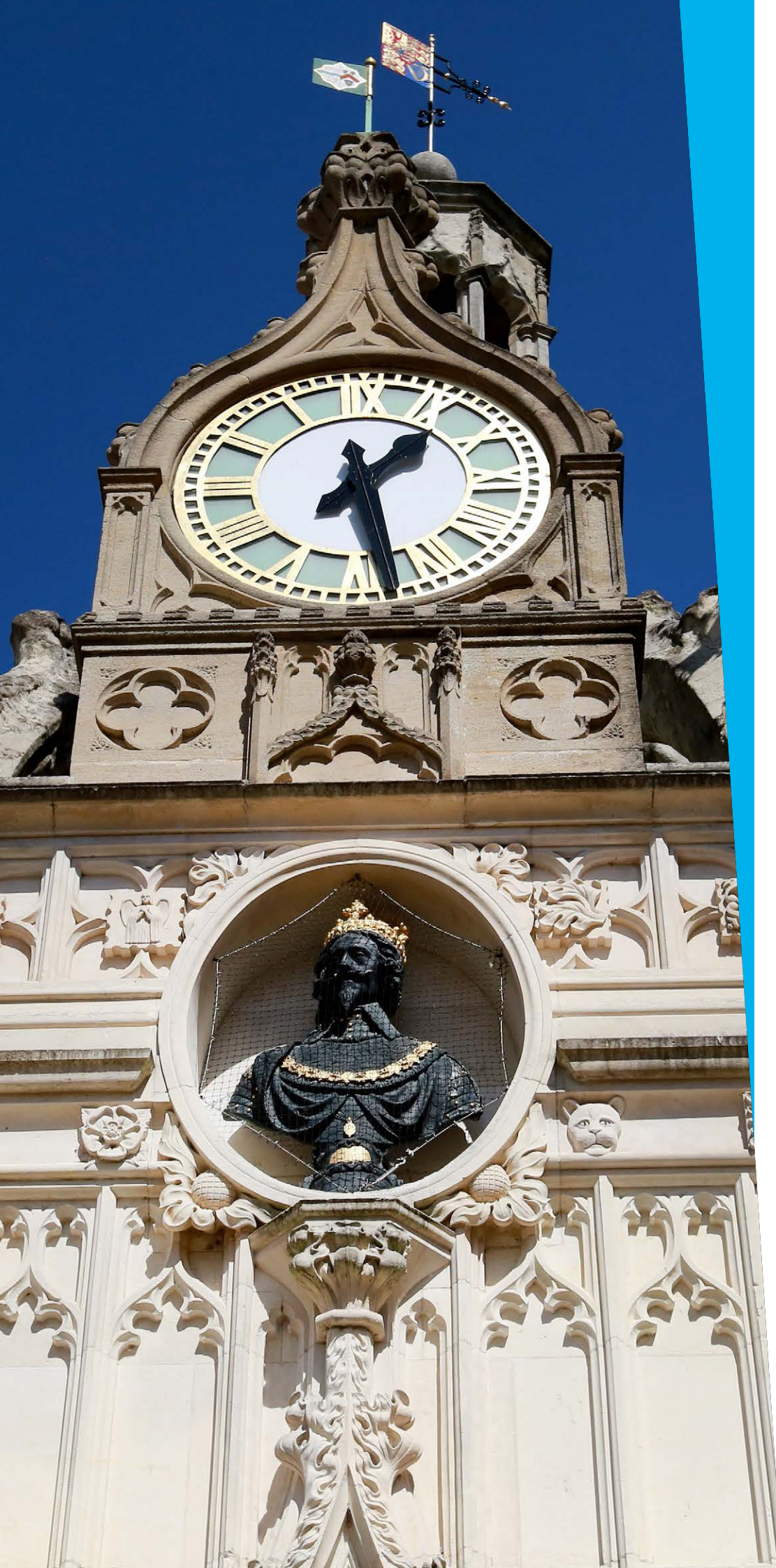
"For many, it is not about growth but survival right now. But we also saw some amazing shows of resilience in West Sussex through pivoting, diversifying and going online over the last year. Increased farm shop deliveries, new takeaways, online experience creation and creative drive-in experiences, for instance.

"For those able to think long term, a focus on experiential tourism, Carbon Net Zero plus increased digitalisation and better market connectivity to capitalise on an ever-increasing virtual market place should be the focus."

What other initiatives are in the pipeline?

"Our partnership is working with *England's Coast Project* to promote our coastal offer to the French, Italian, Spanish, German and Dutch markets. Our joint financial contribution to the campaign allows coastal tourism businesses to list for free on England's Coast website.

"Another new marketing partnership sees Kent, Essex and Sussex come together to promote *Gardens and Gourmet* to the domestic market, and *Shop Sussex* - a new initiative to promote online sales for the tourism community. We also aim to develop a *business barometer* this year, in conjunction with the national one run by National Coastal Tourism Academy, with a view to continued lobbying of our MPs, DCMS, BEIS and VisitBritain for further support."



Culture: Interview with Kathy Bourne, Executive Director of the Chichester Festival Theatre

Why is culture so important to the future prosperity and progression of the region?

“Culture has a huge impact on society and the economy; it brings people together and nurtures wellbeing. The Chichester Festival Theatre isn’t just about performances, it has a broad outreach programme. During the lockdowns, it has been even more important to take the work of the theatre into the community and we feel that community work is as important as what is delivered on stage. We’ve delivered outreach programmes to all ages in isolated and more deprived communities.”

So, can culture benefit everyone?

“It can. There is a perception that culture will only appeal to a certain demographic and this perception and these barriers need to be broken down.

“We recognise that Chichester Festival Theatre needs to evolve and grow by listening and appealing to a broader demography.”

How has Chichester Festival theatre reacted to pandemic?

“We were agile and able to embrace digital technologies and there has been a digital transformation, including online performances streamed in over 50 countries. We took performances outside in the summer and we now have a large learning, education and community team to engage our communities.”

What do we need to do to promote culture in Coastal West Sussex?

“We need to strengthen collaboration across organisations and geographies because in the visitor economy sector, there is a lack of communication and joint working. There is also a clear need for high quality accommodation and good road and rail links to support our offering.”

Business: Councils intervening in markets to enable growth.

By Alex Bailey, Chief Executive, Adur & Worthing Councils

We are doing much in this area to send out a message to businesses “we want you here”.

At Adur & Worthing Councils we are investing in local land. That can mean acquiring it, developing it as councils or joint venturing with development partners who share our ambition.

At Decoy Farm (in Worthing) for example we are de-risking significant investment on contaminated land to provide new work space. At Teville Gate we are stepping in to underwrite housing development costs to bring forward the development of a significant town centre residential development that has been stalled for too long.

We’ve bought industrial estates and even some retail space, too. Many of these projects involve borrowing money (from Public Works Loans Board) whilst interest rates are historically low. This approach is not for everyone, it is not without risk, but our business sector has been hugely supportive of the enabling role we are seeking to play.

Sports and leisure: Promoting coastal West Sussex as an active watersports destination

After being awarded a £170,000 grant from the Coastal Communities Fund towards a £340,000 project to develop water sports in the region, there’s a desire to make West Sussex a recognisable active water sports destination.

Experience West Sussex, the official destination management and marketing organisation for West Sussex, has been working in partnership with the Coastal West Sussex Partnership to deliver this through the **All on Board** project.

Samantha Smithson, project leader, said: “I have been windsurfing this coastline – and more recently paddle boarding and surfing – for many years and feel passionately that we have a brilliant stretch of water with much to offer water sports devotees. This is a great opportunity to develop the region as a water sports visitor destination.”

5 | Sustainable Growth, tackling climate change

A commitment by local authorities to be address climate change is driving innovation in sustainability across the region and putting sustainability at the heart of what we do.

West Sussex County Council is working with local partners to push forward with this agenda through its Climate Change Strategy.

Steve Read, Director of Environment & Public Protection describes the progress being made on the strategy:

What impact has agreeing the Climate Change Strategy had on West Sussex County Council?

The Strategy covers all of the county council's operations and looks to both mitigate the impact that the county council has on the drivers of climate change but also to adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change on our operations and our communities.

Our work on energy, both in reducing our operational need for energy through efficiency but also in generating our own energy is important for our actions to mitigate climate change.

How does the council generate its own energy?

There has been substantial investment by public and private bodies in solar farms across the region and the WSCC-funded two solar farms, Tangmere 4.8MW and Westhampnett 7.4MW solar farms.

The Westhampnett solar farm in Chichester District was the first publicly owned solar farm to be developed with large (4MW) on-site batteries. They are used to store surplus energy generated by the 26,000 panels at the solar farm and release it to the grid when needed during peak periods. They also help to keep the frequency of the electricity grid within normal boundaries, supporting a resilient energy system.

Does battery storage help to reduce CO₂ emissions?

The county is also at the forefront of energy storage projects. Following the success of the pilot programme at Westhampnett, programmes under development include a large energy storage facility on a former waste site in Sompting (Adur District) which will become the location for 12MW of grid-scale batteries in 2021.

By utilising batteries that have previously been used in Electric Vehicles (2nd life batteries) to help stabilise the electricity network, we expect the project to bring additional sustainability benefits to the local community.

Having batteries on the local grid means that it can accept a higher level of renewables on the system which helps decarbonisation of the electricity network.

How can local communities engage with this work?

The WSCC Solar Power for Schools programme has seen solar panels installed at 80 schools across the county to help them reduce energy costs and lower environmental

impact. The programme has a total combined clean energy generation capacity equivalent to Tangmere solar farm but is delivering power directly into schools so that they receive greater financial benefit than simply buying renewable electricity from their usual supplier.

Work is also underway to create innovative smart, local, energy systems that deliver decarbonisation at scale in West Sussex.

By introducing new ways of generating and storing low-carbon heat, electricity and energy for transport and demonstrating how these can be used to balance energy supply and demand across a local area, delivers both cost and carbon benefits. It is hoped these integrated systems will provide cheaper and cleaner commercial and household energy, whilst creating high value jobs in our communities.

What other sustainability activities are happening?

There are numerous sustainability programmes taking place across the region. Small to Medium-Sized Enterprises in West Sussex will be able to access support and grants for low carbon initiatives through the LoCASE (Low Carbon Across the South East) programme. Launching in 2021 Kent County Council will oversee this tri-LEP programme, with WSCC a strategic funding partner and the University of Brighton's Green Growth Platform providing specialist support to local businesses.



Sussex kelp forest

In conjunction with the Sussex Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority, work is being done to restore a 177km square kelp forest off the coast of West Sussex. The kelp forest has been damaged over the years by storms, fishing pressure and poor water quality but is vital to the ecosystem and to CO₂ emissions.

A kelp forest can take up to 20 times more CO₂ out of the atmosphere than a land-based forest. If Defra sign off a proposed byelaw which will see trawling excluded from an area of Sussex coastline, then a new kelp forest could be established which would remove 70,000 tonnes of carbon per year from the atmosphere and help prevent coastal erosion.

The GB10

Coastal West Sussex and those councils across the region that form part of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB) signed up to support the GB10, a list of pledges to help tackle climate change and develop green growth in the region.

Kelp: backing a scheme to introduce a carbon capturing kelp forest off the Sussex coast

Water Recycling: partnering projects to introduce recycled water into new homes

Zero Emission Fleets: committing to phasing out diesel cars, refuse trucks and vans

EV Charging Points: supporting a huge increase in electric vehicle charging points.

Rewilding: supporting an increase in natural landscapes and rain garden projects

Home Visits: supporting Southern Water's 50,000 water and energy efficiency home visits

Public Buildings: reducing energy use by 50 per cent by 2030

Innovation: establishing an Innovation Forum to share latest research and best practice

Lobby: using Greater Brighton's powerful voice to lobby government for investment

Low Carbon Heating: rolling out schemes to replace oil home heating with electric and other low carbon fuels



Chapter Two.

Partnerships in action

Working in partnership is one of the most important aspect of Coastal West Sussex's work. Only by working together, with businesses, councils, the private sector, the public sector, charities and utility companies we can deliver the future we all strive for.

This white paper is full of examples of how local businesses were able to thrive because of the excellent relationships that have been built over years in the region, and here are some further examples of partnership in action:

RISE and innovation

RISE is a unique programme that will operate in West Sussex to provide SMEs with enhanced access to innovation support to unlock sustainable productivity growth through the adoption and enhancement of new products, services or processes. The £1.2m programme, led by the University of Brighton, partnering with the University of Sussex and supported by the West Sussex councils, brings together interactions

between like-minded SMEs, university expertise and academics. The RISE programme is receiving up to £603,514 of funding from the European Regional Development Fund as part of the European Structural and Investment Funds Growth Programme 2014-2020 in England.

The programme addresses SME innovation challenges within the three economic areas within West Sussex (Rural, Coastal and Gatwick Diamond) by creating an innovation ecosystem, taking account of the differing needs of the three distinct place-based economies, with their different business profiles and productivity and varying levels of innovation engagement. Over 500 West Sussex businesses will benefit from increased awareness and understanding of innovation through events and workshops, access to an online digital platform, expert support from innovation specialists as well as innovation support funding. SME support aims to commence May 2021 and will run for 2 years.

EXPERIENCE WEST SUSSEX

Experience West Sussex

The Experience West Sussex Destination Partnership started with a digital marketing platform from a partnership opportunity to expand work being delivered across the coastal area.

Recognising the importance of the visitor economy to the area, (worth over £1.2bn and employing over 17,000 people) the partners felt more could be achieved by taking a wider collaborative approach. Securing project funding, the Experience West Sussex platform is now the marketing platform for the whole of West Sussex, with a dedicated team, a strong marketing proposition, offering support for businesses, and being proactive around new market opportunities with a keen eye on target markets.

Promoting the coastal area through events is also a key element of our work programme. For the last three years, the CWS Partnership has worked with Willmott Dixon, the UK's leading independent construction and property services company to host

an annual event to look to the future and showcase new opportunities to a wider business audience.

During the lockdowns of 2020, we transitioned face to face events with topical webinars which reached a wide and diverse audience.

CWS Skills and Enterprise Group

This group exists to inspire more young people and adults into local, meaningful work, apprenticeships and long-term employment across Coastal West Sussex. It is the only forum across the coastal area that brings together a broad range of stakeholders and works together to raise the aspirations of our communities to learn new things.

The group is chaired by Shelagh Legrave, CEO of the Chichester College Group and over recent years has championed and driven investment in the STEaM agenda, embedded enterprise into the school curriculum, promoted apprenticeships and encouraged greater business involvement in the skills agenda.

Hydrogen Sussex

A new energy group, Hydrogen Sussex, has been launched to put the region at the forefront of a hydrogen fuel revolution.

Local authorities, businesses and organisations are all involved, and by pooling expertise and lobbying power the partners hope to position the clean fuel as a mainstream energy carrier, helping the drive towards a zero-carbon economy.

One aim is to stimulate the development of clean alternatives for some of the highest emitters of carbon and air pollution which are also critical for the UK economy – for instance, planes, lorries and buses.

It comes at a time when Shoreham Port begins work on an ambitious new partnership with H2evolution to create a green hydrogen hub. A planning application is being developed to establish a 20-megawatt electrolysis plant south of the port's lock gates.

Rampion 2

Rampion 2 is a proposed expansion of the Rampion offshore wind farm located in the English Channel off the south coast of the United Kingdom. The offshore area of search being reviewed for development of the new wind farm is adjacent to the current Rampion wind farm. With a maximum planned capacity of 1200MW of electricity, Rampion 2 could meet the electricity needs of 1M+ homes each year.

Working with other partners, the CWS Partnership will help to engage the community and other partners with this emerging opportunity to help ensure our area can maximise the economic benefits should this proposed expansion be approved.

Five towns, one vision

One of the biggest strengths of the Coastal West Sussex region are the five main towns and cities which line up along the coast, all offering their own unique opportunities for investment and improvement.

These are, from east to west:

Shoreham-by-Sea

Worthing

Littlehampton

Bognor Regis

Chichester and Selsey

There is an opportunity to create a compelling vision of a coastal region united in its desire to reinvigorate and modernise its tourism offer, support landmark cultural projects, combat climate change and attract vibrant new businesses to transform its economy.

Coastal West Sussex By Numbers



Population
460,587



Investment into
Higher Education
£35m



Economy
£9bn



Number of
businesses **18,700**



Already invested
£1.5bn



Median annual
wage **£28,400**



Average house
price **£327,568**



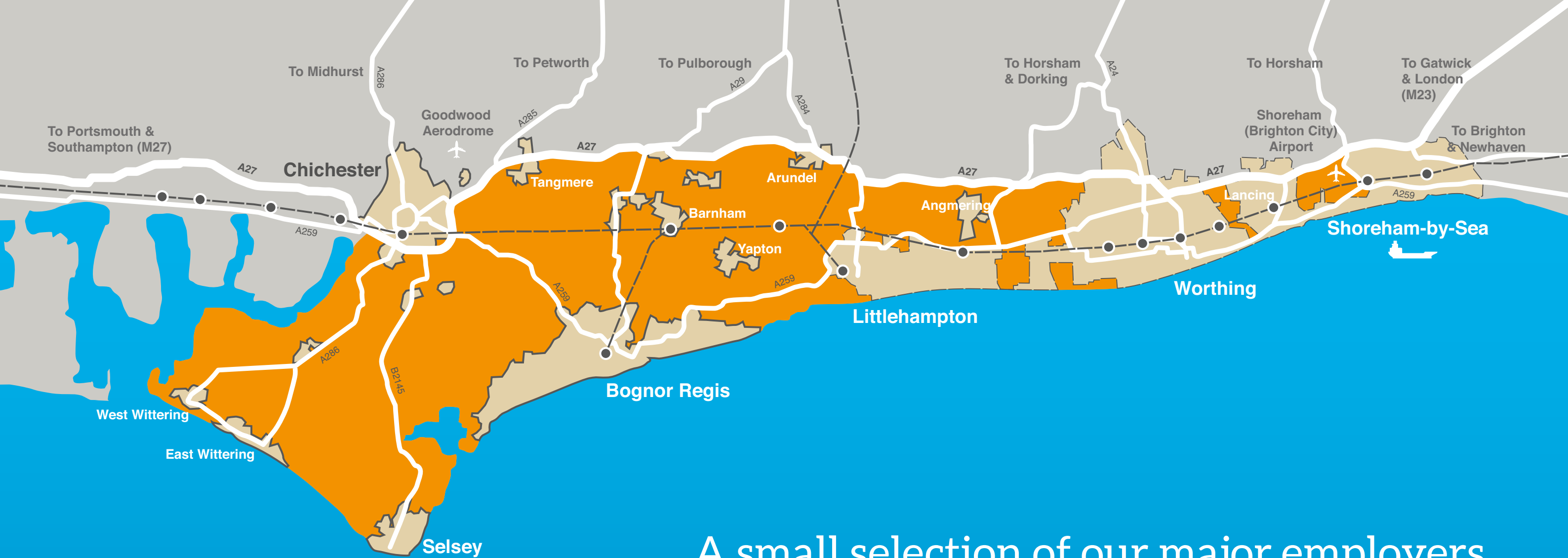
Value of tourism
(2019) **£1,180,348**



Commuter pool
within an hour's
drive **3.5 million**



Total productivity
output (2016)
£9,346m



A small selection of our major employers



Chichester and Selsey

- Goodwood Estate
- Rolls-Royce Motor Cars
- Vitacress Herbs
- Montezuma's
- Oceanair Marine Ltd



Bognor Regis

- Heirlooms Linens
- Barfoots of Botley Ltd
- Global Technologies Racing Ltd
- Butlin's Bognor Regis Resort
- Cover's Timber & Builders Merchants



Littlehampton

- The Body Shop
- S I Protech Ltd
- Finecast Foundries Ltd
- Fittleworth Medical Ltd
- Fargro Ltd
- Inpress Plastics



Worthing

- Allergy Therapeutics Ltd
- Bowers and Wilkins
- GSK Plc
- Electronic Temperature Instruments Ltd
- Rayner Intraocular Lenses Ltd
- L&S Printing Co Ltd



Shoreham by Sea & Lancing

- Shoreham Port
- Ricardo Ltd
- Higgidy Ltd
- Eschmann Limited
- Parafix

Chapter Three.

Our businesses in action: inspiring stories from the toughest of years

There is no doubt that pandemic and Brexit have made it a complicated and at times extremely difficult period for businesses across our region. However, there have been beacons of light to encourage us all and to look forward with confidence. Here we pick out stories of businesses and industries whose experiences can be an inspiration – especially to those thinking of making the move to Coastal West Sussex...

An astonishing story of growth in pandemic – and why it could only happen in Coastal West Sussex

How a sustaining and supporting eco system in Littlehampton helped Inpress Plastics produce medical sharps bins for the NHS

When Inpress Plastics of Littlehampton agreed a deal in March 2020 to buy a business which manufactured medical sharps bins, it could not

have foreseen what would happen next – and how much it would be thankful to the business community of Coastal West Sussex for the way it turned out.

Just a week after the deal was signed, the UK went into lockdown and Inpress was under pressure to fulfil an inherited order to deliver products to the NHS from July.

To achieve that it needed to open a new factory on site, find new staff, install new equipment and overcome all the usual red tape which goes with planning permissions, road works and infrastructure.

There was another problem, too, because in March the management team went down with Covid-19.

Commercial Director Henry Powell remembers: “It was tough – we had to finance the project and keep the business going while we were all ill.

“Our bank, HSBC, was incredible and agreed a deal even though I was unwell. It soon became apparent that the relationships we have here in Coastal West Sussex, the supporting ecosystem and business community around us, as well as our amazing staff, were going to be vital to get us through. I can’t speak highly enough of the many people who helped us.”

Staff at Inpress Plastics ensured that production never stopped for even an hour during that period and every hurdle was jumped thanks to support from the business community.

Henry lists some key moments which include:

1. UK Power Networks stepping up to put in a substation for the business within three weeks.
2. Arun council working with West Sussex County Council and giving quickfire permission to dig up roads – within half an hour.

3. The University of Chichester giving permission for its apprentices to work full time at the factory.

He said: “At one stage, when everyone was ill, we had two of our degree apprentices running the whole place at the age of 20 and 21 – and they were incredible. Thankfully, our close relationship with the University allowed us to ask for their course work to be rescheduled so they could work full time.

The story has a happy ending because Inpress was able to fulfil its order with the NHS and now supplies the UK and nine other countries with medical sharps bins.

Henry added: “A lot of people went above and beyond to help us get there. The whole story shows the value of the business community we live in here. It’s precious and we should shout about it.”



How Worthing's Allergy Therapeutics navigated through pandemic and Brexit

Planning and high-quality staff the key to success against the odds for pioneering immunology business

Allergy Therapeutics, global pioneers of convenient treatment for allergy related disorders, spotted early that Brexit would provide challenges; but the story of how it overcame them is a remarkable one.

Preparations for the Worthing-based company began as early as 2017 with the setting up of a multifunctional project team and a risk-assessment for each function for the business.

Early on it identified the need to replicate analytical testing in the EU – not an easy job when the business offers more than 90 different sterile products with biochemical and chemical testing.

New laboratory in Spain

"In response, we built a new laboratory in our Spanish factory in Alcala de Henares and replicated the laboratory equipment we have in the UK," said Operations Director, Bev Lees. "It was finished within six weeks using our UK building company.

"We also knew that the process of performing repeat tests and validating the tests compared to the UK would be the most time-consuming part of the project. So, to mitigate, we built stock for our customers and shipped it to Spain ahead of Dec 31st thereby ensuring we could maintain supply of most products without delays."

Import licence and red tape

Meanwhile, its European offices applied for tax and VAT exemptions to allow smoother transit and hired an EU agent for preparing documents on the EU side. Each country obtained an EORI number essential for custom transactions.

But perhaps the biggest issue was obtaining a medicine import licence for the EU.

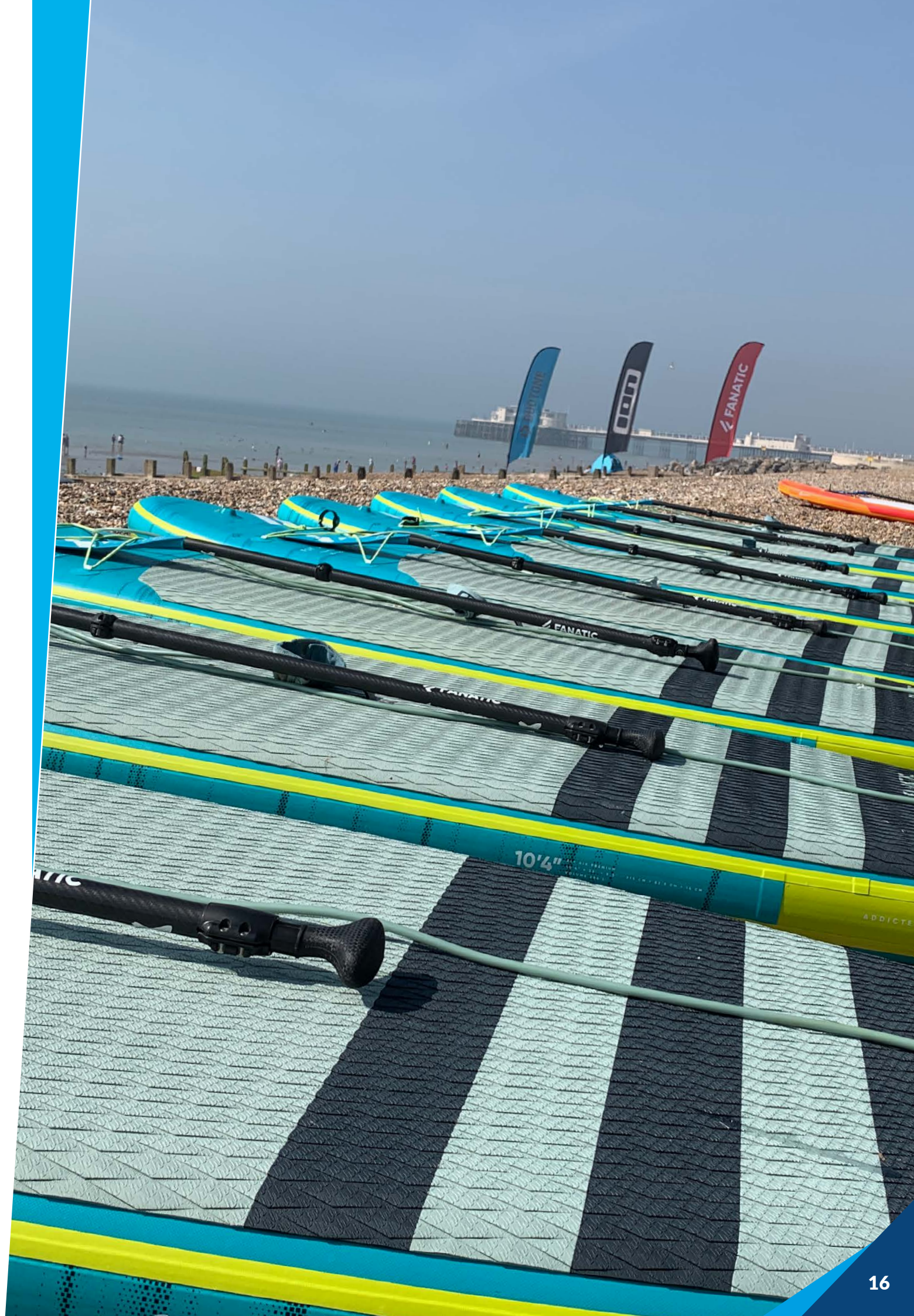
Bev added: "The only country we could obtain one from before the end of the year was Spain. We tried France and Germany but they had too many complex requirements to fit the timescale.

"This has meant our lorries need to go via Spain for delivery to Germany, Italy and Austria. On arrival in Spain the goods are checked by the medicines agency as well as passing customs. Whilst this takes a lot of paperwork it does mean that we have shipped our products from 7 January 2021. We hope we can find a better solution in the future but for now it is working!"

Impact of pandemic

Taking all these actions during a pandemic added many complications and Bev has provided a list of those who helped, including:

- The Allergy Therapeutics workforce in Worthing, who fully bought into the purpose and need to come into the factory.
- Lorry drivers, who continued to work through the pandemic to deliver medicines.
- The sales team, who worked remotely with healthcare professionals to maintain supply of vaccines.



- The medical team, which provided educational sessions for personnel and healthcare professionals.
- The IT team, which switched much of the workforce to virtual working within a few days
- The purchasing team, which worked flat out to get the PPE needed for sterile manufacture of vaccines and to ensure a stock build of raw material ahead of Brexit.

“That fact that we have been successful as a company through Brexit/Covid its down to the commitment and hard work of our employees,” said Bev. “They never gave up and always thought of our patients. It shows what can be achieved with good people.”

Horticulture: a flourishing West Sussex industry in tune with the environment

By Richard Hopkins, Chairman of the West Sussex Growers Association (WSGA) and Managing Director of Fargo

Our region's rich natural capital provides the perfect environment for some of the UK's leading horticultural growers.

The horticulture industry in our region delivers close to a billion pounds of turnover, employees 10,000 people and, as you'd expect for a sector with such close links to the land, leads the way in protecting the environment.

Our region produces top-quality wines, too, and West Sussex is home to the largest glasshouse area in England.

Build back greener has become a buzz phrase as people look towards a re-set after the pandemic but it's an ambition which is achievable for Coastal West Sussex, given that we already have such a strong horticultural base here.

When it comes to attracting inwards investment, the narrative should already be there: you can start to invest in businesses which are fulfilling their role in the battle against climate change

There are some key drivers for the industry in this respect, which are significant opportunities for horticultural in our region - and they are global drivers rather than local ones.

These include:

Water and the global water trade

Water is essential for the crops we grow. Yet we are based in the south east of England, classed by the Environment Agency as an area of serious water stress. However, when rain does fall (and we get 31% less rainfall than the rest of the UK) being able to capture it close to where we use it (rainwater harvesting) is important. My belief is that there's no need for horticulture to be in competition with municipal water; 88 per cent of our growers already practice some kind of rain water harvesting. That can be scaled up but capturing water does take local co-ordination, it cannot be down entirely too individual businesses.

There's an interesting agenda, too, around 'global water trade'. It's the concept that by importing fresh produce from countries which are water-impooverished is not good for the planet and that Western countries are essentially stealing the water from countries which need it. So, you'll find beans from Morocco on the supermarket shelf here but that's not a water-abundant place and water is not priced into the product.

It takes twice as much water to grow a strawberry in Spain as it does in West Sussex, so there's an opportunity to explain that agenda.

The veganism megatrend:

This trend brings an opportunity for growers in West Sussex because it's a food revolution. If you are already in the business of growing salad crops and veg then it can only be a positive.

Food and flower miles:

The nature of growing herbs, salads and fruits is the cost of transport and it's disproportionately high in comparison to the value of the of the products – and not so good for the environment, either. So, the shorter distance they are transported, the more environmentally friendly it is. This is an opportunity for West Sussex because we already have the infrastructure in place to do that.

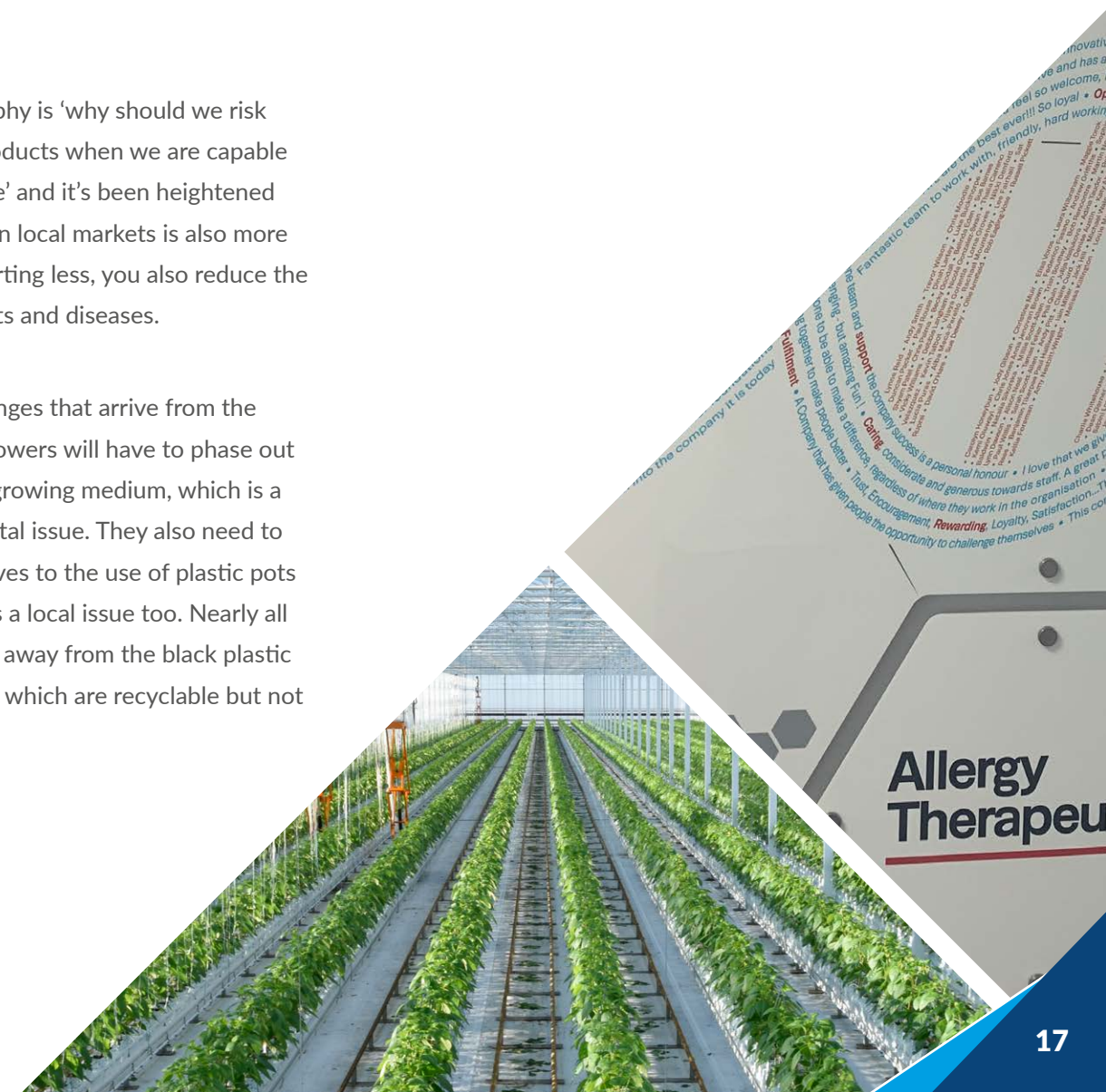
Food security:

The growing philosophy is 'why should we risk importing certain products when we are capable of growing them here' and it's been heightened by Brexit. Focusing on local markets is also more sustainable. By importing less, you also reduce the risk of importing pests and diseases.

There are also challenges that arrive from the green agenda. UK growers will have to phase out the use of peat as a growing medium, which is a complex environmental issue. They also need to think about alternatives to the use of plastic pots and trays, and there's a local issue too. Nearly all growers have moved away from the black plastic pots to grey or taupe which are recyclable but not yet in all areas.

Energy:

Most of the larger growers have alternative energy sources in place, from biomass to PV cells and combined heat and power. It's an important way that the sector is trying to tackle climate change and will also drive down energy costs. It's a key investment that is being made right now. But horticulture is not a subsidised industry, unlike agriculture which has the Common Agricultural Policy (which is soon to become the Environment Land Management Scheme). But nonetheless, these big investments are being made to the benefit of everyone and they are all low carbon solutions, with solutions also in place for lighting. In fact, some growers are aiming for carbon net zero production and if they achieve it then that will be a competitive advantage. We are ahead of the game in West Sussex.



Our dream

Dave Cooper

"Coming out of Covid, we need regeneration, but I think that opportunity is there and it requires a cohesive narrative to make it happen. That's what Coastal West Sussex is all about. We need to develop some really strong themes for the future and those themes need to be backed by genuine proposals – and of course by funding."

"The key is to focus on a small number of proposals which are achievable so that the message does not get diluted. The starting point is to look for the skills that are missing and develop them."

Jo Williams

"It is vital the tourism and visitor economy sector survives for Coastal West Sussex. In 2019 almost 23,000 jobs depended on this sector, bringing in £1.1billion. The offer is so varied along the coast and is intrinsically linked to the rest of the Sussex offer that appeals to many audiences, including potential residents, business and inward investment. What underpins all of these market and product development opportunities is connectivity – digital connectivity and the ability to access fast internet but also the need for excellent physical access that includes a comprehensive, sustainable transport system."

Bev Lees

"I'd like to see us create towns that provide a great place to live where 'Instagram worthy venues' such as restaurants, hotels, activities, cafes, cinemas and theatre are in close proximity to businesses. We also need to enable digital and AI business to grow rapidly in by offering incentives to business owners to move here."

Alex Bailey

"My view is that you have to be realistic about what Coastal West Sussex Business Partnership can do. It isn't a "thing", it is a valuable network. And what do networks do? They network well. So as well as lobbying, catalysing great activity between companies already here, I think CWS needs to be a consistent voice of business in the ears of government, public sector investors, potential private capital investors and businesses already here. It doesn't need to change the world, but a strong network with a clear and confident voice helps enormously in providing the kind of assurance that others need to come and set up shop here".

David Martin

"We need to work together and promote the region as a place to base your business and identify land to provide flexible commercial space. Of course, one of the biggest issue is the transport system and the A27. If you go further west in Hampshire, they have the M3 the A3, the M27 and Southampton Airport. So, you can see how their business has taken off on the back of those transport routes. If we could do something similar it could have a major impact on the opportunities and the wealth of the Coastal West Sussex area."

Kathy Bourne

"I would like to see better access via road and rail to Chichester and West Sussex - and more higher-quality accommodation that is attractive to our visitors. We still need to strengthen communication and partnerships across the county, too."





Conclusion.

By Caroline Wood

Throughout the research process for this white paper, what came through was the incredible passion, commitment and expertise of our business community and public sector colleagues in Coastal West Sussex.

Our businesses are not looking backward but forward, despite the challenges of pandemic and Brexit, and there is a willingness to embrace innovation.

I'm convinced the ecosystem around council infrastructure and local business support networks is stronger here than in a big city like London. You know you are welcome – and that's true of Coastal West Sussex as a whole.

Together with the natural environment and the work-life balance that living by the sea provides, it makes Coastal West Sussex a wonderful place to live, work and do business in.

Our job now is to do everything in our power to promote those qualities in a bid to attract new funding and investment which will help the region's economy grow and make solving some of the more historically complicated issues we face more feasible.

It's important that we have also committed, as part of a Greater Brighton initiative, to help tackle climate change and develop green growth, including signing up to the GB10 - a range of pledges underpinning energy and water projects which will help the environment. We need to

look at everything we do through the prism of sustainability to make this region a leader in the fight against climate change in future.

We know there is a lot of work to do if we want to sustain the kind of growth which delivers economic success and improved living standards between the sea and the Downs.

Digital infrastructure and digital skills are going to be vital, as indeed are all our five key themes.

Delivering meaningful change to road and transport infrastructure has taken longer than anyone would like, and divides opinion. But progress is being made at Arundel and we need to continue that project while also focusing on activating other innovative projects across the

region which will increase wealth, boost the economy and make large scale change possible in future.

It's important that we recognise opportunities that lie ahead, approach them with an open mind, and work together to build the Coastal West Sussex economy for the long term.

We have all been through difficult times but it is also a situation which presents an extraordinary opportunity for us all.

Be a part of the Coastal West Sussex Partnership so that together we can...

Promote

by raising the profile of the coastal area
through events and across media channels

Deliver

key projects that will enhance and develop
the coastal economy

Lobby

for investment into key infrastructure and
development projects

Influence

by bringing the business voice into key
investment and policy decisions

Work in Partnership

working together to champion the
coastal West Sussex area

Champion

championing the coastal West Sussex
economy and be a vocal advocate for the area



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