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East Sussex Economic Development Strategy Consultation

Foreword

On behalf of East Sussex Economic Partnership I am pleased to present the refreshed East Sussex Economic Development Strategy. At its heart the new strategy captures the core aim of the Partnership which is to:

'Lead and coordinate on strategy and activities which contribute to raising the economic performance, improving the quality of life and developing employment opportunities in the county of East Sussex.'

The refreshed strategy moves this aim forward, building on the existing strategy which was published in April 2002 and is therefore 5 years into its 10 year life. It takes into account the wealth of policy statements, relevant studies and economic performance data that are currently available for East Sussex; for example the new Regional Economic Strategy and draft South East Plan which need to cascade to a sub -regional level.

The Partnership is dedicated to ensuring that we have a countywide strategy which is fit for purpose and reflects the issues currently facing East Sussex. The refreshed strategy will enable everybody involved in economic development across the county to work together, towards a focussed set of outcomes, ensuring East Sussex continues to grow and move forward, whilst making a real contribution to the economic success of the South East.

The Partnership now seeks your comment and sign up to the new strategy. We seek specific responses on the following questions:

1. Are the priorities identified the right ones?
2. What can be done to give the proposals greater impact?
3. How can you contribute to the delivery of these priorities?

I ask that any comments are forwarded to Mark Pearson, Chief Executive, East Sussex Economic Partnership Ltd., by close of business on the 31st August. Contact details are as follows: email - mark.pearson@esep.org, post - County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, BN7 1UE

**Hamish Monro
Chairman
East Sussex Economic Partnership Ltd**

1 June 2007



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***Refreshing the East Sussex
Economic Development Strategy***

Consultation Draft

May 2007

Prepared by

East Sussex Economic Partnership Ltd

With

ANCER SPA (London and South East) Ltd



ANCER SPA

**DEVELOPMENT, REGENERATION
& PLANNING CONSULTANTS**

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1. PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

The purpose of this document is to set out a forward strategy for the economic growth of East Sussex for the next ten years, ensuring that the resources and actions of partners are aligned to meet a focused set of goals.

It provides the strategic focus binding the Regional Economic Strategy and the South East Plan to the programmes and initiatives of local and sub-regional partners which seek to transform and improve the economic performance of East Sussex. The document also marks out the role and contribution of East Sussex within the South East Coastal and Rural strategies and at a local level will provide a framework for the Local Area Agreement 4th Block processes.

This leads and builds on the earlier economic development strategy produced in 2003 that focussed on a set of three key goals: an improved integrated transport infrastructure; development of a genuine knowledge and skill-based economy; active support for rural and urban revival.

Since then, much has moved on, given major enabling investment in Hastings–Bexhill, new urban renaissance opportunities in Eastbourne–Hailsham, and Newhaven, and the emergence of the new economic and spatial strategies. This strategy sets out a vision for the county that will build on these achievements and provide a focus and a set of priorities on which the finite resources of funding partners can be concentrated.

2. THE POTENTIAL

A unique combination of downland, rural natural beauty and coastline make East Sussex an attractive place in which to conduct business and generate wealth. The main focus of its economic growth potential lies in the coastal urban areas. These form part of a linear grouping of urban centres running from Ashford, in Kent, through Brighton and Hove, to the dynamic economies of Portsmouth and urban South Hampshire, linked together through a spinal rail and trunk road system. This urban corridor has scope to emerge as a powerful and integrated axis of economic growth in which East Sussex is poised to play a pivotal role. By providing a hot bed of innovation-led growth and high quality investment, it will bind the emerging dynamism of coastal areas together from east to west.

Already the foundations for a critical mass of new industries to achieve this transformation are being put in place.

- In ***Hastings-Bexhill***, major investment has been committed towards stimulating the creation of new high value businesses and education-led economic growth. An Enterprise Hub, innovation, media and e-commerce workspace incubators and a university centre have been developed. The choice of business locations for expanding Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and inward investors is being widened through forward development of office space in Hastings, the creation of expansion sites at North Bexhill and within the A21 Innovation Corridor.
- The ***Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle*** is being prepared as a key strategic location to attract a strong grouping of globally competitive industries. A new business park at Polegate, improvements to the A27 linking to the M23, Gatwick and Brighton and a possible Parkway station will provide and encourage

significant new employment space along the A22 corridor in order to attract inward investment and encourage local business growth.

- In **Newhaven**, there are proposals by investors for the acquisition and transformation of the port area, involving the building of a new berth, access road and terminal building. Complementing this, the assembly of major employment sites in the vicinity would create new jobs in advanced logistics, ICT, passenger and cargo handling, and other port-related industries.

A number of supporting factors anchor these potentials. Most of East Sussex is strategically accessible to Gatwick, one of Europe's largest airports for business travel. Three higher education establishments with strong graduate retention rates provide the area with a competitive knowledge base. The county competes strongly on lifestyle, environmental and cultural quality. Collectively, these provide a strong magnet for attracting new entrepreneurial activity to the county.

East Sussex has already attracted a large number of small, high value businesses. Many are tucked away in the rural areas, but the mechanisms are in place to bring them together into a powerful network of dynamic entrepreneurial activity.

Nevertheless, there are major challenges to be tackled. Areas to the east of the county are not conveniently accessible to strategic road links. For these reasons, East Sussex has to become self-sufficient by creating its own strong, specialist hubs of economic growth.

The conditions to achieve this have never been better, given the infrastructure now in place for internet trading, innovation support, fast track business growth and the investment magnets now being assembled. Through a combination of ambition, resourcefulness and partner commitment, East Sussex can deliver strong and sustainable economic performance by pulling these opportunities together.

3. WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

3.1 Economic Disparities

East Sussex is broadly made up of four economic entities.

- Hastings-Bexhill.
- Eastbourne – Hailsham
- Newhaven – Lewes and Brighton hinterland.
- The rural areas served by the market towns.

There are significant variations in the economic and demographic profile across different parts of the county. Hastings & Bexhill, Eastbourne, Hailsham and Polegate, and Newhaven are characterised by problems of low skills, high levels of long-term unemployment and local deprivation. In these areas, regeneration effort need to be focused on attracting more employers to the area with higher-level skills, offering jobs to those in the urban areas and their rural hinterlands.

In contrast, areas such as Lewes, the rural areas and market towns to the north have higher levels of skills, business growth, employment and earnings performance.

Closing the gap in economic performance between these areas will be a fundamental aim with growth programmes stimulating economic diversification.

3.2 Current Economic Performance

East Sussex needs to enhance its capacity to create wealth. Nearly two thirds of its employment is in relatively low paid sectors such as public services, distribution and hospitality. Higher value sectors such as manufacturing, financial and business services account only for 25% of the sub-regional economy. In the past five years, some 4,000 jobs have been lost from those higher value sectors, replaced by 8,000 jobs in the public sector, distribution and hotels.

This is reflected in the relatively poor earnings levels of the county. East Sussex employees earn considerably below the national and regional average with mean gross earnings in 2005 of £384 compared with £450 across the South East and £436 across England.

The county's economy is made up predominantly of small businesses. 75% turnover less than £500,000, 13% turnover between £500,000 and £1m and only 12% turnover more than £1m. This poor turnover performance is largely due to a failure to penetrate wider regional or export markets. Almost half of all trading takes place within 10 miles of where businesses are based.

On the positive side, new businesses are being set up, particularly in the financial and business services sector and in construction. Micro-businesses are seen as important providers of employment and many have potential for a step change in their performance.

3.3 Factors Constraining Economic Growth

3.3.1 Business Property

There is insufficient property of adequate quality to encourage new enterprise, growth of micro businesses and SMEs or the attraction of new industries to the area. There is a marked lack of average sized units currently available to meet market needs; 20% of East Sussex businesses see improvement in the supply of premises as the number one priority.

A concerted site and workspace development programme linked closely to a better-resourced service to business retention and expansion, will release this expansion potential significantly.

3.3.2 Transport

Poor transport infrastructure remains the strongest contender as a barrier to growth. East Sussex does not benefit from fast rail links to London in the same way as other parts of the South East; it is unlikely that this constraint will be removed in the short to medium term. The South East Plan states that the lack of adequate transport infrastructure is delaying the delivery of some major development proposals and highlights the need for essential infrastructure to be addressed early in the planning process. Enabling transport infrastructure is essential to the success of key developments; this will therefore need to be lobbied for and funded in the short term.

By creating an innovation-led entrepreneurial culture and supporting the growth of e-trading, East Sussex can develop its economic performance within the limitations of its constrained road and rail network. In parallel, every opportunity to present the case for improving strategic access needs to be grasped, working through established mechanisms of the County Council and the Regional Transport Board.

3.3.3 Fragmented Support to Enterprise

There is a weak entrepreneurial culture in the coastal areas and some of the county's businesses may be operating fairly comfortably producing lower value added products and services for local markets and are protected from competition from wider markets. Therefore, there is less likelihood for them to aspire to grow. Due to poor connectivity and the large expanse of the rural area, businesses are dispersed and in many cases their make-up and potential are not well understood. The rural business community is notoriously difficult to reach and rural businesses tend not to seek formal advice due to lack of awareness, time and money issues and the lack of specialised support. Coherent strategies to reach this community are needed.

3.3.4 Aspirations and Skills

In areas such as Hastings, Bexhill and Eastbourne aspirations towards self-advancement are low. This is partly brought about due to high dependence on employment in the public sector and traditional industries and on the general low aspirations of many of the local population. However, current measures to reverse the constraints on attracting inward investment provide an opportunity through which local people can aspire to new careers and develop higher-level skills.

3.4 Key Challenges

To strengthen the East Sussex economy a number of complex issues will need to be tackled.

- **Creating Conditions for a Higher Value Economy.** East Sussex needs to focus on creating the conditions for securing higher levels of investment and business growth in high value activities and generating jobs where the potential exists. This will require the successful attraction of new knowledge based businesses that can boost the county's growth potential in high value industries.
- **Encouraging Stronger Business Performance.** The growth ambitions and competitive competences of East Sussex businesses need to be lifted. This needs to be matched by achieving stronger rates of high quality business creation and survival and a stronger entrepreneurial culture. There is also a need to address the constraints on business growth currently caused by the poor choice of business accommodation and opportunities to expand, gaps in skills and the quality of business support. Solutions to removing these constraints need to be found and applied.
- **Encouraging the Move Towards Full and Sustainable Employment.** East Sussex needs to generate jobs for those with lower skills in the less prosperous parts of the coastal and rural hinterlands, to help raise aspirations of the less skilled and encourage self-advancement. The unemployed and economically inactive then need to be helped into new jobs. This will require stronger focus and impact from available funds and support delivery in order to accelerate the transition of those on welfare benefits to a suitable employment.

Addressing these challenges must align with policy objectives for the wider regional economy.

4. FACTORS SHAPING THE ECONOMIC STRATEGY

4.1 Regional Economic Strategy

The Regional Economic Strategy (RES), published October 2006, identifies three challenges that have an impact on every part of the South East, namely, Global Competitiveness, Smart Growth, and Sustainable Prosperity. The economic growth of East Sussex has considerable scope to address these goals.

- **Global Competitiveness:** East Sussex has scope to increase the productivity of its businesses and help more of them to expand their penetration of home and international markets. The county is in a stronger position to put forward foreign direct investment propositions.
- **Smart Growth:** There is scope to attract and grow a higher stock of high value, knowledge based industries, that are internationally competitive by bringing forward key strategic employment sites in the coastal areas and widening the choice of small and medium sized property. Through higher levels of education attainment by local residents, the East Sussex large labour market can be transformed into a dynamic workforce, increasing earnings levels.
- **Sustainable Prosperity:** East Sussex can provide an exemplar for sustainable industries, exploiting its large land based sector by diversifying into renewable energy and a range of high value environmental industries. The self-sufficiency of the market towns can be secured through targeted business support, improved choice business accommodation and supply links to growth opportunities in the urban areas.

4.2 South East Plan

The South East Plan has a Core Sub Regional Strategy that aims to bring sub regional performance up to the South East average; reduce peripherality by improving the strategic transport infrastructure; provide decent housing at an affordable price; and enhancing cultural and historic assets.

The Plan identifies the Sussex Coast as an area in need of extensive regeneration and reducing social and economic disparities. It has defined a sub-regional strategy for the Sussex Coast from Chichester to Rye as a special area, which it identifies as an area in need of extensive regeneration, given high levels of multiple deprivation in many of the coastal towns, most especially in Hastings and Brighton & Hove, and by GVA in the sub region being 30% below the regional average.

The Plan states that key measures should include diverting assistance and expenditure to areas in greatest need, by continuing the support to Hastings and Bexhill. Key to this will be agreeing a long-term vision in further developing the Hastings and Bexhill five point plan, optimising the potential in Eastbourne-Hailsham and continuing to improve Newhaven and its port.

4.3 Role and Identity in the Coastal Strategy

In the context of the emerging coastal strategy for the South East, East Sussex has a pivotal role in linking the east and west coastal economies together. For this to happen successfully requires a strong critical mass of robust and sustainable economic activity to be generated, and then integrated into the broader coastal economy. To create such

conditions will require a considerable scale of intervention, in addition to maintaining the impetus of the transformational programmes already in place.

Redevelopment opportunities such as Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle and Newhaven will require planning frameworks, site acquisition, enabling infrastructure and delivery coordination to be put in place. Strong public sector intervention will be needed to pull together complex land ownerships, which are holding back the bringing forward of these sites and to create products that will attract new employers and enable existing ones to expand. A well-financed and resourced special purpose delivery vehicle will be needed to accelerate opportunities within the Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle.

If substantial improvements to strategic transport are to be secured in the long term, future development and economic activity need to be suitably aligned so as to create a demand led case for such investment in regional and nation agendas.

4.4 Creating Opportunities for the Rural Areas

The development of the rural parts of the county will be boosted to a major extent by successful urban renaissance of the coastal areas. Rural residents will benefit from a wider choice of higher education, employment and career opportunities and an enriched cultural and lifestyle offer. Rural businesses will have larger local markets to tap into and there will be wider opportunities to link up with collaborative partners with whom to exploit and commercialise innovative concepts.

To strengthen the self-sufficiency of the rural areas in terms of economic growth and to integrate them gainfully with the coastal urban areas, a number of tactical interventions will be needed.

- The provision of improved local transport services.
- Providing rural businesses with access to strong and effective business support services and networks enabling them to widen the market penetration of their products and services
- Ensuring the effective use ICT and broadband services.
- Pulling together a more integrated culture and tourism offer.
- Enhancing the supply of rural business property.

The rural areas are an important potential source of business accommodation, given the range of small development sites and workspace provision that can be brought forward through farm diversification. As the urban renewal increases business investment to the sub-region, the rural areas can offer alternative and in many cases superior locations for incoming and expanding businesses, in turn, generating higher levels of local economic activity. Their main urban/rural sectoral differentiation is retail mass offer and land based industries.

4.5 Local Growth Opportunities

➤ *Hastings and Bexhill*

The five point plan for Hastings and Bexhill sets out a vision and a strategic framework for regenerating the area, focusing on education, business, urban renaissance, broadband and transport. Following the opening of the Enterprise Hub, Business Centres to support and accommodate creative and media, innovative and e-commerce

businesses and University Centre Hastings, a number of flagship site developments will also serve to attract to larger established businesses to the area, in addition to helping existing businesses within East Sussex to consolidate and expand their operations.

➤ ***A21 Corridor***

The innovation corridor is being brought together through the bringing forward of the creation of Hastings site development opportunities at North Bexhill, Queensway Business Park and sites straddling the relief road and the A21. The vision is for an enviro-enterprise corridor occupied by sustainable businesses in manufacturing, research and design.

➤ ***Rother***

Complementing the work of the task force, Rother District Council is seeking to create a thriving commercial environment that enables businesses to compete in a global market place offering high quality career opportunities. Aiming to create or retain 2,700 jobs as a result of bringing forward important site development opportunities at Bexhill Town Centre and Seafront, Sidley Goods Yard, the former Bexhill High School Site and North Bexhill, and to increase the earning power of the local population through an improved education offer for all ages.

➤ ***Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle***

The Eastbourne-Hailsham Blueprint identifies a forward vision and strategy based on five relevant themes: Leadership and Coordination, (e.g. addressing the need for public investment) High quality business infrastructure and business sites; Confident and Creative People; a Culture of Entrepreneurship; and Smart, Sustainable Enterprises. Development opportunities at Polegate as outlined in the South East Plan are a key focus of the plan along with proposals to review allocations of business sites such as Golden Cross, Hackhurst Lane, and sites in Eastbourne. The plan would be driven by a new form of collaboration between East Sussex, Wealden and Eastbourne Councils in collaboration with SEEDA, University of Brighton and through the possible set up of a special delivery vehicle.

➤ ***Lewes District***

Lewes District Council's interim economic development strategy highlights the significance of local self-employment that is significant amongst a higher skilled workforce. It also points to the growth potential of the creative industries, knowledge economy and financial and business services in Brighton & Hove and Sussex Innovation Centre that cannot meet the demand for new business space. It advocates greater representation of high value industries; promotion of entrepreneurial activity; creation of appropriate premises for businesses and better marketing of the area's tourism assets. Potential redevelopment of the port of Newhaven could open up major opportunities for the attraction of high value industries.

➤ ***Wealden***

Much of Wealden's economic development activity centres on sustaining the market towns and rural communities. The market towns have developed business networks which play a key role in articulating business and economic support needs. For example, the Crowborough Partnership has identified 'starter' business units with variable short term leases as an important priority for the local economy.

5. STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

5.1 Vision

A globally competitive growth economy, sustainably built on successful urban renaissance driving prosperity throughout the county.

5.2 Mission

Engendering a sustainable, high value economy with a move towards full employment within East Sussex.

5.3 Strategic Objectives

1. To create a robust and dynamic critical mass of sustainable, high value, knowledge based economic activities within the coastal areas.
2. To raise aspirations of businesses and local residents towards improving their wealth creation performance and prosperity levels.
3. To match supply of business accommodation with demand.
4. To achieve a move towards full and sustainable employment for people within the coastal and rural areas.

5.4 What Success Will Look Like

The following factors will provide the qualifying principles for the action plan framework, which will be developed through partnership working, commitment and engagement; with tested SMART targets, which will deliver the vision.

- East Sussex will develop a high value base of economic activity, driven by close synergies with surrounding coastal areas districts and its proximity to Gatwick. It will become a focus for new investment competing with other South East locations through superior lifestyle and the dynamism of its workforce.
- As a result dynamic clusters of innovation led, growth businesses will emerge together with a small number of significant, flagship inward investors providing the anchor for the new development zones. Together, these catalysts will provide a magnet for like minded SMEs to move into the area.
- More local people will be encouraged to start with viable businesses and help them to be helped to survive and expand.
- Existing East Sussex employers will increasingly realise the value of instilling a learning culture and intensify the development of their work forces, leading to a higher level skills base within the East Sussex economy.
- An improved property offer will release major constraints on the attraction of high quality employers to high quality accessible sites and amplify the start up and expansion space for SMEs.
- There will be a major reduction in levels of economic inactivity brought about by improved levels of basic employability skills and support into work. Effective, joined up job preparation and placement and skills development services will

ensure that local people are encouraged and fully assisted in taking up newly created jobs, leading to full employment and a substantial increase in local economic prosperity.

6. STRATEGIC FOCUS

6.1 Consolidation of Hastings – Bexhill Transformation

Through continued implementation of its transformation programme, the aim will be for Hastings-Bexhill to become a magnet for innovative, knowledge based business entrepreneurs. They will be attracted by the high quality business growth support from the Enterprise Hub and Incubation Centres and the expansion opportunities provided at North Bexhill, Queensway and on the A21 Innovation Corridor. These will create a stimulus for further inward movement from like minded businesses. These successes will change the culture of Hastings and Bexhill, encouraging more local people to set up businesses and improve their skills, in which they will then be fully supported.

This will require continued implementation of measures to ensure that major investment in the transformation of Hastings and Bexhill occurs and translates into tangible and lasting benefits to the local economy and community.

6.2 Stimulating the Growth of the Eastbourne-Hailsham Triangle

The priority is to create a dynamic economic growth node, by providing a platform for transformation of the wider surrounding area longer term. This will be brought about by providing a better supply and mix of appropriate sites and premises to meet projected employment growth over the next 15 years.

These development opportunities lie in the most strategically accessible part of the county and can contribute significantly to reversing site shortages and generating renewed investor confidence. Providing larger scale sites which have a higher economic impact, housing the largest companies which are often the biggest value generators in the economy, paying higher wages and creating an associated value chain of suppliers and customers.

Priorities will be to define a planning and development framework to optimise these growth opportunities, securing resources for a special purpose vehicle to bring forward new sites and attract a grouping of high prestige occupiers to anchor further growth.

6.3 Building on the Growth of Newhaven

The development of the port by external investors will transform the port area and contribute significantly to the regeneration of Newhaven's local economy. Once this is accomplished, the priority is to build on the major opportunity this creates to optimise and spread economic growth benefits widely within the East Sussex economy.

This will involve a number of interventions. Additional land assembly will be required to create catalysts for port-related and high tech inward investment. The profile of the Newhaven-Dieppe/Le Havre link as the fastest route to Normandy and Paris and the associated business opportunities will need to be raised. Strategic advocacy for rationalisation of other small south coast ports and the potential of pursuing Freeport status will seek to secure unique advantages for Newhaven and assure its long term competitiveness and growth. Workforce development initiatives aimed at improving the investment case for incoming businesses will be put in place.

7. SUPPORTING OUTCOMES REQUIRED

7.1 Aligning Business Growth and Investment to Regeneration Priorities

In order to generate a strong and dynamic base of economic activity within regeneration areas, strategies will be advanced out for the creation and growth of strong innovative clusters and for wider sector growth opportunities building on the advantages and strengths of East Sussex and extending job opportunities. In addition to innovation led business growth, opportunities in culture, leisure, tourism and sport, the care sector and public services need also to be fully scoped.

In relation to each of these opportunities, such strategies will spell out the scope of inward investment propositions; sub-sector support needs; opportunities for tailored business support and skills provision; property offer; innovation support and finance; relevant support offer of the universities; essential infrastructure that must be put in place and lobbied for; and arrangements for the reorientation of the funding resources needed to take forward these proposals.

7.2 Raising Aspirations for Entrepreneurism

Because of limitations in the potential for inward investment in certain parts of the county, a greater emphasis on supporting micro-businesses is needed as these currently contribute a very high portion of the County's GVA. For this, the aim is to provide a sound platform for creating businesses and preparing them for further growth during the first three years of operation. However, within parts of the sub-region, support provision for start-up and micro businesses is limited. This will be strengthened and targeted to contribute more directly to increased economic performance. The various forms of small business and start up provision will be coordinated and refocused to ensure that its impact can be more tangibly felt on the growth of the sub-regional economy. Once this is achieved, efforts will be directed towards getting more local people to consider enterprise as a major life option through a targeted campaign.

East Sussex contains a number of small high-value innovative young businesses but many are tucked away in the rural districts and are not comprehensively engaged or supported. Through concerted engagement and coherent delivery of business support, East Sussex businesses with the potential to grow will be helped to become more productive, expand their market penetration and to develop their export readiness.

Existing employers are now benefiting from the shift of public funds towards employer-led skills development brought about by the Leitch review. Opportunities to create employed workforces with higher level skills through schemes such as Train to Gain will be intensively promoted.

7.3 Widening the Choice of Commercial Property

The restricted supply of sites and premises in East Sussex is arguably the biggest constraint on business investment and growth and must continue to be addressed as a key priority. Employment land needs to be retained and brought forward for development, otherwise the demand from the housing market will swamp it and business will disappear. The Local Authority Local Development Framework processes must have cognisance of this and respond to ensure adequate and appropriate employment land allocation is achieved.

A strategic framework and programme will be put together that will direct partner actions and site interventions to address site ownership difficulties, lack of developer ambition, planning issues, and other factors that constrain the supply of business property, in order to provide the built products businesses need. In parallel, sites and funding opportunities for provision of flexible, affordable small business workspace across the coastal areas and market towns need to be identified and appropriate interventions made to bring these forward.

7.4 Focusing Resources Towards Higher Level Skills and Sustainable Employment

If the workforce of East Sussex is to be successfully transformed and sustainable employment maximised, it will be necessary to establish a joined up, fully integrated employer engagement, economic inclusive, skills delivery and job preparation service, signed up to by all key providers of such services.

This will have a number of implications.

- Sharpening the response to employers' needs, through strong brokerage and delivery mechanisms which ensure the education and training resources of the county respond swiftly to the demands of incoming or expanding companies, provide accurate identification of needs and effectively deliver skills solutions tailored to address them. Such mechanisms will usefully be deployed in providing entry level employment and training for the public sector.
- Raising skills standards by addressing major skills gaps, particularly improved levels of basic skills linked to such processes as confidence building, job preparation and placement and especially in the coastal towns.
- Achieving greater impact from welfare to work support, given that greater levels of inclusion, employment and social progress are fundamental to realising the desired impacts from the investment and regeneration programmes currently being put in place. The significant funds spent on measures to engage unemployed people to prepare them and place them into work need to be used to their full effect. This will be achieved by joining up the activities of the different funding and delivery agencies towards tightly focused aims aligned to the LAA targets will be of particular importance. The set up of the East Sussex Adult Skills Partnership is a useful platform which will be built upon to address these aims.

8. MOVING FORWARD

This strategy has set out a vision and focused set of goals for the next ten years. It has highlighted the opportunities and marked out the contribution for East Sussex in delivering the Regional Economic Strategy, the South East Plan and for forward development of the South East Coastal areas.

Following on from this, the key public and private sector bodies have to draw up and agree detailed action programmes which will deliver the goals. In parallel, the structure of working relationships between funding and delivery organisations will need to be developed in detail so that resources are appropriately consolidated and aligned towards the outcomes and impacts required. Through this process, East Sussex can aspire to achieving dynamic growth and full prosperity and become a key driver in the growth of regional economic performance.



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East Sussex Economic Partnership Ltd is a company limited by guarantee, Registered in England and Wales, Company Number: 5479902, County Hall, St Anne's Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1UE

Tel: 01273 482336

Email: info@esep.org

Website: www.esep.org