

**Sussex & Brighton** | Strategic Authority

a Combined County Authority

<b>The Strategic Authority Board</b>		<b>Agenda Item 7</b>	
Title:		<b>The Strategic Framework</b>	
Date		15 April 2026	
Accountable Chief Officer:		Mark Rogers Chief Officer Devolution Programme	
Accountable Employee:		Steve Skelton Strategic Policy, Strategy & Investment Lead	
Public Report	Yes <b>X</b>	No	The Strategic Authority is committed to transparency and accountability. Accordingly, reports and associated documentation will ordinarily be published and made publicly accessible.
Voting Arrangements:		The Board will work to progress decisions via consensus, if a vote is required then it is by simple majority	
<b>Recommendation(s)</b>			
<b>The Strategic Authority is recommended to:</b>			
<b>A</b>	<b>The Strategic Authority Board is invited to discuss and endorse the work underway to develop a Strategic Framework for the new Strategic Authority.</b>		

## 1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to set out the function and scope of the Strategic Framework for the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority; and to confirm work in place and priorities for the coming period.

## 2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 This report explains how the Strategic Framework will guide the work of the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) as it begins operating. The Framework sets out the overall vision and priorities that will help the Strategic Authority make joined up, evidence-based decisions. It brings together the key strategies, policies, and delivery plans that the SBSA will use to coordinate work across the region and meet its legal responsibilities.
- 2.2 The central part of this Framework is the Sussex & Brighton Prosperity Strategy, which will be developed over the next year. This will describe the Strategic Authority’s purpose, the challenges and opportunities facing the area, the priority outcomes across all seven areas of devolved responsibility, and the initial actions needed to deliver them. Alongside this, other strategy and policy work is underway to support the safe transfer of new powers, prepare essential statutory plans, and respond to local and national priorities.
- 2.3 The report highlights that developing the Strategic Framework is a phased process and a key early task for the new Strategic Authority. The Board is asked to discuss the work already in progress and endorse the approach set out, helping ensure the SBSA is equipped with a strong, coherent foundation from which to deliver long-term benefits for Sussex and Brighton.

## 3. The Strategic Framework

- 3.1 The Strategic Framework sets out the overarching vision and priorities and directs the governance arrangements that will guide the development and operation of the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority. It provides a coherent structure through which the Strategic Authority can coordinate decision-making, ensure accountability, and deliver on its statutory responsibilities from the outset.
- 3.2 The Sussex and Brighton Strategic Framework will be formed of a series of related documents as set out in the diagram below.



- 3.3 Strategic Policies (the Prosperity Strategy, Local Growth Plan and Spatial Development Strategy) have the greatest direct bearing on the organisation's priorities.

### **The Sussex and Brighton Prosperity Strategy**

- 3.4 The Strategic Framework will be developed in iterations over time. Some elements, such as the Spatial Development Strategy, may take several years.
- 3.5 The first iteration of the Strategic Framework will be formed of the Sussex and Brighton Prosperity Strategy. This keystone document will:
- describe the role and purpose of the Strategic Authority, its governance arrangements and ways of working,
  - explore and summarise economic, demographic and other strategic trends and considerations, including an analysis of the enablers of and constraints to growth,
  - describe policy priorities, aspirations and priority outcomes across each of the SA's seven areas of functional competency, and
  - set out initial delivery plans.
- 3.6 An integrated evidence base for Sussex and Brighton will be prepared that synthesises and strengthens existing available evidence developed by local authorities and partners. An aligned work package will also explore how an integrated data capability might best be developed at Sussex and Brighton level through this and subsequent related work.
- 3.7 The Sussex and Brighton Prosperity Strategy will be developed over the next 12 months and will increasingly take on weight as a Strategic Framework over this period. Key milestones over this period include:
- developing a framework of priorities to guide the Prosperity Strategy for adoption at the Strategic Authority's 2026 Annual General Meeting,
  - preparing a draft Prosperity Strategy to inform initial investment decision making by Autumn 2026, and
  - finalising the strategy for adoption before the end of 2026/27 financial year.

### **Strategy and Policy Programme**

- 3.8 Other strategy and policy work is underway in parallel with the development of the Prosperity Strategy. This includes:
- work to enable the careful transition of public safety functions to the Strategic Authority, and preparatory work to secure funding for adult skills and local transport investment,
  - preparatory work to meet statutory responsibilities, including the future development of a Local Growth Plan, Spatial Development Strategy, a Sussex and Brighton Transport Plan, and future iterations of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, and
  - work to respond to known and emerging priorities locally and nationally, including the development of a housing delivery action plan and establishment of a Strategic Place Partnership with Homes England, and curation and analysis of an integrated SBSA investment pipeline.
- 3.9 The Board is invited to discuss and endorse the work underway to develop a Strategic Framework for the Strategic Authority.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Local Assurance Framework (LAF) requires that the Strategic Authority adopts a Strategic Framework that, "sets out the overarching vision, priorities, and guiding principles for the Authority".

- 4.2 The LAF explains that the Strategic Framework, “provides a clear foundation for collaborative working across the region, ensuring that decisions are evidence-based, transparent, and aligned with the ambitions of local communities”, and defines its purpose as being to:
- define the long-term vision for prosperity, inclusive growth, sustainability, and improved quality of life across Sussex and Brighton.
  - establish strategic priorities that guide investment and policy decisions in areas such as transport, housing, skills, economic development, and climate action.
  - provide clarity and accountability for how devolved powers and funding will be used to deliver measurable outcomes.
  - ensure alignment with national policy, including the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, while reflecting local needs and opportunities.

## 5. Partnership & Engagement

- 5.1 Partnership working and early engagement have been central to the development of the Strategic Framework. As a new Strategic Authority, the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) is committed to working collaboratively with constituent local authorities, public sector partners, business, the voluntary and community sector, and other key stakeholders to ensure that the Framework reflects shared priorities and is grounded in local evidence and insight.
- 5.2 A series of Policy Sprint workshops were held with partners and stakeholders from across Sussex and Brighton. These workshops brought together officers from local authorities, representatives from partner organisations, and subject-matter experts to explore key policy themes, challenges and opportunities linked to the Strategic Authority’s devolved functions. The Policy Sprints provided a structured, time-limited forum to test emerging thinking, identify areas of consensus, and surface issues requiring further analysis or coordination at a strategic level.
- 5.3 Further structured engagement with partners will be built into the development of the Prosperity Strategy and associated statutory plans, alongside broader stakeholder and community engagement where appropriate. This will ensure that the Strategic Framework remains responsive to local needs, aligned with partner strategies, and supported by those responsible for delivery.

## 6. Appendices

- 6.1 There are no appendices to this report.

Board is requested to consider the following identified implications:	
<b>7. Financial Implications</b>	
7.1	The proposed budget for 2026-27 includes funding for staffing to develop the Strategic Framework and its component parts, as well as commissioning budgets to secure specialist external advice where that is required. The development and adoption of the Strategic Framework is a key part of the Local Assurance Framework to enable the Strategic Authority to demonstrate Best Value in line with its statutory duty.
<b>8. Legal Implications</b>	
8.1	The development and adoption of a Strategic Framework is a requirement of the Local Assurance Framework (LAF) for the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA). The LAF sets out the statutory expectation that the Strategic Authority establishes a clear overarching vision, priorities and guiding principles to support transparent, evidence-based decision-making and to demonstrate Best Value in line with its legal obligations.

<b>9. Equality &amp; Diversity Implications</b>				
9.1	There are no negative equality or diversity implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.			
<b>10. Other Significant Implications</b> (Tick other implications provided and provide detail in box below)				
Risk		Assurance Framework		Procurement
Improvement		Environment		HR & IT
10.1	No other significant implications are identified within the contents of this report.			