

COASTAL WEST SUSSEX

A Strategic Framework for the
Future.



A Co-Creative and Collaborative Process.

Our approach to the development of this strategic framework for the Coastal West Sussex Partnership and the region in which it has operated, was a breakaway from the traditional process of appointing external consultants, to working on it as a collective. This seemed not only innovative, but appropriate to the culture we have built over the past 12 years.

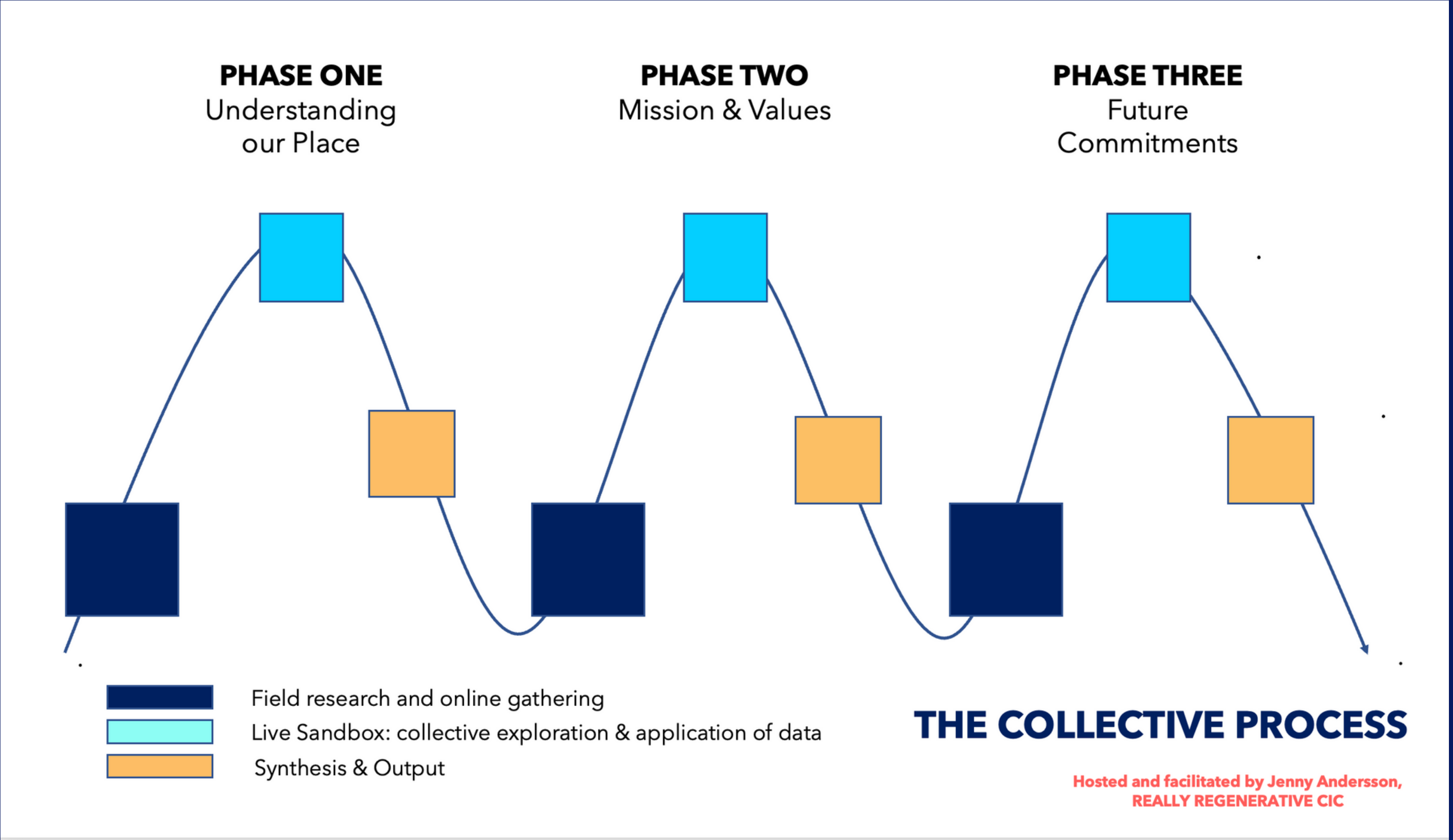
It is always challenging to bring together a wide variety of views, opinions, hopes and dreams and synthesise them into a vision we can all get behind. I think we have achieved that. The Strategic Framework contains an ambition we can all work towards that is both aspirational and pragmatic.

It required imagination, work, thoughtful input, creativity and the ability to put aside individual missions and agendas to achieve something which could serve the future and the greater good. I want to take this opportunity to thank *everyone* who so willingly participated and contributed to the process which I feel showcased the potential of our collective to best effect.

It is my earnest hope that this work will be continued in the future, in order to bring an economy that is fit for purpose to meet the challenges we face, to fruition.

I look forward to seeing what evolves, and take one final opportunity to thank you all for your support in the past 12 years.

Caroline Wood
Director





OUR COLLECTIVE MISSION

Three key strategies. Three core values.

COASTAL WEST SUSSEX : AN ECONOMY FOR LIFE

Creating sustainable prosperity for people, place and planet.

Successful place-based economies are created by a set of complex, interconnected relationships between the health and vitality of the natural systems that support biodiverse life, the viability of the business ecosystem in that place, and the people who work and live within them. To thrive, both place and people require the conditions conducive to life to be constantly tended, grown and developed across the economy, ecology and culture.

This is an economy for life.

Our economy for life is in the early stages of transition towards a strategy to deliver sustainable prosperity and sustainable economic growth - for people, place and planet. We recognise that the fundamental shift towards an economic system which supports all life is a long-term mission which will require transformation across all our business sectors, our economy and culture. It is our mission to influence our partners to make radical transformations in key systems which support a thriving life-centred economy – such as energy systems, transport, shared infrastructure, nature-based innovation, and develop the required skills base for the future – by 2035.

At the heart of our economy for life is our business ecosystem. That ecosystem is a fusion of innovative, resilient and sustainable businesses across a mosaic of different sectors including manufacturing, service, horticulture, viticulture and creative digital businesses, that share in common three important commitments:

To build a **resilient, innovative, evolutionary economy** that realises the full potential of the place in which we live and work, and develops an economic strategy for sustainable growth that leverages the unique benefits of a coastal economy.

To ensure we are an economy that is focused on **addressing both regional, national and global challenges**, including adaptability to the potential impacts of climate change, biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, ocean and water pollution.

To consistently deliver a high quality of **wellbeing and shared prosperity** for the people who work and live here, through innovative management of our shared infrastructure, excellence in our business culture, care for our natural environment, and developing **intergenerational social equity and fairness** for all people at **all ages and stages** of life.

To meet these commitments we focus on three key strategies.

1. Growing our own innovative evolutionary business base

Resilient economies build place-based strategies that will stand the test of time and the winds of change. We will enable long-term, resilient evolution in our existing business landscape to ensure our economy is adaptable and responsive to the demands of the ever-changing global, national and regional context in which we operate. This includes the impact of climate change, shifts and threats in the global economy, political instability, and cultural wellbeing. We will foster integrated partnerships with our education networks to ensure we bring through a population with skills that match those challenges and meet the needs of our business base. We take a longer-term perspective to address the root issues that will create the resilient future we want.

2. Creating a future-fit blue and green economy.

We are an economy focused on rebalancing, restoring and regenerating our relationship with nature. We host both a blue and green economy. We have made a commitment to regenerate thriving natural ecosystems; and to ensure sustainable use of ocean, marine and coastal resources. We aim to eliminate ocean and water pollution; significantly reduce environmental risk and rebalance our biodiversity. As we grow our green and blue innovation economy, we will develop new business and employment opportunities, creating economic ripples of change and growth. We will find ways for all our businesses will contribute to the restoration and regeneration of the natural ecosystems that surround us. We will strive to address current and future challenges through building a circular economy, support our businesses to decarbonise, achieve net-zero and net waste, and become a centre of excellence for renewable energy innovation.

3. Developing innovative business networks

As our economy has responded to the innovation challenges demanded of it, a pattern of clustered sector-focused networks has emerged organically to support innovative businesses. As with the blue and green economy, our manufacturing, service and creative digital clusters are giving rise to sustainable growth as the ecosystems develop and grow. We must continue to grow these sectors strategically, further enabling the rise of high-skilled, high-value networks in which innovative entrepreneurialism can rise across our region across all ages. .

The core values on which we base our economy for life now and in the future are:

1. Adaptive Resilience.

Adaptation is the route to resilience. Businesses and local authorities here are responding actively to the global challenges of both the environment and economy. We are focused on strengthening the regional economy through cross-sector and cross-region dialogue, collaboration and the development of a nature-inspired economy.

We are rapidly advancing digital connectivity, decarbonising our economy, aiming to support all our businesses to actively decarbonise by 2035. The net zero and circular economy opportunities can forge powerful new partnerships across previous siloes of public and private sector.

Developing and delivering local, place-based solutions and business models can offer some of the strongest opportunities for development and change

2. Collaborative & Interconnected

The challenges we face can only be addressed through cross-sector multi-lateral collaboration. We value collaboration and connection between our businesses here, and with our neighbouring economies who also contribute to our viability and future, as we do theirs.

We collaborate most effectively across challenges that affect our whole region, and the sectors that we need to grow. We recognise that the shared infrastructure to continue such collaborative, inter-connected society in our region is not yet strong enough.

We need further integration between the business community, education and public sector, across our ecosystem clusters and beyond the multi-layered political geography we are part of.

3. Living Well

We value the quality of life for the businesses and people who chose to work and live here, and are committed to enabling the full potential of future generations. We value the ability of all people to live well by co-creating genuine community prosperity, human good health and spirits, kindness and generosity, neighbourliness and respect. We value the importance of life-long learning and development, and commit to building a business ecosystem in which on-going learning and development is a key feature from the smallest SME to largest multi-national.



OUR IMMEDIATE PRIORITIES and long-term actions.

GROWING OUR OWN INNOVATIVE BUSINESS BASE

CREATING A BLUE AND GREEN ECONOMY

DEVELOPING INNOVATIVE BUSINESS NETWORKS

OUR ECONOMY FOR LIFE IN THE WIDER COMMUNITY

In the longer term.

To create the interconnected, collaborative environment we believe to be necessary to our future we must develop a better collaborative process with:

- Local and central government
- Business groups
- Trade bodies

To evolve the education and skills development challenge we need a representation forum of educators with whom we can develop the ‘right’ education offerings, innovative apprenticeships and pathways to employment. It will be essential that local authorities participate and step up to contribute to this goal.

We will need to influence policy-making in the following critical areas through a group formed from a cross section of our community to work on:-

- Planning
- Local economic development plans
- National & regional industrial strategies
- 5g enabled networks for business

In the next 12 months

We will:-

·Develop a programme of business engagement around the three core strategies in order to identify their real needs to grow their businesses

·Develop a programme of engagement with universities, colleges and skills providers and the business community to determine the critical skills for the future

·Develop a programme of research and education to understand and mitigate risk to business in respect of global, national and local threat to bolster adaptability and resilience (which may be executed by sector or generally tbd)

- We will place deeper focus on growing our own: deepening the relationship between further and higher education, innovation, research and business development in Coastal West Sussex.
- We will find more innovative ways to shape remote working economies but also maximise the space we have available for future-focused business collectives that are mutually supportive – recognising that we will always be short of land.
- We will seek greater external and internal innovative forms of investment to grow those enterprise ecosystems.

In the longer term.

To create the interconnected, collaborative environment we believe to be necessary to our future we will:-

- Establish stronger collaboration with universities to define key opportunities for business development and employment potential in green & blue economies – such as building capacity for heatsource pump installation.
- Explore collaboration with regional and local authorities on net zero capacity building.
- Set up a fuel transition lobbying group to advocate for and source investment for, the transition to renewable energy of all viable kinds for our region

We will need to deepen our understanding and knowledge, as well as influence policy-making, in the following critical areas:-

- Planning – to allow for the development of alternative forms of energy including onshore wind and solar energy, hydrogen and electric transport
- Water – in the long-term to understand how best to address overall water use, consumption and processing in industry, and within the environment - especially the unsustainable situation with sewage release into waterways
- Landscape and ecology restoration – how the considerable local authority and community-led work that is happening in our region, can be grown as a source of employment

In the next 12 months

We will:-

- Create a steering group to oversee the development of both blue and green economic strategies which as primary short term goals should be:
 - Develop a strategy to enable policy, planning and investment behind further developing a reputation for the region as a source of alternative energy systems (especially hydrogen and wind)
 - Develop a plan for better integration and collaboration between The Sussex Bay project, Shoreham Port and a marine-based business network (this aligns with strategy 3) to identify key priorities to build our blue economy
- Develop a synthesised approach of the many pathways and options for decarbonisation for SMEs and to define a carbon net zero baseline for startups
- Create a networked business mentoring process to support carbon net zero measurement plans where larger organisations with established plans support smaller organisations
- Explore university collaborations to develop specific blue and green apprenticeships for Coastal West Sussex.

In the longer term.

We will need to influence policy-making in the following areas:-

- Influence chancellors and research directors to focus time and investment locally, contributing and supporting the open innovation networks.
- How to drive key funding towards the networks we want to develop

In the longer term our aim is to establish Coastal West Sussex as a centre for business innovation investment in creative technology, medical technology, marine tech and sustainable transport technology, and other clusters which emerge.

In the next 12 months

We will:-

- Establish open innovation networks/clusters in the following sectors – creative technology, medical tech, marine tech and sustainable transport technology, consisting of HE, key businesses, catapults, local authorities with a goal of
 - Building case studies and success stories
 - Collectively pitching for project funding to develop the economy
- Investigate how to upgrade support for SMEs to grow their enterprises beyond the traditional routes which exist.
- We will build connections. We will identify where our key stakeholders are in each cluster, where external centres of excellence exist whose support we need, what UKRI funding is focused on, and build connections across the network of venture capital and other sources of funding

Our Economy For Life also includes the wider community and our commitment to all of our citizens as well as to the environment in which we live.

As a business partnership we intend to focus most of our efforts on engaging with young people across our region and promoting wellbeing practice:-

- Develop a group of B Corporation mentors (we have a growing number) to advise, mentor and share knowledge to our schools network
- Develop and work with existing careers networks to create a careers advisory service within each of our innovation networks.
- Develop a ‘wellbeing’ steering group to promote best practice across our region with a view to developing a wellbeing study to promote the benefits of the region.



**For more informaton on future developments, the process,
or the outcomes, please contact:**

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