

Report to: **Cabinet**

Date: **15 October 2014**

By: **Director of Communities, Economy and Transport**

Title of report: **East Sussex Councils' 'Open for Growth' Peer Challenge Update**

Purpose of report: **To provide an update on the progress of and activities resulting from the East Sussex Councils' 'Open for Growth' Peer Challenge**

Cabinet is recommended to note the progress and activities resulting from the peer challenge and the emerging action plan.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 No additional costs have been identified at this stage as arising from the recommendations of this report.

2. Background

2.1 Peer challenge is a tool that helps councils review their performance and was developed by local authorities and the Local Government Association (LGA) to replace the previous national performance framework of inspection and assessment, which judged performance against prescribed national criteria. Peer challenges are improvement focused, with the scope tailored with the council(s) involved. An 'Open for Growth' peer challenge looks at how councils are supporting their local economy and businesses.

2.2 All six of the East Sussex Councils (Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council) were to take part, and commissioned the LGA to undertake a first of its kind peer challenge across a two-tier area. The LGA brought together an expert team from within local government and other sectors to assess:

- what the councils do well to support local growth;
- how and where the councils could do better; and
- what businesses need from the councils to support the sector further.

2.3 The East Sussex Councils identified the following five priority areas for the focus of the peer challenge:

- Promotion of economic growth;
- Planning;
- Housing;
- Educating and training for skills; and
- Procurement.

2.4 The peer challenge took place in March 2014, with the peer team spending a week talking to Members, officers and partners. In total, the challenge team met over 250 key stakeholders.

2.5 A presentation of the initial findings was then delivered by the peer challenge team followed by a report which set out all the findings and their recommendations for next steps. The full report is attached as Appendix 1.

2.6 Since the final report was approved in July, the local authorities have worked together using the recommendations in the report to develop the first stage of an Action Plan that outlined the status of the report's key recommendations. In all, there are 30 recommendations across 5 key areas: (i) Leadership; (ii) Team East Sussex (TES); (iii) Partnership Working; (iv) Business Focus; and (v) Final Key Messages.

2.7 The subsequent work carried out by all the local authorities has been to identify those recommendations of high importance and rank the remainder accordingly. The group soon recognised

that the majority of the recommendations were already being progressed. The developing Action Plan giving the current situation on each recommendation is given at Appendix 2.

2.8 Key recommendations include:

- Production of a strong and punchy East Sussex Growth Strategy.
- An effective, inclusive and forward looking Team East Sussex (TES).
- Build upon the effective working relationships under the 'Duty to co-operate', to look at the value of implementing a 'Strategic Cross Boundary Planning Infrastructure Plan'.
- Better support to local business through the South East Shared Services Procurement Hub.
- Establish a new East Sussex Employment and Skills Partnership Board to influence and shape skills and training priorities with providers.

2.9 Two key recommendations recognised as 'linked' were specifically subject to an LGA facilitated workshop for the local authorities on 19 September. These were:

- A stronger East Sussex narrative and branding that maximises our growth potential.
- Recognise the importance of joining up the combined visitor / culture and tourism economies in East Sussex.

2.10 The workshop was viewed as successful and was facilitated well by the LGA. The findings from the workshop are:

- that all agreed with the principle of a joint East Sussex narrative and to move the process of defining it forward;
- the joint production of an East Sussex 'prospectus' to articulate the specific offers of East Sussex – a 'package' that plays into the strengths of a 'county of contrasts' and;
- the need for some new work on 'perceptions' to also be used as initial benchmarking and so test the effects of the actions.

2.11 The initial workshop will be followed up with a more focused meeting to agree methods and timings to progress the key agreements as above.

2.12 As appropriate to the individual recommendations, the Action Plan will be developed into more focused outcomes and timely actions. It will also be more specific about the contributions that partners will make to the achievement of the outcomes. This will inform (in part) the new East Sussex Growth Strategy and will be incorporated into the Councils' business planning processes.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 The report details the background and the work to date on the peer challenge recommendations and highlights how the majority of them are already being progressed, or explains how they will be.

3.2 Continued support from authorities in carrying through the recommendations independently and collectively will ensure the positive working relationships already well-established further enable growth.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

None

Appendix 1

Investment (open for growth) Peer Challenge

East Sussex Councils

10 - 14 March 2014



1. The Investment (open for growth) peer challenge

This is a report of the findings of an Investment (open for growth) peer challenge organised by the Local Government Association (LGA), in association with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS). The peer challenge was carried out at the invitation of the six East Sussex Councils and conducted by sector peers in the spirit of a 'critical friend' to promote the priority of growth for the East Sussex area.

1.1 Purpose

Councils by themselves cannot create economic growth, but they have a pivotal influence in creating the environment for it to flourish by being 'open for business'. This peer challenge was focused on assisting the East Sussex Councils understand where their key areas of influence lie and to assess how effectively they are set up to support, promote and facilitate a positive environment for economic growth that will benefit the residents and businesses of East Sussex.

The peer challenge aims to support the East Sussex Councils to align their services to facilitate and support economic growth. It is less about process and more about whether the vision, structures, relationships and resources are positioned to deliver this objective.

1.2 The perspective and methodology

For councils to be effective in promoting an environment conducive for economic growth, they need to be self-aware of their service contributions, but also to understand the factors that affect business or community confidence, and how decisions are made about investment.

This peer challenge takes account of a range of background documentation but its primary evidence was face-to-face meetings with a range of people both from within councils and from partner organisations, the business community, developers and community organisations. Through these meetings and extensive data gathering, the team worked to establish how effectively the councils and their partners performed to create an environment for growth.

Care is taken to differentiate between the common gripes levelled at council services and those that reflect the real experience of doing business with the East Sussex Councils and their partners. Such an external review is inevitably challenging. The goal is to provide a platform of understanding upon which recommendations can help councils meet their ambition for encouraging growth.

1.3 The peer challenge team

- Nick Hodgson, former Chief Executive, Derbyshire County Council
- Councillor Spencer Flower, Leader of Dorset County Council
- Councillor Ric Pallister, Leader of South Somerset District Council
- Councillor Graham Chapman, Deputy Leader, Nottingham City Council
- Daniel Mouawad, Chief Executive, South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
- Richard Alderton, Head of Planning and Development, Ashford Borough Council
- Fiona McDiarmid, Assistant Director of Economic Development and Strategy, Norfolk County Council
- Joe Keech, Chief Planner, Devon County Council

- Phillipa Silcock and Richard Crawley, Principal Advisers, Planning Advisory Service
- Andrew Winfield and Gill Elliott, LGA Peer Challenge Managers.

1.4 Areas of focus

The focus of this peer challenge was to investigate the manner in which local government in East Sussex (Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council) are engaged in fostering economic growth within the locality, both together at the strategic level and separately within the communities of each borough/district.

The peer challenge was asked to focus particularly on:

- Ambition and corporate and political leadership
- Strategic planning and partnership working
- Promotion of economic growth and supporting businesses
- The role of planning in economic growth
- Housing and infrastructure needs
- Educating and training for skills for the current and future economy
- Procurement (in relation to support for the local economy).

It is these themes that are used to structure this report.

1.5 Follow up support

The LGA and PAS make a significant contribution in investment (open for growth) peer challenge delivery and are keen to ensure that councils follow this up with an improvement programme. After the peer challenge report is finalised, PAS and the LGA offer a follow-up Improvement Planning day to meet the councils' requirements and involving some members of the challenge team. Other support is also available from the LGA and PAS, and some of this is listed in Appendix 1.

1.6 Thanks

The team appreciates the welcome and hospitality provided by the East Sussex Councils and the candour and openness in which discussions were held. The team would like to thank the 250 key partners and stakeholders in the local economy from the public, private and third sector that they met during the process for their time and their contribution.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 The importance of growth for East Sussex

The former South East Plan showed that the East Sussex county economy was underperforming when compared to the rest of the South East. The Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population is 68% of the national average and 63% of the South East average.

The six East Sussex Councils (Eastbourne Borough Council, East Sussex County Council, Hastings Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Rother District Council and Wealden District Council) recognise the importance of economic growth and have, as such, prioritised it as a strategic policy objective.

2.2 East Sussex is a county of contrasts and opportunities

The East Sussex population and employment patterns are predominantly urban and much of this is concentrated in the major coastal communities of Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hastings, and Newhaven. At the same time the county contains an outstandingly beautiful environment recognised through the establishment of the South Downs National Park and the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

There is considerable and concentrated economic disadvantage particularly in Hastings (recognised as the 19th most deprived borough in England) but also in other coastal communities. There is considerable economic opportunity in both the urban and rural areas and the inter-connection between them is not sufficiently developed. The challenge is not only to achieve growth but to ensure its benefits are widely shared.

East Sussex is not a homogenous economic entity. Eastbourne and Hastings are recognised centres of economic areas, while Lewes, as the County Town, links closely to Brighton and Hove and parts of Wealden have links to both the Tunbridge Wells and Crawley areas. The links with Gatwick, London and the continent are unique but under-exploited assets.

The population is 531,000 (ONS mid 2012 estimates) and is the lowest of the three counties contained in the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). However, the proportion of the population over 65 years is high at 24%, where the national average is 17%. This will have a significant impact on the future economy with a smaller population proportion being available for employment. It will also have a significant impact on housing needs for older people and their social care requirements.

Although the demography, socio-economic disparities and educational attainment levels are challenging, there is a good foundation to deal with these and opportunities to drive sectors of the economy. The 'county of contrasts' holds great potential for developing niche growth sectors that may not rely on expensive road and rail infrastructure but could flourish with the availability of high speed broadband.

However, the county needs to develop a narrative that takes account of the opportunities and advantages of the county and understand when to represent these with a coherent identity and unique selling point, which will underpin its economic growth and inclusion strategy.

2.3 Good Working Relationships

There are extremely positive relationships apparent across all tiers of local government in East Sussex. East Sussex County Council (ESCC) and the five District and Borough Councils enjoy positive and productive working relationships.

This is supported by a Joint Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group and a Joint Chief Executives' Group, the latter includes not only councils but chief officers from the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police. These are important public sector forum to enable East Sussex-wide working.

The pattern of working arrangements varies across East Sussex depending on the issues and how widely these are shared. For example, there is the increasingly important role of SELEP to direct economic growth, which covers the county areas of Essex, Kent and East Sussex and two Unitary Councils. The development of the SELEP strategic economic plan will provide an important platform for the future East Sussex economic growth strategy.

Effective, county-wide strategic partnership working has been essential to co-ordinate activity, agree priorities and to maximise the opportunities that SELEP can offer East Sussex. The success of this has been seen in the higher level of funding achieved from some funds than would have come from a proportional allocation. This provides a good foundation for future working within the federated structure of SELEP. The further development and resourcing of Team East Sussex (TES) and effective links to strategic and delivery partnerships operating at the level of the functioning economies, will be crucial to further strategic level success in the future.

An important area for future development will be to further develop opportunities for councils to combine resources to develop greater capacity. The recent joint waste contract has done much to build a climate of trust where more joint working can be considered. This might include joint working on projects, shared services and common performance standards, approaches to promoting economic growth. This might also include: employability hubs, development viability assessments and pre-application planning advice.

2.4 Working in Partnership

Successful partnership working will be important to develop the capacity to deliver economic growth priorities. However, this landscape should be continuously reviewed to check that the resources committed are delivering what was originally envisaged.

Effective partnerships can provide scope for engagement across the public sector and also bring in more commercial and entrepreneurial skills and resources. They also provide a chance to build social capital through partnerships with the community and voluntary sector in the community. Supporting innovative partnerships will require councils to consider new governance arrangements that are more agile and adaptable to changing circumstances in which they can be confident of having effective representation and influence. This will only be achieved if Government enables the new federated system to work through effective and autonomous use of budgets and without undue bureaucracy.

It will also be important that the partnership landscape is comprehensible and accessible and that there is a complementary fit across the piece. The partnership landscape in East

Sussex is complex and would benefit from mapping and, where necessary, review to ensure that partnerships remain fit for purpose and still fit together.

2.5 Proximity to Major Employment Areas and Infrastructure

The proximity to London, Gatwick airport and Brighton is important for the local economy and the 'agglomeration' effect. The Newhaven to Dieppe crossing provides access to mainland Europe and is poised for important development. However, transport infrastructure is recognised as a significant weakness for economic growth with no motorways in the county and only 7.4 miles of dual carriageway. The advantage of proximity to London is currently lessened by slow rail links. The economic potential and importance of Brighton and Hove which borders the county and Lewes and Newhaven in the west of the county is highlighted by the recent approval of the City Deal for the Greater Brighton City Region.

The aspirations for transport infrastructure improvements extend across the county area. However, it will be important to acknowledge that public sector spending constraints will require aspirations to be tempered with pragmatism and prioritisation. This will mean that some aspirations will not be realised in the short-term and will require tough decisions to be made on which transport infrastructure bids progress and which are deferred.

High speed broadband will be important for the future economy and is scheduled to be implemented by 2016 with area coverage of 95%. The economic opportunity presented is that smaller businesses could be attracted to East Sussex for the quality of life while successfully conducting and growing their business via high speed information connectivity. It will be important to map the likely broadband coverage and mobile phone gaps - 'not spots' - and make contingency plans to address these.

2.6 Housing

Housing is an essential component for economic growth, and the location of strategic housing growth, supported by infrastructure, will be a key component of future economic success. The particular issues in East Sussex are:

- Affordability where average house prices are 7.36 times greater than earnings (the national average is 5.44 times).
- A dysfunctional housing market in a number of coastal towns where comparatively cheap housing has contributed to a rise in the private rented sector often linked to the availability of benefits and low wages.
- Spatial Strategy for housing growth.

Housing issues can be linked to deprivation levels, which vary across the county in rural, urban and coastal areas. Hastings is the 19th worst nationally on the Index of Multiple Deprivation and this is partly due to the collapse of demand for visitor accommodation which was then often turned into poor quality rented housing creating a cycle of economic inactivity.

Growth is supported by the councils' good record on the delivery of housing. This is not just in terms of new build market and affordable housing. It is also the work and commitment to address housing market failure, due to the significant rise of the private rented sector and the quality of this housing, which is a particular issue in coastal towns.

The availability of development land for some coastal authorities to meet their housing growth requirements is a considerable constraint. The Duty to Co-operate, from the Localism Act 2012, will be important for councils to develop a mature discussion on housing and employment market areas, housing constraints and how they might work together to address housing growth needs and concentrate infrastructure investment accordingly (judged against other infrastructure priorities). This will be an important area to progress as economic growth will go hand in hand with the growth of mixed-tenure housing.

There were some good examples of innovative financial models – detailed in the body of this report – to deliver more housing and there is good learning to be obtained from these to extend this further, in particular by councils working together more closely in future on such initiatives.

2.7 Supporting Existing Businesses

The structure of the economy in East Sussex is different to other parts of the South East. East Sussex is dominated by micro businesses with 85% employing fewer than 10 people. ESCC conducts an annual survey of 1,000 local businesses which provides good intelligence and is used to steer local action.

However, not enough is known about the significant clusters of economic activity in East Sussex, their supply chain or what their future growth plans might be and how these could be supported. This knowledge will be important to develop as existing businesses will form the basis for the future economy. It will also enable potential benefits from the 'agglomeration' effect of interacting with local businesses, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) even at micro-business level and the attraction to new businesses to join and profit from these business clusters. One particular area that could benefit from such an approach is tourism which is a major contributor to the county economy. This is an area of work that should be progressed by the East Sussex Councils working together.

2.8 Skills and Training

As in many parts of the country, businesses in East Sussex have concerns that education leavers do not possess the employability skills that they need and expect.

ESCC has recently drafted a Skills Strategy, which is about to go out to consultation with partners. Once approved, this should seek to be the principal strategic means to drive skills and training. It should seek to bind the range of different partners, working in this area, to work together to agreed priorities and outcomes.

2.9 Procurement

ESCC and Surrey County Council operate a joint procurement partnership which offers the obvious benefits of savings of economies of scale. ESCC has a target of 45% of procurement spend in the local area. For the current financial year, only 14% of this is with SMEs. The District and Borough Councils are achieving much higher rates of spend with SMEs. This would appear to be an area to explore further and could be progressed via the county-wide Procurement Hub, which encourages support to SMEs through working links with Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses.

3. Recommendations

To support the East Sussex Councils achieve their priorities of growth and inward investment, the peer challenge team has made the following recommendations:

R1: Leadership

- Use the emerging consensus around the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and a revised East Sussex economic growth strategy, as a catalyst for driving forward the next round of Local Plans.
- Raise the standards and improve the consistency of the councils' 'Open for Growth' services including a more consistently positive and proactive approach to the delivery of the planning system, especially development management, in East Sussex.
- Build consensus across the councils and develop a common and consistent strategic approach to support a shared vision and understanding of the role of house building as an economic generator and social benefit, linked to the economic growth and inclusion strategy.
- Focus on a small number of achievable infrastructure projects which are essential to the delivery of economic growth.
- Ensure that economic inclusion and opportunity as well as economic growth plays a key part in future strategy and delivery.
- Recognition that housing growth and delivery is key to economic growth

R2: Team East Sussex

- The SEP, cited in R1.1, should be developed under the strategy and guidance of Team East Sussex.
- Develop Team East Sussex as the partnership to co-ordinate the delivery vehicles for the East Sussex economic growth strategy in the federated structure of the LEP, to:
 - operate at a new level of maturity based on openness and trust between the partners
 - co-ordinate delivery vehicles; influence and advise on commissioning delivery
 - involve key public/private/third sector players as an executive driving force for the economic growth agenda
 - create the East Sussex 'narrative' which reflects the varying need and ambition across the county and which sets out an agreed vision for the future
 - ensure the right economic partnerships exist to deliver and initiate action and strategic thinking at a local and thematic level
 - encourage leadership and participation by all partners
 - operate a "light touch" approach that values innovation and creativity by all partners and enables rather than constrains this.
- Map the micro and niche clusters of business activity in East Sussex so that councils can engage with these commercial interests to understand their needs and be better able to provide support.
- Review the membership and resourcing of Team East Sussex to ensure all necessary stakeholders are included.

R3: Partnership working

- Be open to new opportunities to work more closely with existing partners to maximise outcomes, but also look out for opportunities to work with wider partners.

- Review different governance models to ensure partnerships are effective and are inclusive of the business sector, the third sector and community agencies to maximise social value and economic growth.
- Stretch ambition and trust by combining resources, as appropriate, to improve business access to services and to develop collective capacity.
- Help each other with the hard choices regarding the Duty to Co-operate whilst incorporating priorities across the area.
- Branding will be essential as will the need to recognise when to market as 'East Sussex' and when to market as 'specific areas' of the county (understand and play to collective and individual strengths as necessary) in a way which maximises the economic growth, opportunity and benefits for businesses and residents.

R4: Business focus

- Focus procurement activities where they will have the most chances of success in supporting local businesses while delivering value for money.
- Review, along with partners, procurement activities across the councils with a view to developing new procedures to promote and enhance opportunities for local businesses.
- Continue to recognise tourism and culture across the county as important elements for growth and consider building resources to further support these parts of the economy.
- Ensure that employers and business are able to influence and shape the skills and training priorities for the East Sussex economy with education and skills providers.
- Review the performance of Locate East Sussex and inward investment activities, with a view to understanding if increased resources would deliver added value.

R5: Key message

- East Sussex is poised to accelerate growth but this needs collective vision driven by a strategic view.
- Continue to build on partnerships across the county and understand when to work collectively and when to work independently. The consensus already achieved and the proven track record is the way for councils to deliver economic growth for their communities. This approach may require individual councils to trade some control on certain issues in exchange for enhanced rates of growth and prosperity across the county as a whole. Partnerships between councils are not constrained by Team East Sussex and may include additional regional, national and international working.
- Working together and stretching the boundaries for closer working will build trust and lead to mature working relationships between councils and partners.

4. Detailed findings

4.1 Ambition and Corporate and Political Leadership

East Sussex is a relatively small county which has the advantage of being capable of mobilising quickly behind growth initiatives.

There is a strong sense of ambition with all East Sussex Councils making economic growth a corporate priority. This is supported by committed political and managerial leadership. This is despite political complexities, for example the mix of political administrations across the area, and the churn associated with elections and the intake of newly elected Members. Ambition and leadership are supported by a good understanding, across the partners, of the issues hindering growth and often leads to consensus on what needs to be done to address these, for example action on infrastructure, housing linked to growth, school leaver skills and the creation of apprenticeships.

This ambition is supported by a willingness to take brave decisions, many of them project based, for example, providing and securing priority funding for the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road, funding for high speed broadband and commitment to planned housing delivery targets. Further strategic land releases may be considered in future. Local Plans, through Examination in Public, may require a more co-ordinated infrastructure supported approach for schemes.

This ambition and commitment is underpinned by good working relationships at both Member and officer levels and between authorities. This is an extremely important basis for collective working that enables the East Sussex Councils to set out agreed priorities with a single and a louder voice.

Supplementing county-wide working arrangements are the several initiatives where districts and boroughs are working together on local priorities/issues, for example, the Hastings and Rother Task Force, rural business support to farming and forestry business and community and tourism enterprise delivered through the Wealden and Rother Rural (WARR) partnership. This acknowledges when natural alliances are best positioned to progress these issues locally, and includes options outside the county area, for example Lewes and Brighton and Hove and the LEP Coastal Communities Group. It will be important to continue to press for support for the rural economy and SMEs through the 2015 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs announced programmes of support.

With the priority given to economic growth, the East Sussex Councils have ensured that Economic Development services are being safeguarded. However, these are still relatively small given the need for, and the potential of, East Sussex to create growth. It would be worth considering whether these resources are sufficient to deliver and whether there might be means to aggregate this resource to greater effect.

Team East Sussex (TES) is an important vehicle that has been established to take forward East Sussex's economic growth and to support the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). TES is well regarded in articulating the East Sussex 'offer' and 'ask' within the SELEP. Its membership includes a strong business voice, and representation from the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, the Leaders of

each of the District/Borough Councils, ESCC and representation from the HE and FE sectors.

Working alongside this are the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group and the Chief Executive's Group of East Sussex Councils, the latter of which includes senior representation from the Fire and Rescue Service and the Police. Both forums are reinforcing strong working relationships.

SELEP is the largest LEP outside London in England and includes the counties of Essex, Kent and East Sussex as well as two Unitary Councils. It has recently moved to a federated structure, based on the three county areas, to allow more a local focus. This should offer significant advantages for East Sussex to agree its priorities at a more local level and to then set out these out to the wider SELEP, where this adds value.

Historically, East Sussex has been successful in accessing SELEP funding. This success has been due in particular because East Sussex has had schemes ready ('shovel ready') for implementation. To date, it has secured £19.5m of Regional Growth Fund and Growing Places Fund, used for:

- £7m to the Priory Quarter Phase 3 in Hastings
- £1.5m for North Queensway Business Park in Hastings
- £6m for Bexhill Business Mall
- a further £3.6m will be secured for the Sovereign Harbour Innovation Centre at Eastbourne, subject to confirmation by the SELEP Board
- £1.9m of Rural Development Fund under the Leader Programme for rural business.

SELEP has £165m of European structural funds for the entire LEP area. This will be matched by UK Trade and Investment, the Skills Fund Agency, private leverage and council contributions. This funding will be available for business support, innovation and business, and work on skills and the reduction of worklessness. East Sussex will need to maintain its readiness to promote strategic delivery projects in the new funding allocations, with schemes for implementation, and at the same time clearly set out the East Sussex 'ask' from the new federated SELEP working arrangements.

The East Sussex Councils and partners on economic growth are poised at a moment of significant opportunity. The Strategic Economic Plan (SEP) will bid for a local Growth Deal and a share of the £2bn national Single Local Growth Fund. SELEP's bid for the period 2015-2016 proposes £148.22m Local Growth Fund for East Sussex being match funded by £451.31m with the aim of enabling 27,547 jobs and 32,913 homes. The bid was submitted at the end of March 2014.

The peer challenge team believes that TES should take an increasingly important role to maximise the above opportunity so that it becomes the partnership to co-ordinate the delivery vehicles that drive economic growth. All councils will need to get behind TES even if it means being bold and accepting some short-term aspirational sacrifices in the interests of long-term economic growth and inclusion. It will also be important to ensure strong links between the TES and structures that perform a valuable role at the level of the functioning economies that exist within the county, such as the Hastings-Bexhill Task Force and Sea Change. Such structures can be effective mechanisms for mobilising and co-ordinating resources at a local level and in delivering economic initiatives.

One of the first jobs for TES, following the SEP submission, should be to work with partners on an economic growth and inclusion strategy. Following the SEP submission and determination, it will be important for the East Sussex Councils and partners to develop an economic growth strategy that clearly sets out the East Sussex growth priorities, detail on resources and leveraging, related infrastructure priorities, partner roles and their contributions. Implementation timelines and the allocation of project lead roles will be important to avoid any loss of momentum in taking this forward.

4.2 Partnership Working

There are a large number of partnerships in existence and they take up a significant resource to operate. It would be beneficial to review the partnerships to ensure they remain fit for purpose, specifically, how they link to TES. Partnerships based on functional, economic areas or with sound branding in their sectors will continue to be of value.

At the same time there is a need to develop new partnership governance arrangements to encourage and enable working with social enterprise and community agencies so that these can assume an important and contributory role on economic growth.

The East Sussex Councils have made huge strides in engaging with the community and voluntary organisations, mainly through the organisations who represent the voluntary sector and larger voluntary organisations. This work will be important to support community led regeneration initiatives, neighbourhood planning and to enable the community and voluntary sector to contribute to sustainable communities. It would be useful to further develop a wider understanding of the link between social value and economic delivery.

In the midst of a public service austerity programme, it makes sense to continue to look for opportunities to drive up performance and efficiency through sharing resources, skills and best practice across councils and with other partners. This is not just to achieve financial efficiencies but to generate capacity and enable improved access to business advice services.

4.3 Promotion of Economic Growth and Supporting Businesses

East Sussex was described by partners as being “ahead of the pack” and “punching above its weight” while operating as the smallest partner in the largest LEP in the country outside of London. East Sussex has done well to have schemes ready for implementation and has been successful in making applications to SELEP under the Regional Growth Fund and the Growing Places Fund (GPF).

There is an excellent delivery vehicle in place in Sea Change Sussex, an economic development company, which was initially started in Hastings but is being developed as a successful East Sussex-wide model. Sea Change Sussex has led on a number of new projects, including: the Hastings Priory Quarter; Hastings North Queensway Business Park; the Bexhill Innovation Mall and the Sovereign Harbour Business Innovation Mall at Eastbourne and made effective use of the GPF funding secured to date.

Support and development of rural businesses has been achieved through the WARR partnership which successfully delivered some £2m of business and community support. The partnership is poised to consolidate this success through a further bid to the DEFRA

LEADER Programme from which monies are available for 2015 for the implementation of a second phase of rural business support.

There are a number of examples of good joint working across councils, for example SPACES (Strategic Property Asset Collaboration in East Sussex) reviews and seeks opportunities to reduce the size and cost of public sector property estate throughout East Sussex. A ten year plan and vision for collaborative asset management in East Sussex has been approved, which identifies a range of short-term opportunities and long-term aspirational targets to:

- achieve Capital Receipts in excess of £30m through property disposal
- reduce property revenue costs by £10m per annum
- reduce CO₂ production by 10,000 tonnes per annum by 2020.

Another example is the Newhaven project to expand the harbour and port facilities to enable it to secure the support base contract for the multi-million pound Rampion Offshore Wind Farm. This has seen all agencies coming together to ensure that a major planning application submitted in April/May can be determined by August with timing critical to meet E.ON's requirements. Joint working has shown that, when required, authorities can accelerate and co-ordinate their processes to meet commercial deadlines. These joint working principles should be taken forward to assist in delivering other economic growth projects. The examples of joint working point towards a growing maturity of councils willingness to work together to gain capacity and achieve shared priorities and bodes well for future working arrangements.

Locate East Sussex has an important inward investment role and is being funded by the East Sussex Councils, at £660,000 in a three year contract. Its purpose is to provide assistance with location decisions and access to funding to accelerate growth, as well as providing valuable connections to local planning and economic development teams. Locate East Sussex could be important to the creation of an environment that is more conducive to the growth of new and existing businesses, as well as promoting inward business migration. The various parts of the county offer distinctly different opportunities for business investment, and promotion should appropriately reflect this distinctiveness, rather than marketing the county as a single place.

However, the Locate East Sussex has a limited marketing budget of £50,000 and the question that councils will need to consider is whether this will be sufficient to deliver the inward investment growth sought. The peer challenge team believes that for Locate East Sussex to deliver, the East Sussex Councils must be ambitious for its success and consider if the balance of resources and ambition is correct (including the longer-term resourcing for inward investment). The business case for increased resourcing must, however, be built around clear strategic outcomes.

Tourism and culture are important sectors of the local economy and need to be recognised as essential components for future growth. For example, tourism activity in East Sussex is at 12.9%, higher than the national average of 10.9% and is estimated to generate £880m of income for the area. However, resources to support tourism are not significant across all councils and its importance is not appropriately reflected in the current SEP for the region. There are, however, more localised cultural strategies that drive much work at a borough and district level. Cultural activities account for 5.9% of employment in Tourism and related industries in East Sussex, the highest being in Lewes at 14.9%. Cultural regeneration is

recognised as a strong driver for economic growth in Hastings and Rother, and is a strategic priority in the Hastings and Rother Task Force's Six Point Plan. There is already considerable joint work (ie. 1066 Country) and councils should consider if current models remain appropriate. It would be worth the East Sussex Councils considering the resources that each currently makes towards tourism and whether there is an opportunity to combine resources to gain more capacity. Also, the role of rural businesses in contributing to much of the tourist attraction of East Sussex's landscape and providing facilities and accommodation needs to be taken into account in integrating tourism support.

The team were told that the general perception was that the tourism sector was either 'looked down on' (in terms of the accommodation offer and the nature of jobs created) or taken for granted – it's always been here and always will be. Although, at a strategic level, there is recognition that tourism is a big part of the economy it will need further nurturing to a wider understanding that this plays an important and more sophisticated part of the overall economy.

Important for tourism is the role and potential of the cultural environment reflected in various plans across the county. Helping to guide this are a number of strategic plans at a countywide and more localised level. The East Sussex Cultural Strategy is built around a number of venues and organisations highly regarded nationally and internationally. These include the De La Warr Pavilion, Glyndebourne and the Towner Contemporary Art Gallery. Other cultural and destination management strategies focus on the distinct visitor destinations that exist across the county.

At district and borough level, the local offer is promoted separately. Whilst there are a few good examples of wider initiatives, for example the culture trail and the 1066 Country marketing brand, there seems to be general agreement that there is no identifiable strategic approach to marketing East Sussex. Although there was widespread agreement that the East Sussex tourism and cultural 'offer' is not well developed as a geographical entity, the team did not detect any emerging strategic product offer linking the 'horizontal' geographies of the Weald, South Downs and coastal into a single, coherent product that could be marketed and might offer more than the sum of the parts presently available.

National Parks have a statutory purpose of 'promoting, understanding and enjoyment' which closely relates to tourism and recreation. It would be productive for the East Sussex Councils to discuss with the South Downs National Park Authority the opportunities for closer working on tourism, to generate additional capacity and together to further develop this mutually important sector.

There are, however, important variations in the opportunities for using culture as a driver for economic growth across the county. For example, Bexhill, Eastbourne and Hastings in particular need to develop cultural and tourism agendas reflecting the urban, cultural, heritage, maritime, music, art and food festivals. These variations are distinct and often based on a strong sense of local heritage and innovation.

There are a number of examples of joint ventures across public and private sectors, for example the £70m Arndale shopping centre expansion in Eastbourne; the GPF funding for the Innovation Mall at Sovereign Harbour, Eastbourne; the Jerwood Gallery, Hastings; the mixed use development at North Street, Lewes; Eastbourne's partnership with CloudConnX offering superfast broadband and the Elva Business Centre, Bexhill-on-Sea.

These all show how councils and partners have worked to create viable funding packages to enable development. Joint ventures, and other innovative models of funding packages to deliver development, are essential at a time of financial constraint and they strengthen the partnership working approach where each has an important contribution to make.

The strategic relationship between East Sussex and Brighton and Hove and other neighbours was not clear to the team. Lewes, by geographical proximity, has an important axis with Brighton and Hove and this is reinforced by the working arrangements across the two through the Coast to Capital LEP, the Greater Brighton City Deal arrangements and the Coastal West Sussex and Greater Brighton Strategic Planning Board. Brighton and Hove is an important hub for the East Sussex and South East regional economy, which will be strengthened by the recent City Deal announcement, expected to deliver:

- 1,300 jobs in the short-term, rising to 8,500 jobs and £361m in annual GVA over the medium-term;
- £173m of investment in the medium-term, creating a network of Growth Centres across the City Region;
- The unlocking of sites to deliver up to 2,000 new homes over the medium-term;
- A £1.8m integrated business support programme across the Greater Brighton and wider Coast to Capital Local Enterprise Partnership area.

This should be incorporated into the wider East Sussex strategic planning arrangements for economic growth. This also applies to other strategic areas of interest that extend beyond the boundaries of East Sussex, for example Gatwick Airport just one hour journey time is of considerable strategic importance and strategically important road networks, for example the A21 road connecting East Sussex and Kent. The links to Ashford are important for economic growth in the eastern part of the county, particularly for Bexhill, Hastings and Rye.

Businesses perceive some local authorities as difficult to access, and that responses/support can be too variable. The team was not able to collect sufficient information to assess this by district and borough but there was variable performance and surprisingly few examples of a common approach to working with business. Advice and support, such as planning advice or tendering information, are offered by a range of different agencies to different standards and quality levels. In particular, developers indicated a strong desire for meaningful, co-ordinated pre-application advice. One commented that “I currently just pay lip service and tick the box but I would be prepared to pay extra for a proper pre-application service”. There is obvious scope here for much stronger sharing of best practice, and adopting minimum common approaches and service standards, so that businesses know what to expect and can be re-assured that all councils are striving to offer a consistently high level of support across the county.

The team saw no collective understanding of the existing or potential business/niche clusters in East Sussex. Although there are no large clusters, there are certainly micro and niche clusters that need to be better understood and which have significance within functioning economic areas. For example, there is a small and growing clusters of vacuum technology based and advanced engineering industries in the county providing valuable jobs and career opportunities. There is an annual survey that gathers valuable intelligence on business needs but there does not appear to be a structured approach to understanding the business sectors and niches and, from this, tailoring a means to work with these. SELEP has identified important contributors to the employment growth of the

area, being: finance and business services, retail, professional services, health and social work, construction, other business services, and distribution, hotels and catering (tourism). In addition, there are also other sub-sectors, of which the most important are: cultural and creative industries; agriculture (including wine production); offshore renewables/renewables and education, for example foreign language schools. It will be essential to have a stronger understanding of these sectors to sustain the current and future economy and support their growth requirements.

There is an absence of a strategic economic framework to support coherent partnership working. Rather than an organised architecture for economic growth there appears, instead, to be lots of good projects and initiatives but uncertainty as to whether these always align with overarching priorities. It is likely that this lack of coherence is due to the current absence of an agreed set of priorities to deliver economic growth. Team East Sussex could work to provide the necessary coherence.

For example, the team found insufficient growth market focus. So, historically, there has been a focus on projects to address deprivation (or parts of it) through public funded regeneration programmes. However, this funding is likely to be less readily available and the area will therefore need to set out its 'offer' and 'ask' more clearly according to the opportunity. A clear narrative that sets out East Sussex's 'unique selling points' will be important to 'brand' the area and, in so doing, differentiate it from other areas when competing for funding.

There is a lack of a consistent 'narrative' about East Sussex. This needs to be developed and balanced so that it avoids the 'chocolate box' presentation and includes both urban challenge and the traditional attraction of the countryside. The lack of a narrative could undermine the selling proposition to businesses and inward investment because it is not as clear as it needs to be. Once the narrative is developed, in tandem with an agreed set of economic growth and inclusion priorities, then the richness of the story will become evident and the area's unique 'offer' and 'ask' clearly set out. This will be essential to inform the 'branding' of the area at county, district or other level according to the market or issue being addressed.

The team were unable to identify an agreed single set of priorities to deliver economic growth across East Sussex. There is an East Sussex Strategy from 2012 which is acknowledged to be out of date. It is recognised that this is a major piece of work to be undertaken once the SEP has been submitted and the outcome known. The team regard this as a critically important piece of work that must set out clearly economic growth and inclusion priorities and be grounded on a pragmatic understanding of what can be implemented and resourced.

Outcomes are notoriously difficult to define and capture and particularly for economic growth where this can be predominantly initiative/project based. However, this will be important in the future to evaluate the benefits of growth investment and to project the future economic profile and changes.

Good work is being conducted with East Sussex Local Forecasting Model and economic impact model. The ESCC 'programme for growth' undertook an economic impact assessment to quantify economic benefits. This estimated that the programme would

generate £1.65bn GVA over twenty-five years and that for every £1 of capital investment there was a return of £3.40 GVA generated.

Economic opportunity and inclusion is critical to long-term economic sustainability in East Sussex, and a key challenge will be to ensure that the opportunities of economic growth (ie. jobs and wealth creation) are accessible to East Sussex residents. Capturing the benefits of growth is as important as the growth itself. Growth that does not stimulate local employment and prosperity is of limited value.

It will be important to build on this in the development of the economic growth strategy so that this can be founded on key milestones and measurable outcomes. It will be vital to measure achievement and to demonstrate the beneficial outcomes linked to significant inward investment. TES should have an important role to regularly monitor strategy delivery and outcome achievement.

4.4 Planning

Planning has a crucial role in delivering economic growth. For East Sussex, there is an important balance to be struck in promoting economic growth for sustainable communities, while conserving and enhancing the natural landscape that makes the county unique.

It was apparent to the team that growth has sometimes been seen as a political and a professional ‘problem’ – particularly on whether growth might spoil the area and where growth should take place and be prioritised. It will be necessary for the East Sussex Councils to move to shared ownership of a joined-up approach to housing and economic growth. Housing is an essential component of economic growth; economic growth is a priority for all East Sussex Councils. Progressing this will need strategic management so that sustainable community growth is achieved with integrated infrastructure without losing the intrinsic richness of the East Sussex environment.

This makes the development of Local Plans of great importance in setting out a spatial vision for each council area and for East Sussex as a whole. The Local Plans are in effect, the economic development strategies for each LPA and should not be seen as separate from the overall delivery of economic growth. Good progress has and is continuing to be made in developing the Local Plan framework for the East Sussex area, with adoption already achieved by Eastbourne, Hastings and Wealden with Rother close to adoption and Lewes progressing well (Lewes will be a joint Local Plan with the South Downs National Park Authority). It is through the certainty and encouragement of the LP process that investment will come. The current Government focus on housing must be balanced with appropriate employment and infrastructure provision to enable sustainable economic growth. Once adopted, the Development Planning process needs to be supported including through the appeal process and where historically allocated employment land has been under threat from residential applications.

This importance of a Plan led process is supported by evidence of working together and an increasing realisation of the importance of co-operation, for example:

- The recent establishment of a Strategic Planning Members’ Group is major step forward and should provide a sound basis for future policy development
- There is an emerging joined-up approach to infrastructure planning and effective Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) development and a growing awareness of the importance of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

There is specific evidence of where the planning system has responded rapidly to help secure delivery of a major project. For example, Lewes District Council has worked in partnership with Newhaven Port and Properties and the County and Town Council, to put in place an ambitious Planning Performance Agreement for the Port which will secure an infrastructure investment of £35m that will help to safeguard the port's future.

Although by its nature the plan-making process is slow, the submission of the SEP should be a catalyst for developing a more joined-up approach to housing and economic planning. The section of the SEP dealing with East Sussex will assist in developing a shared strategic view of future economic and housing development, and set out the investment priorities. While it will necessarily take time for the next round of Local Plans to come forward, the East Sussex authorities could use the submission of the SEP as a basis for further developing their joint approach to the delivery of housing and economic development. In the short-term this could involve a changing emphasis in the interpretation of adopted policy and development management and in the longer-term by developing a clearer understanding of where there are direct links between housing provision and job growth. The submission of the SEP may also require the phasing of investment, as set out in Infrastructure Delivery Plans, to be revisited. There may be particular opportunities within functional travel to work areas and housing models for boroughs and districts to co-operate more actively.

The Duty to Co-operate (Localism Act 2011) will become increasingly important and will need both resourcing and strong political partnership working arrangements. The Strategic Planning Members' Group could have an important role on this (this has been an item for discussion already), with it being evident that the Duty is becoming increasingly important for Local Plans' test of soundness. It is clear that a number of the East Sussex Councils have major constraints on housing growth; with a combination of National Park and AONB being limiting factors. Nevertheless, Wealden, for example, has been able to deliver significant volumes of planned housing within these constraints but such levels of growth cannot be sustained without significant and prioritised infrastructure investment. The Duty can build on the good working relationships across East Sussex to explore how housing numbers might be met by councils working together and what the quid pro quo might be for councils who accept additional housing.

There is an important role for the Strategic Planning Members' Group to develop this further and thought may need to be given to strengthening the political support this needs by means of assurance of all councils through their effective representation and the ability to influence economic strategy. For example, this could be by the involvement of Leaders and agreement on how the governance of decision-making in each district can support the Group and enable key decisions to be made.

Local Plans are often driven by the response to housing need but housing provision needs to be linked more clearly to economic growth objectives so that the two work in balance. Authorities should use their collective understanding of the area's economic growth potential, in terms of scale, type and location, as one of the key drivers for future housing provision across East Sussex. Accepting the major environmental constraints in some parts of the area, this could nonetheless lead to a change in the pattern of housing provision if greater strategic emphasis is placed on growth in the local economy and the distribution of benefits of that growth.

Creative approaches will be needed to protect valuable employment allocations, for example by site purchase and joint development. This will be important to resist developer pressure to convert these sites into housing development.

Although some councils have established quality standards for planning services conducive to supporting growth, development management performance in respect of standards and customer experience is variable, however, across county. The opportunity should be taken to review services across the county with a view to production of agreed best practice guidelines. This needs to be addressed so that applicants can not only see that councils are 'open for business' but also that they can have confidence that the planning service received will be broadly consistent across the county. The opportunity is to create a reputation for a consistent county-wide planning services working to quality standards, for example: pre-application advice; earlier Member involvement in controversial applications; early clarity on s106; monitoring performance on business applications which would contribute to raising planning performance. It may be useful for planning services to devise a set of 'open for business' metrics that could include quantitative measures, for example determination times of applications along with more qualitative measures, for example on jobs created, local labour agreements attached to major developments.

The commercial world is often frustrated by the lack of speed and drive in delivering a planning permission. Moving from enabling to pro-actively enabling, especially on larger schemes, should be the aim with all statutory agencies. Effective, integrated pre-application advice and the speedy delivery of s106 and legal agreements should be the aim across all councils to achieve delivering a planning permission capable of speedy implementation.

It may be worth building on current planning officer networking arrangements to establish a body to mirror the Strategic Planning Members' Group that could provide a professional spatial voice to support the delivery of sustainable, economic-led growth. There are examples of this elsewhere, for example PUSH (Promoting Urban South Hampshire) <http://www.push.gov.uk/> (although this was based on a shared local economy and infrastructure). In some areas that formerly had Growth Point status, such as Exeter/East Devon and Teignbridge, joint delivery arrangements have been retained to bring forward strategic developments - including main employment sites and the delivery of key infrastructure investment.

4.5 Housing

There is an East Sussex Housing Officers' Group, which includes representation from registered social landlords (RSLs) and from County Council services, such as Children's and Adults' Services. This is good practice that enables a strategic housing view to be taken to co-ordinate housing related services and support.

House building is starting to pick up. The annual average is circa 1,400 dwellings a year, with more than 30% of completions being for affordable housing.

There were examples of enhanced service delivery achieved through innovative work conducted by councils to address housing priorities. In particular, work on the early adoption of Core Strategies has enabled significant housing and economic growth to be delivered. Other examples of specific projects include:

- joint funding (Hastings – the Borough Council and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) working together)
- affordable housing at Compass Point, Bexhill (council and HCA funding)
- 64 new build council dwellings in Wealden nearing completion for handover, with a further phase planned, and 163 affordable homes delivered in the district in 2012/13
- a key site development at North Street, Lewes (including housing, community infrastructure, a health centre and extra care housing)
- a joint venture at Eastbourne with the Arm's Length Management Organisation, for the council's housing stock, working with the council to buy sites to build a mix of: market housing for outright sale; rented housing and affordable housing. Funding comes from the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) financial 'headroom' and council taking advantage of borrowing at lower interest rates.

A notable feature of these schemes is how they have been developed to leverage external funding. This practice could be productively extended where councils might consider mechanisms to convert land or capital to work in partnership to leverage funding for housing development. This could be arranged as investment to realise an income stream while, at the same time, addressing council priorities and adding social value. Collective working, across local authority boundaries, offers real opportunities especially as the 'scaling up' of joint venture proposals could make these viable for external investors, which they might not be for individual authorities.

There are innovative housing models elsewhere that the East Sussex Councils might learn from. For example, Manchester City Council is building homes for sale and for market rent with HCA funding and in partnership with the Greater Manchester Pension Fund. Hackney London Borough Council is building new council homes for social renting through a programme funded by HRA 'headroom', cross-subsidy, rental income and shared ownership sales. The LGA and PAS would be happy to direct East Sussex to these and other examples.

Good work is being conducted to address housing market failure, in particular the imbalance of private rented sector housing and the quality of this stock, for example in Hastings - Seven Streets, St Leonards. This work is important as the comparatively cheaper accommodation in coastal towns encourages inward migration and can "funnel" need into these areas. It is estimated that 58% of the East Sussex population live in coastal urban areas.

The private sector rented sector housing imbalance is a feature of many coastal towns in the area, particularly in Hastings, and there is an opportunity to work on this collectively and share good practice. This could include licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs); inspection programmes across regulatory services, including Fire and Rescue Services; and active liaison through landlord forums. The latter are important to improve housing standards, and to enable homelessness discharge into the private sector.

A SELEP report, commissioned by the Coastal Communities Group, viewed housing market failure as an opportunity as, "housing is relatively cheap (hence viability issues) and development land is relatively available. Development of professionally managed market rented housing alongside homes for sale and affordable homes would boost the overall output of homes and meet a real need."

However, a coherent, shared vision and understanding of housing as an economic generator across East Sussex has not yet been articulated. Across England it is not uncommon to see housing, and housing numbers, driving Local Plans, indeed this appears to be almost the sole thrust of Government advice on such. The challenge for councils and strategic planners is to get the balance between housing provision and economic growth including, connected through integrated infrastructure, so that the contribution of each works to deliver the sustainable communities of the future. This will be important and should be tied into the work to develop an East Sussex economic growth strategy. The councils should commit to housing growth that delivers the mixed tenure and housing type required to complement and enhance business and employment growth.

With the team's recommendation of an enhanced role for TES, the above East Sussex Housing Officer Group's role might be adapted and strengthened by having the group report into TES so that housing is more closely linked to economic growth and the work of SELEP. The group is well placed to work alongside the Strategic Planning Officers' Group and the Strategic Planning Members' Group to incorporate strategic housing as a key component of the economic growth.

In the week following the peer challenge the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced a budget which places a heavy emphasis on housing, including:

- Help to Buy – the equity loan scheme will be extended to March 2020 with an extra £6bn to help a further 120,000 households purchase a home.
- Builders' Finance Fund – Government will provide a £500m recoverable Builders Finance Fund to provide loans to SME developers for sites of 15 to 250 units. Funding is available in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and will unlock 15,000 housing units stalled due to difficulty in accessing finance. The prospectus is due later this year.
- Estate Regeneration – Government will establish a £150m loan fund to kick-start the regeneration of some of the worst housing estates, with expressions of interest invited from private sector developers. Funding is available from 2015.
- Custom Build – Government will consult on a new 'Right to Build' to give custom builders a right to buy a plot from councils. Government will be seeking a small number of councils to act as vanguards to test the model. A new £150m Serviced Plots loan fund (2014/15 to 2018/19) will help provide up to 10,000 serviced plots for custom build. Councils will need to work with contractors or builders to access the fund and will also look to make the Help to Buy equity loan scheme available for custom build.

These present some opportunities for East Sussex that could be developed.

The burgeoning ageing population for East Sussex has significant implications for future housing and social care provision for older people. ESCC has a comprehensive 'Pathways to support and independence: a strategy for supported housing and housing support in East Sussex 2013 - 2018' with a detailed action plan to support delivery.

However, East Sussex Councils have an opportunity to recognise and shape a market for housing needs for older people that would: deliver social benefit; address strategic housing priorities; and provide councils with a return on investment. The provision of housing for older people is a rapidly increasing private sector market. There is no reason why councils should not move into this to offer residents quality housing and to maintain independent living, through assisted care technology and warden support arrangements. This could be

founded on a partnership between councils and developers but could also involve Housing Associations, Clinical Commissioning Groups and the East Sussex Health and Well-being Board.

Finally, councils seeking to derive community benefit from approved development depend upon professional and specialist expertise to understand developer operating margins and viability. There would be benefit in councils contributing towards a shared Valuer, with commercial expertise to advise on development viability, S106 planning gain and CIL. This will be essential to evaluate proposed development and derive community benefit. Additionally, this expertise would assist councils in working on joint venture partnerships with commercial partners.

4.6 Infrastructure

The transport infrastructure for East Sussex is generally regarded as inadequate. There are no motorways and only short stretches of dual carriageway. Although geographically only a short distance to London, this is made more difficult by slow train and road times. This is exacerbated by the increasing trend of out-commuting where nearly one in four of residents in employment travel outside the county to work. Consequently, East Sussex has held aspirations for county-wide transport infrastructure improvements. However, in a climate of severely constrained public sector spending, these aspirations will need to be reined in and decisions made on which are the most important of these for shorter-term delivery and those to be deferred to a later date.

This will be an uncomfortable message for some parts of East Sussex where there are compelling cases for infrastructure improvement. However, it is a message that needs to be heeded and it will require some difficult decisions to be taken. Not to do so will dilute the infrastructure 'ask' for East Sussex and what can be realistically delivered.

It will be necessary to avoid concentrating on the inadequacies of infrastructure and 'talking the county down'. There needs to be a recognition and promotion of existing infrastructure strengths such as the proximity to Gatwick, links to mainland Europe, high speed broadband developments and good logistics services which already operate.

The East Sussex Councils are working on their Infrastructure Development Plans (IDP) in support of their local plans. A template for strategic infrastructure delivery developed jointly by a number of the East Sussex Councils is now being adopted throughout the county. This joint approach will provide consistency, link to funding streams, through to delivery. Such consistency is a positive step, but it may be that a greater emphasis on economic growth and inclusion could lead to some changes in phasing and the prioritisation of investment. As part of this process, ESCC will need to ensure that economic growth objectives are directly reflected in the priorities for transport investment identified in the Local Transport Plan.

East Sussex partners recognise the importance of having 'shovel ready' schemes in the event of SELEP programme slippage. This has been a strength in the past where funding has come to the area because such schemes have been ready for implementation. It is understood that this will be important to maximise investment in the future, especially in the event of SELEP programme slippage.

The high speed broadband programme (to enable 97% of the county to have access to broadband), secured with funding from ESCC and contracts let with BDUK, will be important for business connectivity. [The cost of £34m is met by contributions from ESCC (£15m), Broadband Delivery UK (£10.4m) and BT (£9m).] The programme of implementation is ahead of schedule, in particular, fibre relay boxes are becoming operational in some rural areas. Work is still needed, however, to stimulate take-up of high speed broadband by business and the wider community to enable the remaining 3% to be covered by associated broadband communications options. At the same time there is a need to consider contingency arrangements to address any gaps as there is a commitment for 100% premises coverage by 2018.

Mobile phone coverage was reported to the team as patchy across significant rural and urban areas and will need addressing with the mobile phone providers. Lack of adequate coverage could be a deterrent to new business start-ups.

There are good examples of supported development and new infrastructure. The Bexhill to Hastings Link Road has cost circa £113m and not only improves the transport links to Hastings and north to the A21 but is creating new opportunities for a new High School and Vocational Skills Centre, a substantial new community to the north of Bexhill-on-Sea with 1,200 new homes and 50,000m² of commercial space. Similarly the Newhaven Port demonstrates strong partnership and political working to deliver a Clean Tech Growth Hub to capitalise on opportunities associated with E.ON's operations and maintenance base for the Rampion wind farm; Veolia's Energy Recovery Facility; and the new University Technology College for the marine and environmental engineering sector. However, there is a question on the possible future cessation of the Newhaven to Dieppe crossing which would present a potential economic loss and risk.

There is a clear consensus around the importance of a limited number of deliverable strategic transport investments that would best support future economic growth. If funding for these key schemes is not secured, or is delayed, authorities will need to consider the extent to which an alternative package of smaller scale transport investment schemes could help to unlock the area's economic potential in the short to medium-term.

Councils will need to carefully review how they integrate economic growth and inclusion into their transport, housing and planning functions. This could be achieved by having proper regard to the SEP strategy (and subsequent East Sussex economic growth strategy): in the planning process; the prioritisation of transport investment and the next iteration of the LTP; and in district/borough housing investment plans. It would be sensible for councils sharing housing and economic interests to co-ordinate more closely their planning policy functions. Alternatively, this could be achieved via a shared strategic spatial development framework for the area – setting out what needs to be delivered, through which mechanisms and by whom.

As an example, the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) has produced a Joint Core Strategy which brings together transport, housing and the economy www.gndp.org.uk.

4.7 Educating and training for skills

ESCC is drafting a corporate skills and training strategy which recognises many of the problems and issues that the area is working to address. This strategy prioritises

engagement, retention, progression, connectivity and includes employer involvement in shaping the training offer and tackling disengagement. It is an important development and will need the involvement of schools, colleges and the range of other partner providers to deliver its objectives. Therefore it will be important to share the draft strategy and consult with partners on this. The strategy should reflect the different opportunities and challenges in the county and identify appropriate initiatives in this context. A stronger commitment to delivery that reflects local need and works hand in hand with local partners is important.

This strategy and action plan will need to agree the working relationship with the current East Sussex Adult Learning and Skills Partnership Board, which includes representatives from further and higher education, the voluntary sector, Jobcentre Plus etc. and also from the Economic Development and Skills Team that is represented on the SELEP Advisory Group. There is keen local interest at borough and district level and potential benefits to be achieved in harnessing this. It is also worth examining the potential for building on successful employability and workforce skills development initiatives that have operated in some borough and districts.

Some councils are set to increase their intake of apprentices matched by an increase also in the private sector. For example, ESCC currently has 20 apprenticeships and is aiming to increase this to 150 in coming years. The intention is that for large contracts let by the council, there will be a requirement that contractors take on a number of apprentices. This is encouraging and should be co-ordinated to be extended further. It would appear that local councils could have an important brokering role on this and more widely in matching the unemployed with training and job opportunities. This will build on some of the activities already taking place at a local level, including the Local Enterprise Apprenticeship Platform in Lewes District and Own Grown in Hastings and Rother. This should be extended to Sea Change Sussex and future delivery mechanisms that might be set up.

The evidence that councils leading on apprenticeships stimulate the private sector to also increase their take-up, could be enhanced by the recent budget announcement to extend the Apprenticeship Grants for Employers (AGE) scheme. This will provide £85m for 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 for over 100,000 grants to employers and £20m for post-graduate apprenticeships. TES could lead by example in adopting a challenging apprenticeship target, which all organisations and businesses across the county could be encouraged to contribute towards, with this backed by a strong local media campaign. This will, however, need to link with existing activities and should be co-ordinated through the existing Apprenticeships in East Sussex Strategy Group (administered by the County Council).

In Hastings, the University of Brighton will be expanding its intake from 800 to 2,000 students, specialising in a number of high tech. disciplines. This is significant for the number of students who will contribute to that part of the East Sussex economy and also for the training provided that should be aligned to what current and future employers see as the key clusters and sectors of the East Sussex economy. The University of Brighton will be an important economic partner to discuss such issues as housing and integration of students along with the current and future sectoral development in the area's economy. Furthermore, the emerging University Technical College in Newhaven will link with emerging high-value sectors of the economy.

There are three employment hubs developing. Own Grown is a Hastings initiative and is a good example of a local project extended to operate across the Hastings and Rother area.

The programme includes an Own Grown 1066 Pledge Apprenticeship initiative and brokered arrangements between potential apprentices and employers, involving Jobcentre Plus, Sussex Coast College, the National Apprenticeship Service and Own Grown brand. The Eastbourne Employability Hub is a pilot with the Borough Council, the County Council and Jobcentre Plus to provide a central resource on jobs, skills in demand, assistance in preparing for employment, and training, education and career information and guidance. Included in the target client cohort are 16-18 and 19-24 year NEET groups. The Local Enterprise and Apprenticeship Platform (LEAP) Lewes initiative also seeks to broker arrangements between potential apprentices and employers. This is a good example of successful partnership working, bringing together training providers, voluntary and community groups, employers and young people. LEAP also provides support for aspiring entrepreneurs providing extensive training and mentoring for business pre-starts.

ESCC's Connexions 360 website for young people is a helpful tool for young unemployed people (<http://www.connexions360.org.uk/Pages/default.aspx>) offering support, advice and signposting. This should have an important role in the action plan to deliver the above skills and training strategy.

As in many places, the range of partners involved in skills and training are many and the coordination of services poor. One quote obtained onsite was, "lots of avenues, no real coordination between the avenues" and "lots of strategy, so little delivery". This will be important to address and the skills and training strategy should make improving partnership coordination a priority – building on the work being done through the Apprenticeships in East Sussex Strategy Group and others.

Again, as in many places, the curricula of schools and some further education organisations are still too demand and funding-led. There is an essential coordinating role to establish the skills and training needs for the current economy and to project what these might be for the future. Identified skills and training needs must then form the basis for delivery by providers and will require councils and business representatives to engage with the Skills Funding Agency to agree a core set of skills and training priorities.

The ability of business and employers to influence and shape the training curricula of further and higher education providers will be essential for the new skills and training strategy and a good example of this is the University Technical College at Newhaven which is focusing on marine engineering and sustainability. Another example is the Sussex Coastal College which is aligning a number of courses to local job demand, for example vacuum technology.

The nature of the East Sussex economy means that there is a lack of large employers to drive systematic business engagement with the education and skills sector. With the preponderance of small and medium size enterprises (SMEs), it is essential that the views of SMEs, captured through the East Sussex Business Survey, help to make these necessary links. It is equally essential that support and brokerage projects (eg. LEAP and Own Grown) continue to support SMEs in engaging with skills, such as apprenticeships, in the local area.

Levels of self-employment are high in East Sussex, with Wealden and Rother having the highest levels in the SELEP area. The importance of the self-employed to the local economy, and particularly as they may expand to become SMEs, emphasises the

importance of training and skills to both nurture entrepreneurial activity and to direct potential self-employers to support, advice and funding. Again, LEAP reflects this need and offers potential for expansion across the East Sussex economy.

Some councils appear not to be making the most of procurement and planning agreements to secure local jobs and training. An example of this is Local Labour Agreements where the planning authority reaches an agreement on large development to invest in skills training and support. This could be CV development; psychometric testing and other training to assist the local population gain the skills to apply for jobs resulting from that development. This could form part of an approach that the councils facilitate to get young people, and out of work adults, ready for future jobs. The LGA and PAS are able to provide examples of councils that have used such agreements. The challenge will be to overcome the dichotomy that those areas of the county where land values (and hence planning gain) are low are often those with the highest levels of unemployment.

Another example is from mapping commercial economic sectors across East Sussex so that supply chain gaps might be revealed. The East Sussex Councils and partners could then promote these as commercial opportunities that could be supported by Business Centres offering high quality and flexible facilities for business start-up and growth.

4.8 Procurement

The Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 requires public bodies to consider how goods and services they purchase/commission might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area.

The inclusion of procurement as an essential part of the East Sussex economic growth and inclusion strategy recognises the importance of public/private/third sector expenditure in supporting the local economy and the important role that councils have in how they exercise their spending power. For example, ESCC will have significant spend for goods and services, which creates the opportunity to influence markets.

There are some excellent procurement initiatives supporting the growth agenda. The Procurement Hub and Procurement Portal provide a good basis for greater public /private/ third sector partnership working. Other arrangements include the Improvement and Efficiency South East (IESE) partnership with Eastbourne Borough and Lewes District Councils and the shared service arrangement between Hastings Borough, Rother District and Wealden District Councils.

The team also encountered a number of specific areas of good practice, such as: the SPACES initiative's asset management and contract alignment; 'Build East Sussex' supply chain management aimed at partnering principal contractors with local construction businesses; and the TRAC apprenticeship initiative. These have helped harness local buying power, created business opportunities for local companies that might otherwise not have existed and boosted apprenticeship provision.

However, it will be important to ensure that procurement activities are focused on where they will have the most chances of success, in supporting local businesses and employment creation, rather than chasing overall targets, which is a characteristic of current working arrangements.

Smarter procurement practice should involve more public/private/ third sector partners. More could be done to harness local spending power by coordinating/amalgamating partner procurement to support local suppliers and get better deals. Many people met by the team expressed a willingness to work together on this and just a 1% increase in local spend would have a major impact on the local economy.

Smarter working would also be achieved by standardising procurement requirements through the Procurement Hub – procurement procedures and rules, tender thresholds, insurance requirements, contract packages and a ‘tell us once’ approach would make it easier for SMEs to do business. Creating an East Sussex part of the joint procurement portal, to make it more relevant to local purchasers and suppliers, would promote a local ownership of the initiative and a procurement focus. The LGA and PAS would be able to direct East Sussex to councils that have advanced good practice in this field.

Procurement training and support is limited and disjointed between the public and private sector suppliers and it would be helpful to better co-ordinate its provision between the different agencies in an East Sussex wide programme to improve accessibility for SMEs and make the best use of the limited resources that are available.

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FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

1. To aid the review/updating of Local Plans, the development of the East Sussex economic growth strategy and encourage further development of co-operation between councils on the allocation of housing and employment across the county.

Soon to be published: [PAS Guide to Objectively Assessed Need and housing targets](#)

This guidance note will help councils to understand how to calculate the objectively assessed need and housing targets within their area. It includes up to date advice based on recent Local Plan examinations. This can be used by councils on a self-serve basis. PAS expects also to be able to facilitate a discussion for a group of councils and to provide support in relation to discussions on the Duty to Co-operate.

2. To support the development of an improved pre-application offer across all the councils

The LGA and PAS have worked with a cross-sector group to agree a set of 10 commitments that set out a framework for effective pre-application discussions. http://www.pas.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/5862911/PUBLICATION

PAS area currently completing a suite of supplementary best practice notes that set out advice on how these commitments should be implemented by local planning authorities. Importantly this includes advice on the engagement of councillors in pre-application discussions. These will be launched through a series of workshops in May and June 2014.

The LGA have a suite of case studies that look at how effective partnership with developers and the community at pre-application stage has resulted in delivery of developments to be proud of. http://www.pas.gov.uk/web/guest/publications/-/journal_content/56/10180/5862856/PUBLICATION

3. To help develop a quality performance framework that will monitor how the planning decision making system is working.

PAS has developed a series of tools and templates to help councils to set up a system that will assess the effectiveness of development management services to make the decisions that enable sustainable developments to be delivered in a way that customers value. http://www.pas.gov.uk/web/pas-test-site/events-and-support2/-/journal_content/56/332612/5730199/ARTICLE

4. Not all councils manage their planning services in the same way. Wolverhampton City Council has developed a way of working in their development management service that has been designed to provide more active support for applicants and encourage investment in line with the economic growth plans. http://www.pas.gov.uk/web/pas-test-site/improvement-store/-/journal_content/56/332612/6011793/ARTICLE

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Appendix 2

The Investment (open for growth) Peer Challenge – Towards an Action Plan: Collated interest levels and forward actions

Notes:

1. Very few of the recommendations following consideration were considered new to the East Sussex local authorities; recommendations have been highlighted in green where they are considered to be sufficiently detailed in terms of action and timelines to be identified as 'being progressed'.
2. All the recommendations were 'ranked' in terms of their importance according to the local authorities' responses; some were noticeably ranked 'high' as were *already* recognised as important and were already being progressed. Those ranked high (H) or high medium (H/M) are highlighted in column 1. In yellow

Recommendation	1. Interest level: High; Medium; Low; None	2. Why?	3. How?	4. By When?	5. Potential impact
R1: Leadership R1.1 Use the emerging consensus around the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and a revised East Sussex growth strategy, as a catalyst for driving forward the next round of Local Plans	M/L	Recognised as a need and already in train	East Sussex Growth Strategy. Integration and consolidation of existing documents – outcome oriented actions. This should be linked with the overarching Pride of Place vision and strategy for coherence and to build on existing consensus across the piece for East Sussex. The economic elements should be reviewed and strengthened, but maintained in context to ensure a balanced approach to growth. See notes on R2.25-7, R3.1&2, R4.4 and R5.1&2 Pulling together existing and improved economic evidence. Duty to Cooperate work programme agreed by East Sussex Strategic Planning Members Group (ESSPMG) is already part of the future Local	Nov 2014	Evidenced direction and leadership on key economic priority areas

		M/L	<p>R1.2 Raise the standards and improve the consistency of the councils' 'Open for Growth' services including a more consistently positive and proactive approach to the delivery of the planning system, especially development management, in East Sussex</p>	<p>Plan process.</p> <p>Largely existing responsibility of B/Ds through their development management function; mechanisms already in place, cross authority officers groups.</p> <p>REMOVE: and the Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG). Address need for a 'Strategic cross boundary Planning Infrastructure plan'</p>	Ongoing	<p>Positive responses to businesses/ developers submitting appropriate planning applications; more consistent and clearer guidance.</p> <p>HBC query on agreement to production of plan</p>
	<p>R1.3 Build consensus across the councils & develop a common and consistent strategic approach to support a shared vision and understanding of the role of house building as an economic generator and social benefit, linked to the economic growth and inclusion strategy</p>	H/M	<p>Without a correctly balanced housing supply there will be economic and/or social stagnation</p> <p>Linked to R1.2</p>	<p>Duty to Cooperate work programme agreed by ESSMPG -shared evidence base across ES to support economic growth.</p> <p>House builders engaged through the B/D SHMAS.</p> <p>Ongoing training for all councillors on planning committees; understanding the role of house building as economic generator+</p>	Ongoing	<p>Lack of stagnation through appropriate supply that also supports growth</p>
	<p>R1.4 Focus on a small number of achievable infrastructure projects which are essential to the delivery of economic growth</p>	H	<p>To address key infrastructure needs across the county that are evidenced to deliver the most economic benefit</p>	<p>TES Strategic main decision making role in respect of agreed programme</p> <p>ESSPMG agreed to the development of a 'Strategic cross boundary Infrastructure Delivery Plan'; work programme already in place to deliver Plan.</p> <p>Provision of individual delivery plans used to help identify, bid and secure funding for key projects to unlock capital infrastructure</p>	<p>Plan 2015 (to be looked at for earlier Plan delivery)</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Economic impact benefits produced; improved transport infrastructure and ensuring ready & appropriate supply of employment space</p>

<p>R1.5 Ensure that economic inclusion and opportunity as well as economic growth plays a key part in future strategy and delivery</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>Poverty and economic exclusion are key barriers to economic growth particularly in the coastal conurbations, but also in pockets of rural deprivation; to maintain/gain social cohesion and to assist local people grasp opportunities as they arise in a growing economy</p> <p><u>Also see R4.4 in respect of skills</u></p>	<p>Ensure coherent messages by all and effective lobbying approach</p> <p>To be reflected within the ES Growth Strategy.</p> <p>Maximising the benefits from funding opportunities from ESF and others addressing skills and employability programmes in ES.</p> <p>Stronger remit and influence on this agenda by TES and the ES Employability and Skills Board represented by cross sector organisations.</p>	<p>Nov 2015</p> <p>Mar 15 onwards</p> <p>Oct 14 onwards</p>	<p>Reduced socio/economic exclusion over time measured by relevant indicators and 'closing the gap' against 'peer' neighbours areas and region.</p> <p>Comparison between areas within the County itself would show how TES is redressing economic disadvantage.</p> <p>Appropriate to benchmark local performance against peers i.e. Hastings & Thanet or Wealden/Mid Sussex to compare real changes with those with similar profiles.</p> <p>Can the LEP help in this? The Economic Partnerships operating at a local (functional economy) level (e.g. the Hastings/Rother Task Force) need to take a role in delivering this agenda.</p>
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<p>R1.6 Recognition that housing growth and delivery is key to economic growth</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>See R1.3</p>	<p>Strategic Housing market Area Assessments, Local Plan targets. Governance under Duty to Cooperate and ESSPMG</p> <p>The TES needs to promote housing growth and the “governing” document should be the shared growth strategy.</p>	<p>2015</p>	<p>Closer alignment of infrastructure to housing development.</p> <p>More active ‘live’ progress reporting and information sharing</p>
<p>R2: Team East Sussex (TES)</p> <p>R2.1 The SEP, cited in R1.1, should be developed under the strategy and guidance of TES</p>	<p>H/M</p>	<p>SEP already produced; monitoring role for TES to be defined following SELEP delivery contracting with government</p>	<p>New TES terms of reference agreed. TES to approve draft ES Growth Strategy</p>	<p>Nov 2014</p>	<p>More strategic economic growth focussed organisation able to coordinate activity and lobby more effectively for key infrastructure, socio economic inclusion projects</p>
<p>R2.2 Develop TES as the partnership to co-ordinate the delivery vehicles for the East Sussex economic growth strategy in the federated structure of the LEP, to:</p> <p>HBC a little concerned that a plan for TES doesn't include a proper reference to our relationship with the LEP. There appears to be a silent assumption that this is a straightforward relationship based upon County boundaries. This neglects the coastal work that partners are actively engaged in and</p>	<p>H/M</p>	<p>To ensure momentum maintained and ES continues to benefit via SELEP.</p> <p>See R2.1</p>	<p>Agree forward planning role, areas, responsibilities and resources. Also timely progress tracking.</p> <p>More effective realisation of partnership objectives and coherent messages carried forward resulting in appropriate outcomes.</p> <p>Awareness, linkage to other LEPs/ Growth Deal Team and be informed / advised by these structures.</p> <p>Also essential linkages to be forged with existing strategic and other partnerships across East Sussex to build on the strength of existing</p>	<p>TES SEP role: By March 15</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Measure against deliverables in terms of projects and timeframes.</p> <p>Growth strategy needs to be in place / in line/ supportive of local plans.</p> <p>Delivery of growth is largely dependent upon external factors and it will not necessarily be TES that will be able to influence those at local level.</p>

<p>economic growth agenda</p>		<p>other stakeholder expertise, intervention and funds. To ensure that partners roles are clear and agreed at the outset to increase likelihood of successful delivery.</p> <p>Full participation is essential for effective partnership.</p>	<p>appropriate, co-design and co-produce delivery with partners.</p> <p>Community representative partners to advise on actions referred to in R1.5 above.</p> <p>Third sector rep. on EAB and TES; new TES ToR. Alongside appropriate reps on E&SP board</p> <p>Business reps on TES to cover across key sectoral areas – is Board membership sufficient – other methods? E.g. Economic Partnerships?</p>	<p>Nov 2014</p> <p>Nov 2014</p>	<p>Improved voice of businesses and VCS enabling coherent and joint messages with public sector –elevating cross representation of TES.</p>
<p>R2.2.4 create the East Sussex ‘narrative’ which reflects the varying need and ambition across the county and which sets out an agreed vision for the future</p>	<p>L/M</p>	<p>Little shared narrative that impacts the whole county</p> <p><u>Also see R3.5; R4.3;</u></p>	<p>GS and ‘Innovate East Sussex’ Strategy and ES Business Guide Pride of Place articulates the integrated East Sussex vision to 2026 – adopted by all East Sussex Local Authorities (apart from South Downs National Park Authority)</p>	<p>Event October and on going</p>	<p>Increase inward investment, indigenous business growth and jobs</p>
<p>R2.2.5 ensure the right economic partnerships exist to deliver and initiate action and strategic thinking at a local and thematic level</p>	<p>H</p>	<p>To ensure that informed expertise is available <i>and used</i> to guide and influence investment decisions. Ensure that these partnerships have a real understanding and knowledge & not individual agendas</p> <p>What are the partnerships?</p> <p><u>Also see R3.1</u></p>	<p>Where possible via existing groups at both SELEP level and at the local level e.g. the EAB, the Rural Forum, ‘Speak Up’, SME Commission, Locate East Sussex etc.</p> <p>Ensure that these economic partnerships link in effectively with existing partnership structures – may not need to invent new partnerships, but develop a stronger, more coherent economic focus.</p> <p>Local Partnerships also include the Hastings and Rother Task Force, town partnerships and other county</p>	<p>On- going although slightly more formalised routes in to decision makers may be helpful as will under-standing of main partnerships out there, link back to TES as appropriate</p>	<p>More informed and evidenced decision making; improved chances of success</p>

R2.2.6 encourage leadership and participation by all partners		Ensure strategic issues/projects are embedded in appropriate partner organisations along with TES	<p>wide. TES needs to link with these Existing partnerships to be mapped. NB ESSP and District & Borough strategic partnerships mapped these; should be updated rather than starting from zero.</p>	On going	A strong TES with a sound profile
R2.2.7 Operate a “light touch” approach that values innovation and creativity by all partners and enables rather than constrains this	H	These are the values which will enable a creative approach to partnership working - To avoid unnecessary bureaucracy and focus on	<p>Review of Direction for TES: keep it tight, short, clear and sharply focused; demonstrate strategic fit, relevance and outcomes for each element.</p> <p>Need to look more towards forward planning next growth proposals and ‘asks’, work as appropriate on cross federated proposals and with other LEPS. To ensure effective learning and leadership of TES going forward.</p> <p>Ensure that Council Leaders and senior officers maintain their attendance at Team East Sussex meetings. Ensure decisions are communicated in partners’ organisations, and that they feed in</p> <p>Sign up to finite list of strategic projects as per Duty to Co-operate (Strategic Cross Boundary Infrastructure Delivery Plan)</p> <p>QUERY role of Duty here and strategic list</p>	On going	Possible improvements in innovation/ innovative thinking

			Need to establish effective linkages between Team East Sussex and other partnerships and groupings throughout East Sussex, aligning actions and resources that fit where they touch. See earlier comments about existing structures, opportunities for sharpening focus, coherence; opportunity to update existing mapping to sharpen focus, coherence; opportunity to update existing mapping rather than reinventing the wheel TES plus governance			
R3.2 Review different governance models to ensure partnerships are effective and inclusive of the business & third sector and community agencies to maximise social value and economic growth	M <u>See R2.2.3. and R2.2.5</u>	To ensure governance is fit for purpose recognising that one size does not fit all and that the right representatives are around the table. Important that all sectors are involved to pursue both growth and inclusion agendas	Ensure that partners are aware of existing third-sector & other sectoral structures. Use evidence to inform provision e.g. sharing new data and associated analysis to aid all to target activity. Mapping exercise of all the partnerships will aid clarity. Leading on to ensuring effective sub groups/forums under/to advise TES (may then require updated TES ToR)	Ongoing Nov 2014 March 2015	More streamlined and appropriate involvement. More effective and evidence based expert advice provided to TES through sub groups (groups not to be invented where already in place)	
R3.3 Stretch ambition and trust by combining resources, as appropriate, to improve business access to services and to develop	H/M	The current business support offer is not universal cross county nor between economically aligned areas and does not necessarily reflect	Working with SELEP to further develop the East Sussex Gateway for Growth under SELEP Growth Hubs. Use of LGF and ERDF. Better match of supply with	Spring 2015	Focused support where intervention can demonstrate real added value to business sustainability and	

collective capacity		business need, may require simplification and better targeting to ensure discernable benefits) to business and the economy (and so has healthy positive cost benefit ratio)	evidenced demand e.g. via the business survey / barriers identified by the SME Commission etc.	growth; increased partnership capacity.
R3.4 Help each other with the hard choices regarding the Duty to Co-operate whilst incorporating priorities across the area	H/M	Inevitable tensions between meeting growth needs and maintaining green spaces, and urban/rural dimension	ES SPMG Agreement through ESCG and Leader's Group	Increased prospects of delivery of strategic projects
R3.5 Branding will be essential as will the need to recognise when to market as 'East Sussex' and when to market as 'specific areas' of the county (understand and play to collective & individual strengths as necessary) in a way which maximises economic growth, opportunity & benefits for businesses and residents	M/L <u>Also see R2.2.4; R2.3 and R4.3</u>	Although this <i>may have</i> potential we still need to determine whether this is required, what branding could mean / look like and who it is aimed at	Event October 2014 facilitated by LGA	
R4: Business focus				
R4.1 Focus procurement activities where they will have the most chances of success in supporting local businesses while delivering value for money	M/H	To support local business development and growth. NB Local business support and VFM may not always be complementary especially when seeking economies of scale.	This has already commenced with procurement through the East Sussex Procurement Hub Look at best practice from other councils. Focus on below EU procurement levels where the bulk of the District council's procurement occurs and falls outside the requirements of the Social Value Act. Look to see how EU and above procurements do not disadvantage local business;	Greater retention of public-sector spend within the county. Better quality of provision and vfm as supplier relationships develop. More bids from local companies and potential for increase in local companies

		<p>consider dividing contracts into lots; ensure financial requirements are not excessively onerous.</p> <p>The links the Procurement Hub has established with FSB procurement accord and other organisations should be built upon to include training and skills programmes, and regular opportunities to develop and deepen constructive working relationships</p> <p>Existing information can be analysed to create a baseline for the success of local contractors for the East Sussex Procurement Hub.</p> <p>Continue to investigate possible use of Local Multiplier 3 to ensure better retention of fiscal/other benefit from procurement within the county.</p> <p>Encourage companies are procuring contracts to advertise on the SE Shared Services Procurement hub portal. This would increase local company opportunities to bid.</p> <p>The catalysts for getting public/private/third sector partners to work together are to</p>		<p>winning tenders</p> <p>Possible economies and value added.</p> <p>Greater number of East Sussex businesses engaging with ESPH and registering with SESSP.</p>
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<p>R4.2 Review, along with partners, procurement activities across the councils with a view to developing new procedures to promote and enhance opportunities for local businesses</p>	<p><u>See R4.1 above</u></p>		<p>provide training & awareness and ongoing opportunities to develop constructive relationships. A first step would be to hold a network meeting of interested parties to try to set up the training.</p> <p>New procedures are already being developed because of changes required to link the e-procurement system with the SE Shared Services Portal</p>		
<p>R4.3 Continue to recognise tourism and culture across the county as important elements for growth and consider building resources to further support these parts of the economy</p> <p>Also see R2.2</p>	<p>H Also see <u>R2.2.4;</u> <u>R3.5</u></p>	<p>As contributors to the local economy including contributing to sector diversification.</p> <p>Supports the overall visitor economy in both rural and urban areas</p>	<p>Cultural actions to be developed via the Cultural Advisory Board noting the organisations represented there also sit on the Cultural Destinations Consortium PLUS TES and local economic partnerships in the light of the work of County and local cultural and tourism partnerships.</p> <p>CAB is a new group and the ToR is still being developed but main focus is on cultural destinations not the visitor economy in its wider sense</p> <p>Tourism locus of B/DCs and supported locally</p> <p>Visitor economy requires future proofing and the cultural strategy implementation; can a collective</p>	<p>Culture in hand + input from 'narrative workshop' October</p> <p>Branding to be developed in accordance with strategic view of tourism.</p> <p>Actions around tourism are not logically placed with the Cultural Advisory Board</p> <p>Notwithstanding the cultural destinations consortium, tourism and culture are not identical.</p> <p>Tourism activity is</p>	

<p>R4.4 Ensure that employers, business are able to influence & shape skills and training priorities for the economy with education and skills providers</p>	<p>H/M</p>	<p>It is recognised that national funding policy, particularly EFA funding in relation to young people, does not always lend itself to employers being able to shape priorities to meet business need</p> <p>Essential that education and skills provision is relevant to local workforce needs</p>	<p>offer yield more spend in ES?</p>	<p>focused at local level (1066 Country etc.) and there is no agreement that this will change. This should be more central in the growth strategy and under the purview of TES itself at a strategic level</p> <p>Post Sept. 19 workshop</p>	
			<p>The Annual Business Survey as an {evidence} tool will continue to gather information from employers about needs and priorities, amongst other methods, and econometric forecasting will be used to forecast sectoral and occupational growth and resulting skills requirements. In addition, a new Employability and Skills Partnership linked with the East Sussex Strategic Partnership (for coherence and cross-sectoral linkage and relationships), drawing in both current and new partners including providers, the voluntary sector, B/DC and relevant economic partnerships</p>	<p>On-going; progression reinvigorated September 2014</p>	<p>Closer fit of education and training output to economic need.</p>

<p>R4.5 Review the performance of Locate East Sussex and inward investment activities, with a view to</p>	<p>M</p>	<p>An existing contact between all 6 local authorities</p>	<p>and businesses, is being formed and will meet early September 2014. The Partnership will cover a wide agenda and will help to ensure that employability and skills fully support sustainable economic growth in the county. There will need to be local partnerships within the different economic areas of the County. New web based 'employer skills portal' developed nationally enabling businesses to request training and then providers to look to meet requirements. The employability and skills partnership appears to exclude local economic partnerships and District Councils. It makes no mention of co-ordinated action at a local level focusing on specific economic geography. Moving forward ought to include the skills partnerships, employers and others working at a truly local level. TES needs to be involved in strategic discussions and ensuring proper identification of opportunities and need across the County. The contract deliverables are already monitored and will be subject to a mid-term review in</p>	<p>Autumn 2014</p>	<p>Increased take up of local commercial property; facilitating fit</p>
				<p>Mid-term review in October 2014; further review</p>	

understanding if increased resources would deliver added value			October via report to Leaders/ESCE meeting	including resourcing nearer completion of contract May 2015	between business premises and businesses which seek to expand; supporting inward investment; supporting business access to RGF 4
<p>R5: Key messages</p> <p>R5.1 East Sussex is poised to accelerate growth but this needs collective vision driven by a strategic view</p> <p>R5.2 Continue to build on partnerships across the county and understand when to work collectively and when independently. The consensus already achieved and the proven track record is the way for councils to deliver economic growth for their communities. This approach may require individual councils to trade some control on certain issues in exchange for enhanced rates of growth and prosperity across the county as a whole. Partnerships between councils are not constrained by Team East Sussex and may include additional regional, national and international working</p> <p>R5.3 Working together and stretching the boundaries for closer working will build trust and lead to</p>					

R5.1; R5.2; R5.3: L

Low priority as seen as a summary of all actions already identified within the previous recommendations therefore there is no need to individually refer to these key messages.

Pride of Place represents the integrated strategic vision for East Sussex as a whole (adopted collectively and individually by all local authorities across East Sussex apart from the South Downs National Park.); the economic elements in both the overarching document and individual area chapters should be reviewed and updated to provide a robust and current platform for this emerging Action Plan.

mature working relationships
between councils and partners