

## **West Sussex Economy Reset Plan - July 2020 (Draft)**

### **1. Introduction**

The West Sussex economy pre COVID-19 was generally a diverse economy, worth around £22.8bn and performing strongly against the national average performance although with significant variation across the county. West Sussex is home to around 859,000 people, with a higher proportion of over 65-year olds than the national and regional average along with a lower proportion of people of working age.

In 2018 there were 387,000 employee jobs. Employee job growth between 2015-2018 was stronger in West Sussex (5.6%) than the national (3.7%) and regional average (1.9%). Crawley saw a 10% increase in employee jobs during this time and Arun and Worthing also saw stronger growth than the national average. Within West Sussex, Crawley, at 94,000, makes up around a quarter of all employee jobs, with Adur having the lowest proportion at 21,000 (5%).

In 2019 there were over 42,000 businesses, though growth over the last five years in the number of businesses has been lower in the county than in the South East region. West Sussex is very much a small firm economy with over 70% of businesses employing less than five people, the exception to this is found in Crawley which has one of the highest percentages of larger businesses (i.e. employing over 100) in the country.

Generally, at county level, there were higher than national and regional levels of economic activity, employment and self-employment rates, and lower levels of unemployment. However, West Sussex's economy underperforms against the strongest economies in the South East with earnings of West Sussex residents lower than the regional average. Earnings levels of those working in West Sussex are lower than the regional and national average except for Crawley where earnings of those working in Crawley are higher. In addition, GVA per head lags some areas in the South East. The North East (Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex) of the county has higher levels of GVA than the coastal districts with Gatwick Airport seen as a nationally significant economic asset and a strong driver of the West Sussex economy as well as the wider regional economy, and a significant employer itself. Key strengths in West Sussex were around a diverse range of sectors including health and life sciences, financial and business services, transport, distribution and wholesale further highlighting the importance of Gatwick, and the high-quality natural environment supporting a strong leisure and tourism offer.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 is having a significant impact on the county's economy and the pre COVID-19 economic landscape is changing rapidly. Businesses are being hit hard, there are significant levels of business failure, residents are losing their jobs and livelihoods, and the implications of the aviation industry crisis on Gatwick airport are far-reaching and impact the local, regional and national economy. The impact on the economy has severe social consequences too.

The reset plan reflects what we know so far from evidence and intelligence on the impact of COVID-19; what we have learnt through the response to the COVID-19 crisis; the opportunities we are keen to embrace; and what we have been doing and propose to do in the coming weeks and months. We must also acknowledge it provides a `snapshot in time` as the situation is fluid, and much of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy is unknown and unfolding. This needs to be a `live` document that is regularly updated.

The County Council is developing its overall reset plan which is informed by wider business and partner engagement. However, given the impact, working on resetting the economy is a priority and we need to map an approach to wider engagement and strategic alignment across the county and with the LEP.

We need to be mindful of resourcing the economy reset plan, and ensure our ambition and approach are realistic. The plan will support the case for additional resources should they become available from Government. A corporate approach across the Council is needed so Cabinet ownership and leadership are key.

## **2. Principles to inform approach to the economy reset**

The economy, business and skills `reset journey` will be complex, multi-faceted and phased over months and most likely years. Government strategy leads the way, and the County Council will adopt principles to underpin the approach. These include:

- a. led by **Cabinet** with appropriate engagement and governance, and forming part of a single integrated corporate plan
- b. guided by **Government strategy** and continuing to influence its development
- c. focussed on the future for West Sussex and the **WSSC priority outcomes**, recognising the economy will not be the same as it was before
- d. built on our assets and guided by **evidence and intelligence** on the impact of Covid-19 on the West Sussex economy, its businesses and workforce
- e. based on creating and nurturing **stronger partnerships** locally and regionally whilst recognising each organisation will be responsible for its own approach
- f. ensuring the **County Council plays a leading role** in recovery where appropriate, including through its own activities
- g. ensuring we are making the **best use of resources**, securing value for money in any County Council interventions.

## **3. Government Strategy and partner roles**

The LGA and WSSC are seeking to influence the development of the Government's policy. We will want to consider mechanisms for boosting economic recovery; opportunities around Government programmes and funding streams; recognise national calls for a `greener, fairer and more resilient` recovery; and how the economic position facing the country will relate to

devolution, 'levelling-up', Local Industrial Strategies and the state of public sector finances.

We are seeking from Government a strong recovery framework that recognises the interdependencies such as the re-opening of schools, and the movement of people. Many partners will be involved, including local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnerships, business and trade representative organisations, trade unions, MPs, business community networks, further and higher education, and the voluntary sector.

#### **4. Vision for reset**

The vision for the economy reset is focused on the future of West Sussex, and West Sussex County Council's priority outcomes. The priorities within the adopted Economic Growth Plan 2018-2023 and the associated activities are still relevant and will provide much of the focus. However, it is recognised the economy will not be the same as it was before and there will need to be a review and in some cases a reset of the pre COVID-19 activities to reflect the changed landscape.

In addition, there will be new areas of focus, to address where the economy has been particularly adversely affected or where there are opportunities – these include the implications of the aviation crisis on Gatwick airport and the wider area including the large numbers of people who have lost their jobs; the challenges faced by young people transitioning through academic and vocational provision and seeking to enter the labour market; the needs of particular sectors including tourism; opportunities to embed a zero-carbon and 'nature-based' solutions approach within the planning and decision-making for economic recovery; the potential to build on the experience of lockdown to maximise a digital technology led approach; the potential to build more inclusive and sustainable economies; and the need for a renewed focus on the adult social care market.

#### **5. Evidence and intelligence on the impact of COVID-19**

The approach to reset should be underpinned by evidence and insight, based on a clear understanding of the immediate and projected medium to long term impact of COVID-19 on the West Sussex economy and workforce. It will be important to have local economic data to inform place-sensitive national policy formulation, and to consider how structural changes in the economy will impact on the county – both the positive innovations that have emerged and the negative ones such as business-types and job roles that will be shown to be reduced or non-viable.

It will also be important to ensure we fully understand and respond to the impacts on residents and workers with protected characteristics, including age (with the potential for young people to be disproportionately affected); sex (for example women are more likely to work in sectors most hit by the pandemic including retail, hospitality and tourism jobs); and race (with data from the UK and overseas showing that the Covid-19 virus has a disproportionately

significant impact on black and Asian ethnic minority people, it will be key to understand and respond to ongoing implications for people's lives and work).

To date there has been limited 'official' data from ONS that can indicate the impact of COVID-19 on economic activity in West Sussex, much of the detailed data so far released has been at national level. Two key sources that do provide insight were released on 11<sup>th</sup> June:

#### The number of furloughed people by local authority

- around a quarter of West Sussex working residents aged 16+ have been furloughed
- Crawley has the highest number of furloughed at 20,000 representing around 33.7% of working residents in Crawley aged 16+, and the number of furloughed in Arun is also high at 19,000 (27.7%).<sup>1</sup>

#### Take up of the Self-Employment Income Support Scheme

- the take up rate for this in West Sussex (i.e. the numbers of claims made against the total potentially eligible population) is 71% compared with 70% regionally and nationally.
- Adur has the highest take up rate at 74%.

In addition, from research and estimates of impact undertaken by various organisations and from our own collation of intelligence from across the county, we are aware of the potential impact and issues. The key messages emerging:

- The number of job vacancies plummeted - virtually overnight with the biggest hits being in the leisure, recreation, food preparation and hospitality sectors;
- The number of business start-ups in West Sussex in March this year were down by a third compared with March last year; and the number of dissolved companies up by over 40% during the same period, though there were more start-ups than closures;
- Considering those sectors that are more likely to furlough or lay off workers, Centre for Cities identified hospitality, aviation and leisure as the most vulnerable and seeing an immediate negative effect. All these sectors are key to the West Sussex economy;
- Indications are that Crawley is the most impacted area in West Sussex in terms of jobs affected, and indeed comes out as one of the most affected in the country;
- There is also some evidence that coastal towns are likely to be more at risk, as they are often already areas that have higher levels of deprivation as well as high proportions of those sectors that are currently shut down including pubs, restaurants and tourist accommodation;

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<sup>1</sup> NB a person with several jobs could have been furloughed more than once and each 'employment' that has been furloughed is counted. The numbers of furloughed from HMRC are based on the residential address HMRC holds for each employee and doesn't necessarily reflect the employee's place of work.

- The care sector is fragile and under considerable pressure, including through workforce challenges;
- The employment and skills landscape are being severely impacted, including opportunities for school leavers; funded pre-employment support and provision, particularly for the vulnerable; apprenticeship provision; the impact on further and higher education settings; graduate employment; and considerable increases in unemployment.

## **6. The proposed approach and role of the County Council**

The approach to the economy reset plan will mirror the corporate approach led by Cabinet and will be integrated into a single corporate programme. This will enable Cabinet to direct relative priorities and ensure best use is made of assets, resources and energy, and that risks are understood.

As the economy reset plan evolves, it will be key to determine and agree the priorities and roles for the County Council. These will vary across the reset plan, at times lobbying, leading, enabling, partnering, supporting, or delivering. The economy reset plan also needs to be cross-cutting, with a range of Cabinet portfolios and corporate functions having a role to play alongside economy, including highways and transport, planning, education and skills, environment and sustainability, digital infrastructure, adults, policy, and intelligence and performance.

## **7. Priority themes**

The proposed priority themes for the economy reset plan reflect:

- what we know so far from evidence and intelligence on the impact of COVID-19
- what we have learnt through the response to the COVID-19 crisis
- the opportunities we are keen to embrace
- an initial review of the Economic Growth Plan 2018-2023 activities

The priority themes provide the framework for where we will:

- focus our own efforts and resources, including on immediate activities to signal confidence
- build or support strategic alliances and partnerships to act, as appropriate
- lobby for attention nationally, regionally and locally

### Priority themes

Theme 1: Protecting and reviving Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond economy

Theme 2: Protecting and reviving the coastal towns

Theme 3: Protecting and reviving the rural economy

Theme 4: Enabling business start-ups, business survival and business adaptation

Theme 5: Enabling an employment and skills reset (includes unemployment)

Theme 6: Protecting and reviving tourism and the visitor economy

Theme 7: Enabling a health and social care market for the future

Theme 8: Enabling a digital technology focussed reset

Theme 9: Embedding climate change and the environment into the reset

The following content sets out the current status for each theme, providing a `snapshot in time` as the situation is so fluid and much of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy is unknown and unfolding. Each theme covers:

- current position and key challenges
- immediate response by the County Council working with partners
- next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond (with pre COVID-19 `BAU` Economic Growth Plan activities highlighted as *EGP*, and key challenges and opportunities where initial focus is proposed referenced with `IF`)
- where appropriate, how government could help.

### ***Theme 1: Protecting and reviving Crawley and the Gatwick Diamond economy***

#### **Current position and key challenges**

- Aviation is undoubtedly one of the sectors that is worst affected by COVID-19 which has significant implications for how quickly Crawley and the wider Gatwick Diamond is likely to `reset`.
- Gatwick airport accounts for an economic footprint of 85,000 jobs and £5.3 billion towards GDP (2016 Oxford Economics).
- The Centre for Cities has published a [report](#) which predicts that Crawley is the most exposed locality to the economic impact of the pandemic with high levels of business failure and unemployment likely.
- Gatwick Airport has warned it expects it to take up to four years for demand for flights to fully recover from the coronavirus pandemic, and major airlines including BA and Virgin have warned they may not resume at Gatwick.
- Gatwick Airport Limited has developed its own `ask of Government` including a sector specific extension to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme until April 2021 to protect the workforce; and for an approach to quarantine for inbound travellers based on county-by-country risk (reflected in Government rules being relaxed for arrivals from more than 60 countries and British overseas territories from 10 July)
- The Manor Royal BID's largest employment sector is wholesale and transport (approximately 10,000 jobs) of which 4,400 are in some way connected to aviation (15% of all Manor Royal jobs). Additionally, 1,000 businesses are classified in Accommodation, Food and Recreation. This highlights a degree of exposure that Manor Royal shares with the wider Crawley area.
- The Gatwick Diamond economy is exposed through its reliance on Gatwick and lacks wider resilience when the airport is adversely affected by international events impacting on air travel.

## The County Council's immediate response working with partners

- Letter sent to Government to lobby for tailored support for the area, signed by the Gatwick Diamond authorities and Boroughs and the LEP (Crawley have written separately to Government).
- Delivering immediate support for the re-opening of high streets and workplaces, mainly through highways and transport.

## Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond

Action 1	Participate in a strategic partnership for the Gatwick Diamond to support the economy through the crisis to reset, with a focus on the people, businesses and places most impacted, and the potential to reduce the reliance on Gatwick in the longer term. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 2	Engage proactively with Gatwick Airport Ltd, consider the Council's role in supporting the airport's asks of Government, and support GAL to 'look local' wherever possible e.g. to the supply chain as they invest in re-purposing the airport to meet COVID-19 standards; and as they build a place offer as part of the case to attract new airlines. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 3	Support the Crawley Recovery taskforce and Recovery Board led by Crawley Borough Council, which is considering recovery action and utilisation of the Government's Towns fund. This will build on the existing Growth Programme and will seek to undertake interventions to assist the town's recovery. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 4	Participate in the Local Government Association's Strategic Aviation Special Interest Group considering the impact of Covid-19 on places where aviation is a key sector.
Action 5	Use the County Council's levers to support investment and private sector confidence including through commencing the procurement of a development partner for Horsham Enterprise Park. <i>(EGP)</i>
Action 6	Deliver the Growth Deals with the Districts and Boroughs, confirm funding arrangements (such as Local Growth Fund), and reset schemes as needed and to maximise opportunities. Explore opportunities for the One Public Estate programme to benefit economic recovery through use of public assets. <i>(EGP)</i>
Action 7	Seek to ensure that strategies and policies in Local Plans (prepared by the local planning authorities) satisfactorily address the County Council's economic reset priorities arising from COVID-19.
Action 8	Deliver the priorities in the Council's Strategic Transport Investment Programme (STIP), and work with Government and partners to progress strategic transport improvements to support the economy in the north east of the county, including improving capacity of the Brighton Mainline (connecting Gatwick to Brighton, the south of the County and London) and on improving services on the Arun Valley Line, including the construction of a new station between Horsham and Crawley.
Action 9	Seek to secure Department for Transport (DfT) funding from Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund for improvements to enable sustainable travel choices on key commuting routes, in addition to the 3 schemes already awarded DfT funding in the north east of the county to be completed in the summer.

## How Government could help

- Recognise the Gatwick Diamond and Crawley as one of the places most affected economically and socially from COVID-19, and work in partnership with us on a plan that reflects the unique challenges faced by

the place, and which aligns Government investment to `reset` the economy of the area.

- Ensure the Government Aviation Task Force recognises the challenges for places with major airports and advocates for bespoke support.
- Ensure committed Local Growth Funding remains allocated to projects important to helping to stimulate economic recovery.

## **Theme 2: Protecting and reviving the coastal towns**

### **Current position and key challenges**

- Nationally, coastal communities are likely to be among the hardest hit areas as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Several reports have already cited the risk coastal locations face as they tend to have a high proportion of their business base in sectors that cannot or will be slower to trade as lockdown is eased, and due to higher levels of deprivation. At the time of the report Bognor Regis had 60% of jobs in sectors not able to trade.
- A Coastal West Sussex Partnership commissioned report (May 2020) provides an early indication of the challenges for our coastal towns and economy, including from a dependence on hospitality and tourism, the presence of cultural and creative industries (including freelancers who have less access to support), and the relatively high proportion of older people who are at risk of being socially isolated and less economically active. Horticulture (particularly ornamental plants) and advanced manufacturing are also important sectors that are being hit hard.
- Before COVID-19, although the county's coastal areas were home to a diverse range of employment and high-profile employers, overall the employment and productivity gap between the coastal towns and the rest of the county was widening. Longer-term career opportunities were viewed as relatively limited, and this is likely to be exacerbated by the impact of the pandemic.

### **County Council's immediate response with partners**

- Letter sent to Government to lobby on behalf of the horticulture sector (ornamental).
- Deliver immediate support the County Council can provide for the re-opening of high streets and workplaces, mainly through highways and transport.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Work with the Coastal West Sussex Partnership (local authorities, business, higher education) and Districts and Boroughs to understand the insight from the commissioned report on economic impact, and potential responses – including those in the other reset themes most relevant to the coast (e.g. visitor economy, employment and skills).
Action 2	Deliver the Growth Deals with the Districts and Boroughs, confirm funding arrangements (such as Local Growth Fund), and reset schemes as needed and to maximise opportunities. Explore opportunities for the



	OPE programme to benefit economic recovery through use of public assets. (EGP)
Action 3	Seek to ensure that strategies and policies in Local Plans (prepared by the local planning authorities) satisfactorily address the County Council's economic reset priorities arising from COVID-19.
Action 4	Deliver the priorities in the Council's Strategic Transport Investment Programme (STIP), and work with Government and partners to progress strategic transport improvements to support the economy in the south of the county, including improving capacity of the Brighton Main Line and improvements to the A27.
Action 5	Seek to secure Department for Transport (DfT) funding from Tranche 2 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund for improvements to enable sustainable travel choices on key commuting routes, in addition to the four schemes already awarded DfT funding in the south of the county to be completed in the summer.
Action 6	Reset the County Council's creative digital sector development activities, including the launch of the Bognor Regis Creative Digital Hub. (EGP)

### **How Government could help**

- Recognise that coastal communities are likely to be severely impacted by COVID-19.
- Support coastal communities and their key sectors such as tourism to adapt and build consumer confidence based on `COVID-19 quality standards`.
- Ensure committed Local Growth Funding remains allocated to projects in the long term, recognising outputs may be delayed.

### ***Theme 3: Protecting and reviving the rural economy***

#### **Current position and key challenges**

- The Rural West Sussex Partnership's economic profile (2019) highlighted that 28% of businesses in West Sussex are in rural areas. The impact of COVID-19 on rural areas will vary to reflect the diversity of the economy – which includes obvious sectors of horticulture, agriculture, forestry & fishing, and visitor economy including food and drink, to manufacturing (manufacturing makes up 5.32% of rural businesses compared to 3.54% of urban ones in the LEP area).
- Horticulture is one sector facing challenges, represented to the County Council by the West Sussex Growers Association and other rural partners. Those who grow and trade in the ornamental sector have been hard hit. The re-opening of garden centres and nurseries has aided this situation although it is too early to know the full impact on early season losses to these businesses.
- Across many rural economy sectors there are issues with access to seasonal labour, largely as overseas workers are less able to travel to pick during the peak season. The national "Pick for Britain" campaign has sought to help address these challenges in the horticulture sector.
- Some rural businesses are facing issues with aspects of the Government's Business Support Package e.g. agricultural tenants are not eligible for the

grants, as the farmer receives it. There are also concerns the furlough scheme will end in the Autumn on the back the peak season of business being lost for many rural businesses.

- Diversification, where possible, has allowed some rural businesses to stay open. Across the county we have seen farm shops and local producers adapting their business operation to home deliveries and take-aways.

### **The County Council’s immediate response working with partners**

- The Leader wrote to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to highlight the challenges experienced by many West Sussex growers and traders of perishable plants.
- Cabinet Members and senior officers have met with the South Downs National Park to assess the economic impact and agreed to work together.
- Supported rural bus services during the crisis.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Work with the Rural West Sussex Partnership to understand the insight from the commissioned report to apply a COVID-19 `impact lens` to the 2019 economic profile, and to identify priorities (including a consideration of horticulture and viticulture).
Action 2	Work with partners to align reset activities most relevant to the rural area, including those from the digital and the visitor economy themes (including partnership working between the SDNP and Experience West Sussex). (EGP)
Action 3	Support the West Sussex Growers Association’s new study on `understanding of the horticulture sector in the county`, including an economic assessment and consideration of aligning approaches to the environment and energy.
Action 4	Ensure final delivery of the LEADER Rural Grants Programme to support jobs and business growth in the rural economy. (EGP)

### **How Government could help**

- Adopt a nuanced approach to the existing Government support package including the tapering of the furlough scheme, to reflect the status of sectors at that time and factors such as seasonality in businesses cashflow and employment.
- Put in place measures to safeguard rural public transport services.

## ***Theme 4: Enabling business start-ups, business survival and business adaptation***

### **Current position and key challenges**

- The business landscape is multi-faceted and evolving. We are seeing businesses close or struggle to survive; workers being made redundant; many re-opening under `new normal` conditions as lockdown has eased; and some thriving during the immediate crisis - the business sector is often the key factor in how a business is impacted by COVID-19.
- The focus of support for businesses and the self-employed to date has been the Government support package, amounting to multi-billions of

pounds and including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, business grants and some business rates holidays administered by the Districts and Boroughs, and business advice from the LEP Growth Hub and other business groups.

- Despite the spend by Government many businesses, company directors and freelancers have not been eligible for support, with many not wanting to take loans. Rent pressures are building for many.
- Individual or groups of businesses (sometimes through federations or membership groups) have been articulating the challenges they face and the support they are seeking, and this will be highly fluid in the coming weeks and months – current themes include financial issues and cashflow, supply chain disruption and synchronisation, and exporting challenges and costs.
- Those who run co-working spaces have made representations to the County Council and partners on the challenges faced by entrepreneurs and micro-businesses, highlighting the value of local supply chains, a theme that resonates more broadly across the economy.
- Some of the county's best-known businesses have set out their own ask of Government, such as Ricardo the global strategic engineering and environmental consultancy, who have been advocating for further consideration of workforce travel issues, the ability to receive international business clients, and the criticality of the movement of goods in the supply chain.
- Government has established ministerial-led taskforces to oversee how sectors closed during lockdown can reopen safely, and has hosted economic recovery roundtables with businesses, business representative organisations, regulators and leading academics on themes such as 'green recovery', 'backing new businesses' and 'the future of industry'.
- Despite the challenges there are some businesses and sectors who have reported an increase in turnover during the pandemic, including food retail, distributors of goods purchased on-line, and those with goods and products that play a role in responding to the pandemic. It will be important to maximise any opportunities as they arise.
- Strong themes are emerging for approaches to business and organisations' adaptation, including those that are technology led, prioritise the environment, and support wider public health. As a major employer in the county the County Council has a role to play in leading by example.

### **County Council's immediate response working with partners**

- Convened the West Sussex COVID-19 economy officers' group also involving the LEP and the SDNP, as an extension to existing arrangements to collaborate on economy matters. The group has played an important role around the delivery of the Government Support package for businesses, and on collating weekly reports on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, which have been widely circulated.

- Established advice and sign-posting information for businesses on the County Council web site and Business West Sussex.
- Sought to support local businesses where possible through the County Council's response to the crisis, particularly on the Community Hub's approach to the provision of food and supplies to vulnerable residents, and the PPE cell's approach to sourcing from local companies.
- Tracking business intelligence, including the findings of any business surveys, to inform the reset approach and actions.
- Working with the representatives of micro and small businesses to identify immediate actions to support their needs.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Take a highly proactive approach to any further Government initiatives and seek to secure benefits for the county. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 2	Produce a monthly business and data intelligence tracker to inform the reset approach and actions. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 3	Ensure current Economic Growth Plan business support activities are adapted and effective in supporting businesses and business start-ups through the reset phase. These include the `live` European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) supported Hot House Programme (also funded by the local authorities); and the bids for ERDF for the RISE innovation project in partnership with the University of Brighton. <i>(EGP)</i>
Action 4	Work with partners (including the C2C Growth Hub) on opportunities to support local businesses as business needs become clearer, and as opportunities arise. <i>(EGP)</i>
Action 5	Ensure up to date information and sign-posting to support and advice for businesses on the County Council web site and Business West Sussex web site. <i>(EGP)</i>
Action 6	Work with the representatives of micro and small businesses to explore `buy local` activities and promote initiatives where appropriate.
Action 7	As a major employer in the county, seek to model approaches to organisational adaptation, including through the adoption of technology to enable smarter working, through prioritising the environment through the adoption of the Climate Change Strategy 2020 - 2030, and through promoting well-being as advocated in the Annual Public Health Report 2019/20 `Good jobs for good health`.

### **How Government could help**

- Continue to adapt the Government's business support package to prevent further business failure among viable businesses (e.g. in response to rent pressures consider the `furlough` for unusable commercial floorspace supported by the British Property Federation and British Retail Consortium).
- Invest in businesses and sectors to help them adapt and innovate for the long-term (recognising that EU funding for business support and innovation activity is concluding).

- Recognise and respond to the challenges some business face around the movement of goods and people due to restrictions on international connectivity.
- Use climate investments to support business recovery and jobs.

### ***Theme 5: Enabling an employment and skills reset***

#### **Current position and key challenges**

- The impact of COVID-19 on people and the numbers who will find themselves out of work cannot be underestimated.
- Unemployment levels are increasing dramatically, with the only `real-time` data (modelled monthly claimant count) showing a 96% increase in the claimant count between March and up to 9th April across the county, with Arun and Mid Sussex showing the highest increases in this period – we also know many locations have very high percentages of jobs in the sectors most at risk from COVID-19 including Crawley and Bognor Regis.
- Many who are finding themselves out of work or facing significant job insecurity are experienced, high skilled individuals across a wide age profile.
- The education, skills and employment landscape are being severely impacted, including opportunities for school leavers, apprenticeship provision, the impact on further and higher education settings, and graduate employment, with some referring to the risks around a `lost generation` of 18-24 year olds.
- Many of our learners in key transition year groups, will have had little or no face to face tuition since March 2020.
- History shows that school leavers are usually hardest hit following a recession in terms of financial health. Many suffer longer spells of unemployment, and slower pay rises, than people with degrees.
- The first rung in the employment ladder for many young people are in the sectors most hit by COVID-19.
- In West Sussex, the Chichester College Group, the University of Chichester and independent training providers are directly impacted, along with many young people transitioning into post-16 education, or already in these settings.
- The finances of these providers will be negatively impacted by the loss of international students and the constraints/ costs of implementing social distancing across their sites.
- Funded pre- employment support is a key requirement for many in the NEET cohort and was in short supply even before Covid-19. Given the anticipated increase in NEETs, identifying appropriate support of this type will be important in any reset plan.
- Nationally the higher education sector is estimating a £6.3 Billion funding shortfall, with much of that from potential loss of international students, and universities and all formal settings are having to plan operations under new social distancing arrangements.
- Creative approaches, and a willingness and ability for collaboration between schools, further and higher education, providers and employers

are likely to be key to the 'class of 2020' entering the labour market, with sectoral and geographic considerations likely to be needed.

- The Chancellor announced a new 'Plan for Jobs' as part of his Economic Statement on 8 July, focussing on apprenticeships, traineeships, investment in the National Careers Service, and a 'Kickstart Scheme'. It will be vital to ensure we make the most of these opportunities for the county's residents and employers.

### **County Council's immediate response working with partners**

- Education and Skills have been responding to the immediate situation regarding schools, and highlighting key issues relating to post 16.
- Careers Advisers have been contacting schools to offer support for Year 11 students who do not have an offer of a place for September 2020 and are at risk of being NEET.
- WSCC, ESCC and Brighton and Hove are working with the Sussex Learning Network to develop a collaborative 'pan Sussex' approach to ensuring education and training at all key stages is available locally; that learners of all ages are aware of them, including mature learners and employers; and progression pathways are highly visible.
- The School Effectiveness Team have established cross-functional Covid-19 Recovery working groups to support schools, including curriculum, leadership and governance and transitions and admissions.
- Work has started to develop the Adult Learning Curriculum to focus on Skills and Employability.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Position the Council's officer 'Skills Governance Board' to enable a cross-service approach to skills, and a coordinated COVID-19 response including on engagement with partners. Service membership to include economy, young people and learning, children, adults, communities, HR and apprenticeships, public health, insight and intelligence. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 2	Map the employment and skills landscape in the county to inform planning of the COVID-19 response, initially prioritising the response to the Government's 'Plan for Jobs' announced in July. (Mapping to include secondary schools, colleges, local universities, independent training providers, Sussex Learning Network, the Council's sub-contracted adult learning providers, the Journey to Work Programme, the Synchronise Partnership, the LEP Skills Board and enterprise advisor network, and the roles of the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Education).
Action 3	Explore the potential for a strategic coalition of partners and business to identify and address the significant education, engagement, employment and skills challenges arising from COVID-19, with the potential for collaboration across East and West Sussex and Brighton and Hove. Work towards an agreed action plan with resources and roles agreed. Review and refresh the case for devolving skills to local government across Sussex. <i>(IF)</i>
Action 4	Review and agree a way forward for the Economic Growth Plan skills and workforce activities, including the mature workforce programme, the Full STEAM ahead initiative for young people, and the apprenticeship levy scheme for businesses. <i>(EGP)</i>

Action 5	Progress the Education and Skills activities in response to COVID-19 including support for those at risk of being NEET; local education and training provision awareness and the re-set of the adult learning curriculum; and schools recovery work.
Action 6	Fully utilise the apprenticeship levy scheme in the County Council, providing reskilling opportunities for staff, and to highlight opportunities to develop green skills to deliver our ambitious Climate Change Strategy 2020 – 2030.

## How Government could help

- Work with Councils to enable them to play a key role in bringing employment and skills initiatives together, including those set out in the `Plan for Jobs` on 8 July.
- Consider further initiatives to support re-training and re-skilling of adults who find themselves out of work due to COVID-19.
- Consider devolving responsibility for skills to the Sussex local authorities.

## ***Theme 6: Protecting and reviving tourism and the visitor economy***

### **Current position and key challenges**

- VisitBritain has estimated the tourism sector will lose £37bn from the impact of Covid-19 (a £15bn drop in income from overseas visitors and £22bn lost from domestic tourism). At the start of the year VisitBritain had estimated the British tourism business would generate income of £107bn in 2020.
- In 2018 the value of the tourism sector in the county was estimated at 2.05bn supporting 37,000 jobs. The impact on the tourism sector was immediate with virtual shutdown overnight, including Gatwick airport, coastal and rural destinations, and with many staff furloughed.
- The wider hospitality and leisure sector have been equally impacted, also effectively shut down during lockdown across the county other than some home-delivery and take-away services.
- This situation has been exacerbated through the timing of the pandemic starting at the beginning of Spring and enduring over Easter, the May bank holidays and the early part of the summer season, with many businesses facing a cash flow crisis over refunding of customer payments.
- Government confirmed the `re-opening` of the sector from 4 July in accordance with operational guidelines. The Chancellor has subsequently announced VAT in restaurants, hotels and cinemas will be cut from 20 per cent to five per cent to January 2021, and a national `eat out to help out` to support businesses and to help retain jobs. Time will tell the extent to which businesses are viable under `new normal` conditions.
- Major events make a significant economic contribution, and the county's event companies include some of those most at risk.
- Culture, arts and heritage venues have also been extensively impacted, and many are likely to remain closed for some time due to COVID-19 restrictions. The Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Secretary has announced a £1.57 billion package of emergency support to help arts,

heritage and cultural institutions, and that from 11 July performing artists can put on outdoor performances to socially distanced audiences.

- The county’s strategy in the short to medium term will need to focus on local and domestic markets and consumers, with international markets likely to be much slower to recover.
- The sector is an important asset and contributor to the `place` of West Sussex, drawing on the distinctive high quality natural environment, contributing to quality of life and health and well-being, the character and distinctiveness of the county, and the attractiveness to businesses and employees, and so has a wider contribution than the immediate economic contribution and associated jobs.
- Sustainable and responsible tourism should underpin the approach to help secure for the longer term the environmental gains from the COVID-19 crisis, such as improvements in air quality, increased access to nature and increased use of sustainable active travel.

### **County Council’s immediate response working with partners**

- The Experience West Sussex Partnership (hosted by the County Council and made up of all the Districts and Boroughs) is taking a highly proactive approach to support the sector where possible and is working closely with Visit Britain, including on the re-opening of the sector in July.
- Marketing activity switched to engaging consumers through virtual tours, on-line activities, and the #WestSussexWishlist, with marketing content ready to go to promote the county.
- Business support and advice has been channelled across the sector, and high-profile webinars have been hosted with Sussex Chamber, the LEP Growth Hub and the South Downs National Park featuring major attractions and other industry organisations, and with high levels of engagement from local MPs with around 900 people viewing across the three webinars.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Reset the Experience West Sussex partnership plan for 2020/21 to support the urgent needs of the sector due to Covid-19, with a focus on countywide leadership and destination resilience; business survival and resilience support; marketing and communications to align with the national Visit Britain `good to go` programme and local visitor messaging; and strengthening traditional low season capability. (EGP)
Action 2	Agree and progress a visitor marketing plan in response to COVID-19 with phase 1 focussed on support local / discover local (residents, visiting friends and family, neighbouring areas), phase 2 on London and the South East, and phase 3 international working as part of the Gateway Gatwick group, all underpinned by building consumer confidence. (EGP)
Action 3	Progress work to assess and highlight the impact of COVID-19 on the sector in the county, including the impact of the aviation sector crisis on international visitors through Gatwick, the cancellation of multiple major events, and the closure of multiple attractions, accommodation and hospitality businesses. Use this work to inform plans, lobby for the sector, and underpin any opportunities for tourism destination funding. (IF)
Action 4	Explore a pan Sussex approach to capitalise on the Sussex brand and create efficiencies of scale, initially considering business support,



	marketing/PR, and positioning for tourism destination funding (such as a tourism zone or Visit Britain DEF funds). (IF)
Action 5	Work with partners to ensure the county maximises the opportunities of Government support and initiatives, including the emergency support to help arts, heritage and cultural institutions; the VAT reductions for restaurants, hotels and cinemas; and the `eat out to help out` scheme.

### How Government could help

- Recognise the wider benefits of the sector to places and communities, and the particular challenges the sector is facing, to ensure the changes to the Government support package do not put at risk the sector in the long term (there are concerns the withdrawal of the furlough scheme will disproportionately impact tourism and hospitality businesses).
- Continue to work closely with Visit Britain on supporting the sector to recover, and look to local destination partnerships as strategic leaders to support recovery in places.

### ***Theme 7: Enabling a health and social care market for the future***

#### **Current position and key challenges:**

- The Social Care Market in West Sussex is made up of over 500 registered providers and over 25,000 people<sup>2</sup> are employed in social care in the county. Those headlines cover a mix that ranges from small, locally based providers to large national companies, several of which are publicly quoted. Within older people's care services, the market is highly dependent on self-financing customers who buy around 50% of the available residential beds, whereas in the disability sector the County Council is the dominant buyer.
- Even though it is a minority purchaser, the County Council has budgeted to spend over £270m in 2020/21 in supporting the care needs of people who been assessed as meeting the eligibility criteria in the Care Act. Based on an overall market share of 30% and taking into account the Competition and Market Authority's estimate that self-funders pay on average 41% more than local authorities for an equivalent placement, this suggests that the value of the sector to the economy in West Sussex is over £1bn.
- The impact that Covid-19 is having on the sector, and the County Council's response, is outlined below. Despite this, it is inevitable that there will be provider failure. In that context the loss of some suppliers will be more significant than others and so it will be essential that the County Council responds pro-actively to the opportunities that this will create, rather than aiming to retain the status quo. The fact that the Care Act gives it an overarching responsibility to ensure sufficiency of supply in the market as a whole adds further to that need.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/adult-social-care-workforce-data/Workforce-intelligence/publications/local-information/My-local-authority-area.aspx>

- In 2019 the Council published its [Adult Social Care Vision and Strategy](#) which describes a vision based on strengths and assets, community led solutions, prevention and reablement, supporting independence, and with a focus on integration, co-production and support for carers. Largely this vision remains unchanged and if anything is even more critical in the current landscape as we consider the economic impacts and recovery from Covid-19. It also implies a need to influence the shape of the market so that the provision which is available shifts to a mix that consists of fewer traditional-style residential beds and a greater element of community-based care.
- A Commissioning Strategy and Market Position Statement for Older People is also in development, and whilst the economic landscape and the market position may change over time and as a result of the pandemic, the focus remains likely to be on prevention, community led support, alternative models of supporting people within their home and communities wherever possible, and for people at the highest level of vulnerability; appropriate nursing and dementia provision.
- Health and Social Care has been substantially and critically impacted by Covid-19, with unprecedented change required in legislation, practice, provision, and service delivery in order to maintain support to the most vulnerable people in West Sussex. The key challenge is now understanding the impacts, the evolving challenges and working towards a plan for recovery.
- Prior to Covid-19, health and social care in West Sussex had a series of economic considerations which presented key challenges and were recognised and considered in our strategic vision and approach to commissioning from the market. These remain part of our core focus and include the following;
  - West Sussex has a considerably older age profile compared to England with a higher proportion of over 65s and comparatively fewer residents aged 15-39. This is a challenge both in terms of demand for services and in sufficient workforce to meet the needs of the older population.
  - In addition, one of the challenges faced in working with the market in West Sussex is that the council purchase a relatively small proportion of the total numbers of residential and nursing home beds and domiciliary care provision.
- As a result of Covid-19 the immediate economic challenges on the health and social care market, in addition to those already identified include:
  - Staffing and Infection Control – A positive impact has been some ability in parts of the market to attract much needed recruitment into care from other industries. However, this is balanced by new challenges for providers on how they manage their workforce and keep their staff safe now and in the future, with a reduction of staff movement to reduce the potential spread of infection. A continued economic challenge will be ensuring sufficient workforce to support people safely in a range of support settings.

- Provider Sustainability and loss of provision - Providers costs have increased during Covid-19 with significant increases for example in PPE costs, additional staffing costs to cover isolation periods, cancelled services and increased travel. A number of services have also had to restrict admissions during the pandemic. This has and will result in vacancies and therefore reduced income which will no doubt present a financial pressure to many businesses and a resulting loss of provision within the market.
- West Sussex has already experienced an unprecedented number of home closures in the last 18 months. Whilst the county has been relatively well served with residential provision, further losses, and particularly in specific areas of the County and supporting more complex needs will no doubt have an impact. This impact is likely to be on support services for those people with most complex needs such as nursing and dementia who are unable to continue living in their own home.

### **The County Council's immediate response working with partners**

- The health and social care system have a long history of partnership working including formal joint commissioning arrangements and associated governance structures. These have been built on and reinforced during this crisis and it is anticipated that the system-learning will be carried forward into sustainable and resilient longer-term integrated working.
- The system has worked robustly together to plan and implement a range of measures to respond to the challenges presented by COVID19. Those focused on supporting the economic challenges specifically have included:
  - Care Home Support – The full details of this support has been articulated in response to the request for Care Home Resilience plans, [submitted to the government on the 29 May 2020](#). Some of the [support identified includes](#) training programmes, strengthened clinical support, detailed communications through newsletters and forums, development of an integrated incident management system, and a multi-agency provider response team.
  - Recruitment - the Council's '[Proud to Care](#)' team are working alongside the Care and Business Support team to assist with workforce issues in the market including active support with recruitment, and social media messaging about working in care, adapting plans to focus on furloughed workers, distance recruiting and using agency staff safely.
  - Financial Support – for services supporting customers who the County Council funds, a [financial package of support to care providers](#) has been agreed including, 20% uplift for domiciliary care, 10% uplift to other care providers over a 3-month period, upfront payments to day centres for people with learning disabilities and swifter payments to support cash flow. The County Council's share of the £600m Infection Control Fund of £13.4m is also a priority focus to distribute to services based on the requirements of

the fund. This will also be available to providers with whom the County Council does not contract.

- A significant early partnership development to meet our hospital discharge requirements and to consistently and efficiently source care from the market was seen in the development of multi-agency hospital discharge and placement finding teams, incorporating Council and NHS staff. There is significant learning on the benefits of working in this way that will no doubt inform and influence our working in the future.

### Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond

Action 1	Progress the Adults and Health Covid-19 <a href="#">Action Plan for Social Care</a> which highlights the next steps in detail and presents a plan to reflect on and learn from our immediate responses, considers retaining the initiatives and developments already in place and further actions to develop with partners as the position evolves. This includes but is not limited to support for providers, contingency planning, workforce support, and financial considerations.
Action 2	Work with partners on the risk around potential provider failures detailed in the plan to manage the impacts, and to respond accordingly to support sustainability of crucial provision and understand the changing landscape for demand and thus future development. Whilst the strategic priority remains to support people in their own home wherever possible, the potential collapse of residential provision, particularly for people with dementia and nursing needs may have a significant impact on our ability to support the most vulnerable people. Therefore the business will be exploring the potential for commissioning blocks within services to enable financial sustainability as well as provision of much needed capacity.
Action 3	Ensure a renewed focus on the strategic priorities to enable delivery of the vision and strategy with partners, to manage the impacts on the market, and to enable alternative solutions to people who require care and support across the County.
Action 4	Continue to work with residents that are self-funders to understand the true implications of their care choices in financial terms both to them and, should their funding run out, the implications for the Council in terms of cost and choice.

### How Government could help

- Government can help by addressing the significant risk nationally on certain parts of the market collapsing under the financial strain of the impacts of Covid-19. Whilst financial support has been given to providers to cover initial costs, and for infection control, the impact of reduced income on an already fragile market could lead to the demise of a number of services. Left unmanaged, this will create financial risk for the County Council if a reduction in supply translates into an increase in price competition.
- With so much of the health and social care market reliant on a stable workforce, which has been under significant pressure as a result of the pandemic, the government could help by reflecting the value of the social

care workforce both in relation to its profile and importance and in appropriate funding and practices to recognise value.

- Care home providers are telling us that they have real worries about risks of litigation and judicial review given that guidance is not always timely and consistent. We are keen that government is aware of these concerns and seek its support in reassuring providers in this regard.
- Providers are also reflecting concern of managing a second wave of infection and that support is likely to be needed over an extended period should this occur. The government could help by considering longer term financial impact and support.
- A sustainable financial settlement for local authorities for adult social care. The Covid-19 crisis has highlighted yet again that it is a false economy to increase funding for the NHS without providing a matching level of additional resources for social care. Unless this is addressed as a priority action, the knock-on implications for the economy in West Sussex are certain to be significant.

### ***Theme 8: Enabling a digital technology focussed reset***

#### **Current position and challenges**

- Prior to Covid-19 UK digital infrastructure lagged behind internationally. The industry was, and still is working to “catch up” and central government is pushing this agenda.
- West Sussex’s position is typical within the UK in terms of speed and coverage for broadband and mobile technology. The County Council’s strategic focus is on full fibre infrastructure. This will encourage the market to invest in connectivity now, and to future-ready ourselves for new technologies. This focus remains highly relevant in the current climate.
- The pent-up demand has increased exponentially with covid-19. As an example, homeworking has seen daily Zoom video conferences soar from 10 million to 200 million in 3 months during lockdown. Throttling of speeds has been implemented to cope with demand - not such an issue on consumer apps, but a real issue if applied to the future delivery of critical public services and a risk consideration for any business. This has shown how critical the quality of our fibre network is and will be.
- The digital divide has been exacerbated. The most digitally excluded are further impacted by social distancing, relying on digital services (from on-line shopping to virtual school lessons) they can’t access through poor infrastructure including in some rural areas, limited digital skills or access to devices.
- Despite any partial offsetting of demand due to a covid-19 financial crisis, it is generally assumed that given our reliance on connectivity for societal resilience and business continuity, demand will continue to increase and that shifts in consumer and worker behaviour including more home-working are likely to stay.
- There has been an increase in anti 5G sentiment citing concerns for public health and the environment. The focus is on what the council’s 5G plans

are and our role in roll outs. Currently we have consistent countywide messaging recognising that councils have very limited influence on commercial deployments and cannot rely on planning to manage sites.

- Covid-19 significantly impacted the delivery of inflight digital infrastructure projects prior to, and in the early part of lockdown. Some lost time has been recovered and slippage has been pulled back to between 1 and 4 months across projects.
- Now is the time to accelerate work to maximise the application of digital infrastructure to benefit the economy, business and skills, and support the priorities across the other reset themes.

### **County Council’s immediate response working with partners**

- WSCC’s Digital Infrastructure Team has continued to work closely with District and Borough partners and suppliers to deliver in flight projects. Where funding is external including Local Growth Funding, Covid-19 impact assessments have been provided to funders.
- The Digital Infrastructure Team has continued to work with the Districts and Boroughs on the strategic direction of the County’s digital agenda, including on assets, the application of technology and Open Market Review mapping activities.
- The Digital Infrastructure Team welcomed the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee guidance on the building of network during lockdown and are well placed to influence via highways colleagues.
- The economy team paused on a new programme of work on the application of digital infrastructure to benefit the economy, business and skills due to COVID-19 redeployment to support the community hub.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Continue to work with the Districts and Boroughs on the strategic direction of the County’s digital agenda, including on assets, the application of technology and Open Market Review mapping activities.
Action 2	Work with DCMS to deliver the West Sussex Rural Gigabit Voucher top up scheme. The West Sussex Full Fibre Programme funded by the retained business rates pool pilot has approved £2.85m for a joint scheme with DCMS to boost rural connectivity. Eligible residents and SMEs will benefit from a single and increased voucher value of £4,000 towards the cost of securing gigabit capable infrastructure.
Action 3	Work with Mid Sussex DC, Horsham DC and Crawley BC to deliver the Converged Fibre Connectivity project that will build a duct and fibre spine between Burgess Hill, Horsham and Crawley via rural areas and key economic hubs. Joint funded with the LEP (£2m), the subsequent commercialisation of the network will bring significant increases in GVA and other productivity measures.
Action 4	Kick start a programme of work with the District and Boroughs to stimulate demand across non digital businesses to increase resilience, increase innovation, reach new markets, and drive down overheads. In tandem with this, apply user centred design around applications in specific sectors or settings to consider how technology can be used to meet economic challenges and opportunities. (EGP/IF)

## **How Government can help**

- Recent changes to the Electronic Communications Code have simplified the planning process for telecommunications companies to deliver 5G services. Local Authorities would welcome Government addressing communities' questions in relation to 5G technology and provide clarity on the role of Councils in this activity and highlight this to the public.
- Given the accelerated demand for resilient digital infrastructure, local authorities would welcome any early sight on anticipated changes and be clear about local authorities' role in working with telecoms stakeholders e.g. an anticipated extension of business relates relief on digital infrastructure.
- From the COVID-19 lessons learnt, local authorities would welcome early guidelines that apply to digital infrastructure build should a similar scenario develop in the future (e.g. from local lockdowns) e.g. deployment of smaller gangs, safe surveying, access to unmanned exchanges or end user premises.
- Ensure committed Local Growth Funding remains allocated to projects important to helping to stimulate economic recovery.

## ***Theme 9 – Embedding climate change and the environment into the reset***

### **Current position and challenges**

- The Government's 25 Year Environment Plan and the UK's commitment to achieving Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 underpin the national strategic position on the environment.
- Environmental benefits arising from the COVID-19 lockdown have been highlighted by many different groups including improvements to air quality, greater appreciation of nature and an increased ability to cycle and walk locally. There is a great deal of attention being given to ensuring the UK's `recovery pathways` protect the environment and reduce the impact on climate change.
- The Committee on Climate Change (CCC), who act as independent advisors to government, have advocated for the importance of delivering a stronger, cleaner and more resilient economy, including through using climate investments to support economic recovery and jobs.
- More than 200 top UK firms and investors have called on the government to deliver a Covid-19 recovery plan that prioritises the environment. They advocate for investment in low carbon innovation, infrastructure and industries, which should focus on sectors that can best support the environment, increase job creation and foster recovery, whilst also decarbonising the economy.
- The Chancellor announced on 8 July a £3 billion green investment package projected to support around 140,000 green jobs and to upgrade homes and public buildings to reduce emissions.

- The low carbon economy and demand for green jobs are forecast to grow faster than traditional industries as the nation transitions to a net zero economy.
- The County Council is progressing its Climate Change Strategy, confirming an ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2030 and with a commitment to support and grow our local green economy (subject to formal adoption in July 2020).
- The Council is already progressing a range of green energy and sustainability initiatives which support the environment and the low carbon sector, and opportunities will be explored to do more as they arise.
- The County Council is a key partner with the Sussex Local Nature Partnership (LNP). The LNP has called upon partners to embed 5 principles they would like to see as part of an integrated approach to recovery: Place making, health and well-being, restoration economy, build back better, and leadership.

### **County Council's immediate response working with partners**

- Accelerated the timeline for approval of the Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 to ensure the commitments can be aligned with and integrated into COVID-19 recovery planning.
- Engaged with partners on the Climate Change Strategy to understand opportunities to align ambition and resource on climate change across West Sussex, regionally and nationally
- Provided immediate support for the re-opening of high streets and workplaces through encouraging and enabling walking and cycling.

### **Next steps to shape the approach for the coming months and beyond**

Action 1	Progress the key commitment in the Council's Climate Change Strategy (subject to formal adoption) to support and grow our local green economy, including through agreeing actions as part of the Climate Change Strategy delivery plan.
Action 2	Initially progress opportunities to support and grow our local green economy through `green tourism`; seeking to take advantage of natural capital investment funding when available; continuing to develop partnerships to encourage sustainable businesses and energy innovation; progressing sustainable energy solutions for business parks and industrial estates; and considering `green skills and jobs` as an employment and skills reset theme.
Action 3	Ensure the principle of embedding climate change and the environment into the reset are reflected in the actions in the other 8 reset plan themes.
Action 4	Progress strategic partnerships and potential projects in support of the economy reset, including with the Sussex Local Nature Partnership based on its `Clean Growth Principles`, and with the C2C LEP and the South2East Local Energy Strategy.

### **How Government could help**

- Provide leadership to ensure the UK's `recovery pathways` protect the environment and reduce the impact on climate change, and to ensure the



low carbon economy and green jobs are integral to economic recovery as we strive to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

- Ensure that any recovery package includes nature. The current crisis reminds us that our economy and the health of society are dependent on a flourishing natural world.
- Use climate investments to support economic recovery and jobs. The Committee on Climate Change previously identified a detailed set of investments to reduce emissions and manage the social, environmental and economic impacts of climate change.

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