

Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan

2025 – 2028

Foreword by Leader of the Council

[Insert photo of Cllr Eggleston]

Mid Sussex District Council is ambitious. We recognise that our successes rely on our unique and wonderful environment and our residents. We are working hard to protect our unique landscape, improve our environment whilst balancing the need to support our economy and secure inward investment to grow and flourish. This is a difficult balance to strike.

The Sustainable Economy Strategy seeks to achieve this balance. It sets out our vision for a vibrant Mid Sussex that is attractive, resilient and supports innovation whilst balancing the social well-being of our residents, protecting our environment and supporting sustainable economic growth.

The Sustainable Economy Strategy has successfully guided the Council and its partners and over the last 3 years it has served our community well. We have made significant progress in delivering the action plan and recognise it is time to revisit the strategy and action plan to ensure it continues to provide a framework for the coming 3 years.

We see regularly on the news, at home and abroad, the devastating effects of climate change. It is a huge challenge for all of us and cannot be ignored. We must all play our part to rise to this challenge and tackle it. Similarly, in this Strategy we continue to guide work on nature recovery and biodiversity using our plan making powers to support these activities.

In 2022 the Council set targets for achieving net zero, the action plan in this Strategy includes important actions towards achieving those targets.

The new actions also build on the achievements the Council has made over the last 3 years in both delivering and supporting our partners to deliver crucial services for our communities for example, supporting community hubs and sustainable food partnerships, and supporting our businesses and third sector partners to access grants. We use the UN Sustainability Goals to clearly target our grant support to local community organisations.

We continue to work with the Government to secure inward investment to deliver the infrastructure we need to support our sustainable economic growth.

The Council is not an island and many of the objectives in the Strategy cannot be delivered without the help of our partners, businesses and residents. However, we play a vital role in supporting and influencing those that live, work and want to do business in our district. This Strategy sets out how we propose to play that important role.

1. Introduction

This Sustainable Economy Strategy sets out Mid Sussex District Council's ambitions for sustainable economic growth. It brings together the Council's sustainability and economic development workstreams, and it is a key feature of the Corporate Plan.

The Strategy provides a framework for identifying and prioritising areas for intervention and investment, and to support in securing inward investment. Clear in its priorities, it is inherently adaptable to changing circumstances, emergent policy and new technologies, placing the Council in the best position to maximise opportunities as they are realised.

The Council's stated main purpose is "to be an effective Council delivering value for money services and helping to create a strong economy, environment and community". This Strategy provides a key opportunity to enable the Council to achieve this.

It builds on the successful interventions delivered through the Council's first Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan (2022 – 2025). Key priorities and actions from these have been updated and, together with new actions, form an ambitious and coherent strategy and action plan for Mid Sussex.

The Sustainable Economy Strategy sets the following Vision for Mid Sussex:

A vibrant District that is attractive, resilient and innovative that balances social well-being, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth

The Strategy provides a clear roadmap for the Council driven by the specific needs of the district but is informed by the new Government's agenda to kickstart the British economy and build productivity; their commitment to decarbonisation and Net Zero targets. The Strategy is underpinned by the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. It addresses how economic development and social and environmental sustainability can successfully co-exist and be sustained in Mid Sussex for future generations.

This Strategy and Action Plan provides the district with a renewed focus on sustainable growth, enabling the economy to grow whilst reducing carbon emissions. This includes supporting resource efficient consumption; reducing ecological footprints; improving residents' skills and health and well-being; promoting green innovation; creating new jobs; attracting new investment; and supporting business formation and growth.

Statement of Intent

This Sustainable Economy Strategy is underpinned by three areas of focus. These three themes are essential to the aims of this Strategy to ensure we create better, more sustainable places for our residents, and to how working in partnership we will deliver the Strategy. These themes work in combination and are underpinned by strategic objectives linked to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. A series of actions set out how we will progress each objective over the next three years, to achieve the long-term vision for the district.

The three themes are:

People

Securing support and investment in people and skills is crucial to delivering sustainable growth and increasing resilience against future economic challenges. Despite low levels of deprivation, we need to continue to raise aspirations and develop the skills necessary to drive low-carbon economic growth.

Developing the skills needed to respond to the challenges and opportunities facing our local economy are central to the Council's strategy. The Strategy aims to ensure residents have the skills to enrich their lives and reach their full potential to meet the needs of our existing and future businesses.

Place

Place is the natural and built environment of the district. Delivery of the Strategy aims to create an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous place, where people choose to live, work and invest.

Significant progress has been made in securing the regeneration and renewal of our main towns and village centres. Responding to economic challenges, we need to accelerate the transformation of our towns and village centres to meet new market demands and local need. We also need to ensure that the district provides an environment that encourages entrepreneurship, incubation, retention and relocation of businesses and attracts inward investment, particularly in our priority business sectors.

We will position biodiversity at the centre of the development process as well as facilitating behaviour change to help reduce environmental impacts.

We will continue our digital transformation to ensure we fully realise the opportunity that digital technology presents for businesses and communities.

Partnership

Partnership working underpins the way in which the Council works with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to achieve our ambitions for the district. There are well-established relationships with local, regional and national partners. These have been central to the successful delivery of many of the Council's strategies, programmes and projects.

This Strategy can only be delivered through effective partnership working with our stakeholders, businesses and residents. This district already benefits from a strong culture of partnership working. We will continue to work hard to strengthen existing partnerships, develop new partnerships and work collaboratively to deliver better outcomes.

2. The District Council's Role

The Council has a key role through its direct service delivery. Where best placed to do so, the Council will lead and drive at pace the **direct delivery** of the Strategy; and **influence**, promote, lobby and advocate our strategic priorities in partnership with public and private sector stakeholders.

An illustration of the different levels of influence that the Council can and will exert to ensure this Strategy is delivered is set out below:

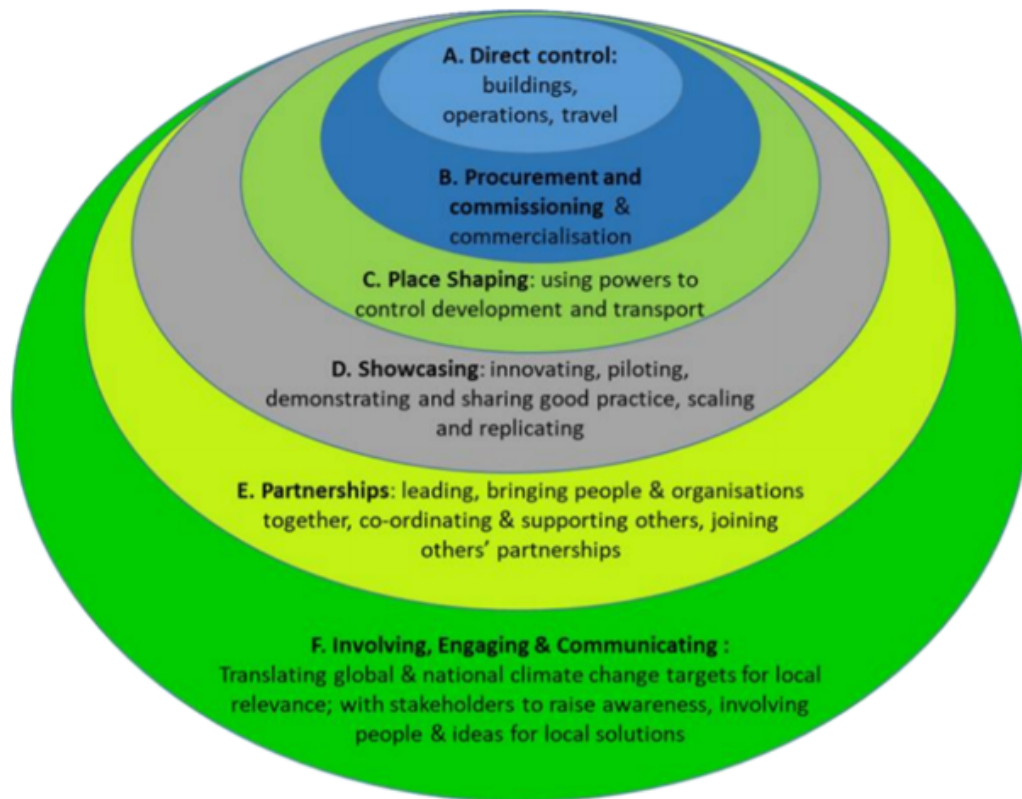
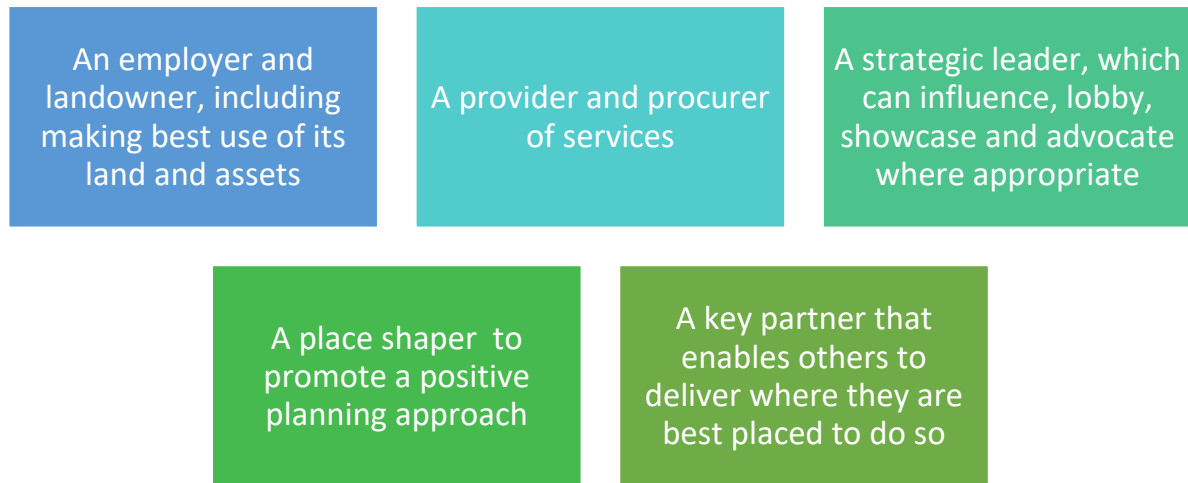


Figure 1: Scope of Influence (Source: Councillor workbook: The local pathway to net zero, Local Government Association, April 2021)

The guiding principles of working in partnership are **openness, trust, honesty and mutual respect**. The Council will strive to agree and deliver shared goals, based on common values and we will maintain regular and effective communication with our partners at national, regional and local levels. The focus will be to establish and maintain effective relationships with stakeholders, businesses and residents ensuring that an inclusive approach is taken that proactively engages under-represented groups and individuals with a weaker public voice.

The Strategy can only be delivered through effective partnerships with stakeholders, businesses and residents. Mid Sussex District Council has a key role as:



How was the Strategy Developed?

Developing the Strategy has and will continue to be an iterative process. It is based on the most recent evidence and data and will be updated and refreshed as necessary as new evidence emerges to ensure it remains relevant.

How has the Strategy and Action Plan been reviewed?

In 2024, a cross-party Member Working Group was convened to guide the review of the Strategy and develop the second Action Plan.

The long-term vision for the district remains relevant. However, the last few years have demonstrated how rapidly our local, national and global context can change. So, to ensure the work of the Council and partners can be responsive to the changes that have and continue to take place such as, the cost of living crisis, energy uncertainty due to conflict, impacts of climate change and the Government's commitment to driving sustained economic growth and improving prosperity and living standards, it was agreed that the three year action plan should be updated.

The Strategy draws on many sources of information and data to ensure it is up to date. The District Profile, a bespoke study which gathers data on a wide variety of social and economic subjects, has been updated. The Net Zero evidence base and programme, identified as an action in the first Strategy, has been used to inform this iteration of the Strategy.

3. Context

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Economy Strategy has been informed by the United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals. These aim to mitigate climate change, eradicate poverty, reduce gender and social inequality and improve economic and health conditions. They are a *"blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all"*. Whilst they are broad and inter-dependent, they are underpinned by specific targets and measures.



Figure 2: The UN Sustainable Development Goals

Mid Sussex District Council and its partners have a key role in ensuring that its priorities and actions support the UK Government to meet these targets.

The National Context

This strategy is set within the wider political, social, and environmental context. The Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical instability, and the impacts of the UK's departure from the European Union have all been major contributors to the country's economic trajectory. Climate change and working towards net zero is influencing how goods and services are produced, delivered, and consumed.

The age profile of the population is rising, adding to pressures to deliver health and well-being services. Digital technologies are having an increasingly dominant role in people's lives, allowing services to be delivered remotely and enabling many people to work more flexibly.

The new Government wants to drive stronger economic growth. Its priorities for sustainable economic growth include:

- building more homes;
- attracting business and institutional investment;
- addressing energy, infrastructure, and climate change;
- establishing a new Industrial Strategy;

- developing a collaborative approach to meeting the country's future skills needs; and
- reforming business rates.

This Strategy and Action Plan takes a local approach to address the climate crisis and deliver more sustainable and inclusive economic growth, whilst aligning and supporting national Government ambitions. This means that Mid Sussex District Council is well placed to gain Government support and funding for its initiatives.

Alongside this, the Government published its [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#) which includes ambitions for the UK to be entirely powered by clean energy by 2035, reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2050, reversing biodiversity loss and creating a circular economy through better resource efficiency.

The Government's strategy includes policies to advance off-shore wind; drive growth of low carbon hydrogen; deliver advanced nuclear power; shift to zero-emissions vehicles; promote public transport, cycling and walking; develop low carbon aviation and maritime travel; build and adapt greener buildings; support low carbon farming and agriculture through innovation; invest in carbon capture, usage and storage; protect the natural environment; and support green finance and innovation.

The Government has recently set out their vision for economic growth, with [Invest 2035: the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#). In it the Government identifies eight growth-driving sectors, which will be its main focus: advanced manufacturing; clean energy industries; creative industries; defence; digital & technologies; financial services; life sciences; and professional & business services. Sector and sub-sector plans will be developed, and spatial clusters of growth-driving and emerging sectors will be identified and supported.

Mid Sussex District Council has aligned its Net Zero Targets with the UK Government, where we have greater reliance on national infrastructure and set a more ambitious target for areas the Council can directly control. The targets, agreed by the Council in 2022 are:

- A District-wide net zero target aligned to the national target.
- A Council-only net zero target of 2040 for emissions the Council can directly control.
- A Council-only net zero target aligned to the national target for emissions the Council can only indirectly influence.

Local Context

The district's economic activity impacts beyond our boundaries and we are outward-looking. We work with partners at the right spatial level to deliver what is needed to enable our residents and businesses to thrive.

In July 2024, in response to the demise of the Local Economic Partnership (LEP), West Sussex County Council and District and Borough Councils established the West Sussex Economic Growth Board (WSEGB). The WSEGB brings together leaders in business, local government, education, and health and acts as a convener, facilitator, and enabler, providing strategic leadership and promoting West Sussex locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The Board acts as the accountable body with Government and is supported by the West Sussex Economic Strategy. It has six ambitions:

- boost productivity growth, investment, and innovation
- deliver new development and infrastructure and maximise the benefits of our international transport hubs
- boost green innovation, enhance natural capital, and support the transition to net zero.
- ensure that we have a dynamic and skilled workforce
- build an inclusive economy; and
- sustain our distinctive and vibrant places and grow our visitor economy.

This Strategy supports delivery of the West Sussex Economic Strategy 2025-2035 and our priorities and objectives are aligned.

Mid Sussex District Council is also a member of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB), which aims to increase the area's international profile, promote inward investment and support innovative businesses. The Board has agreed ten pledges to tackle climate change and has launched Sussex Energy, which establishes the goal of achieving net zero energy status by 2040.

As a result of Gatwick Airport's ambitions to expand, in November 2024 Gatwick Airport Limited (GAL) launched an Airport Economic Zone. A taskforce has been established, of senior economic development and business leaders, including representatives from the Department for Business and Trade, and the six local authority areas within the Gatwick Zone (West Sussex, East Sussex, Surrey, Kent, Brighton & Hove and London Borough of Croydon). The zone will promote long-term economic development, and this Council will ensure that its businesses and residents' voices are heard within this new partnership. We will work hard to ensure that this district is well represented in the Zone.

We work closely with WSCC to deliver the Mid Sussex Growth Deal, including regenerating the Martlets shopping centre in Burgess Hill town centre, developing Brookleigh (formerly known as the Northern Arc), promoting the proposed Science and Technology Park at Burgess Hill and implementing sustainable transport packages. This programme aligns with Mid Sussex District Council's Corporate Strategy and District Plan, providing an explicitly defined spatial and corporate focus for how we will support sustainable economic growth over the next three years.

The Council is reviewing the District Plan. This review has provided the Council with an opportunity to strengthen and include new policies on Climate Change; Sustainable Design and Construction; Biodiversity Net Gain; and Nature Recovery, as well as allocating housing sites to meet the Government's identified need up to 2040. The District's Town and Parish Councils have produced Neighbourhood Plans, setting out their own local priorities. These also inform actions that Mid Sussex District Council will take to deliver this Strategy.

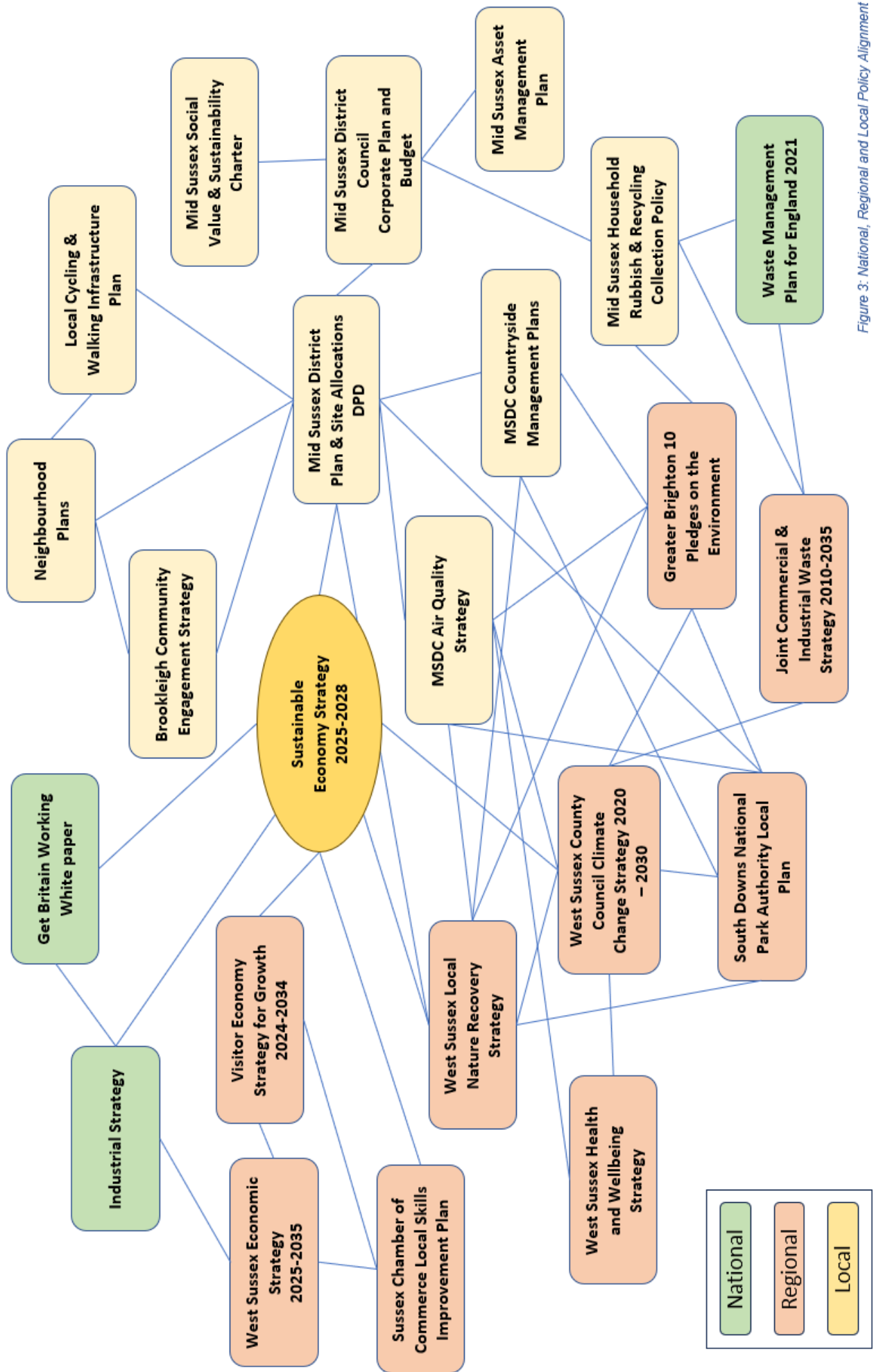


Figure 3: National, Regional and Local Policy Alignment

4. Evidence Base

District Profile

The Mid Sussex District Profile Update 2024 provides a detailed overview of key indicators for the district.

The district has a population of 155,000 which is projected to grow to 167,200 by 2043, with a significant increase in the elderly population. Health and wellbeing indicators show that life expectancy is higher than the West Sussex average, and life satisfaction has risen again, surpassing the county average.

Economically, Mid Sussex has one of the lowest unemployment rates in England at 1.9%, and earnings have risen significantly, with female earnings improving considerably. The district has a high proportion of residents with advanced qualifications (RQF Level 4 and above). The business landscape is diverse, with significant sectors including construction, wholesale and retail trade, and professional services. There has been growth in the number of enterprises with 10 or more employees.

Transport and connectivity are strong, with good railway and highway connections to London, Gatwick, and the South Coast. A significant proportion of residents engage in active travel, regularly walking or cycling. The natural environment is a major asset, with nearly 50% of the district within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and over 10% within the South Downs National Park. The district also boasts extensive woodland and numerous sites valued for biodiversity.

However, this brings challenges to the district's capacity to deliver sustainable growth. There are numerous environmental constraints and the road network throughout the district requires investment at key points. The aging population is projected to rise substantially, posing challenges for healthcare and social services. Health disparities exist, with life expectancy falling since the last profile and a higher suicide rate compared to the England average. Despite low unemployment, there are fluctuations in employment rates and a high reliance on certain sectors. The number of new business formations has declined, and there is a slight increase in business closures.

Housing affordability remains a significant issue, with high property prices relative to earnings. There is a need for more affordable housing to meet the demands of a growing population and to address the high cost of housing in the district. Road traffic accidents are a concern, with a slight increase in collisions and casualties. Despite high levels of broadband access, there is a need for improved digital connectivity.

Environmental sustainability is another challenge. With greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption remaining high, particularly from transport, there is a need for more renewable energy installations and greater efforts towards sustainability.

Mid Sussex District Council Net Zero Programme

The Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan 2022-2025 committed the Council to develop a Net Zero Programme. The Net Zero Programme sets out the Council's approach to achieving net zero targets for the Council's direct and indirect emissions and the District-wide target.

Council Emissions – Net Zero Action Plan

Set out below is the scope of the Council's emissions:

Scope 1 – Direct Emissions

- Natural gas used for heating in MSDC-occupied buildings and those leased by MSDC to tenants where MSDC is directly responsible for maintenance
- Fuels used in MSDC-owned vehicles

Scope 2 – Direct Emissions

- Electricity used in MSDC-occupied buildings and those leased by MSDC to tenants where MSDC is directly responsible for maintenance

Scope 3 – Indirect Emissions

- Tenant electricity (those on longer-term leases where MSDC is not directly responsible for maintenance)
- Tenant natural gas (those on longer-term leases where MSDC is not directly responsible for maintenance)
- Electricity Transmission and Distribution losses
- Transport
 - Grey fleet and commuting
 - Contractor fleet
 - Business travel
- Solid waste (Landfill and Recycled)
- Purchased goods and services

Scope 1 emissions are those the Council can directly control; scope 2 emissions are the emissions generated by electricity suppliers - the Council has some control over them in respect to usage and choice of supply; scope 3 emissions are those the Council can influence but cannot directly control. The highest proportion of emissions, at 86.5%, is from the Council's indirect operations (scope 3 sources).

In 2021 the Council appointed specialist consultants to provide a profile of the key emissions sources and a starting point from which to monitor the Council's and District's emissions reductions over time. It established the following baseline:

2019 Baseline	
Council Emissions (Direct & Indirect) (tCO ₂ e)	District Emissions (tCO ₂ e)
9807	688,000

Based on the Council's emissions profile, the Council adopted the following targets:

- **2040 target for the Council's direct emissions.** These are emissions that the Council can directly control, such as emissions from gas heating or the Council's car fleet and account for approximately 13.5% of the Council's emissions.
- **2050 target for the Council's indirect emissions.** These emissions are outside the Council's direct control and represent approximately 86.5% of the Council's emissions. Most of these are emitted from goods and services procured by the Council.
- **2050 target for the District's emissions.** Although it has a strong influencing role, the Council can only directly control a small amount of the emissions across the whole district. The Council agreed to align this target to the Government's national target. The changes required to achieve this target are outside the scope of this Council.

An action plan has been developed for each of these targets and this has been used to inform the Net Zero Programme, which forms part of the evidence base for this Strategy and Action Plan. [The consultant report can be found on the Council's website.](#)



155,000
resident population



12,200
population
expected to
increase by 2043



£428,895
average residential
property price



7,805
active
enterprises



63,000
employees working
in the District



63.7%
business survival
rate



average price of residential
property in Mid Sussex was
11.8 times the median
annual gross pay of
full-time workers in the
District



The Council
is a Bronze
Carbon
Literate
Organisation
(CLO)



158,000 sq m
of office floorspace
497,000 sq m
of industrial floorspace



District-wide
emissions fell by
11% from
2019 - 2022




50%
percentage of
district in an Area
of Outstanding
Natural Beauty



£768.70
(gross) per week - median
earnings for Mid Sussex
residents working full-time



4.3 tonnes
of CO² emissions per
capita



3,021
number of ultra low
emissions vehicles



£699.50
(gross) per week - median
earnings for full-time
workers in Mid Sussex



56.8%
of workforce
aged 16-64
possessing a
RQF* Level 4
and above



73%
The biggest
emitting sectors in
Mid Sussex are
Transport (39%) and
Domestic (34%)



38.9%
over a third of adult
Mid Sussex residents
walked or cycled for
any purposes at least
five times per week



Council emissions
fell from 9807t to
6229t CO₂e from
2019/20 to 2023/24



44
crimes per
1,000 residents

What does this mean for the strategy?

Considering the evidence and recognising the challenges, this Strategy will:

- Support people to enter the workforce and stay economically active to ensure we have enough people to maintain and grow our economy.
- Support our existing businesses to grow and thrive and encourage new businesses to the district.
- Support the health and wellbeing of our residents and communities.
- Deliver sustainable growth to ensure Mid Sussex is a great place to live and work.
- Seek to address inequalities within the district, for example housing affordability, and work to reduce them and their impact.
- Promote ways in which everyone can live and work in a more sustainable way to reduce our carbon emissions across the district by supporting improvements to sustainable and active travel for communities across Mid Sussex.
- Provide leadership to proactively demonstrate how we can reduce our carbon emissions and make a positive environmental impact.

5. How we will deliver the Strategy

The delivery of this Strategy focuses on those programmes and projects that have the greatest impact on sustainable economic growth in the district. We will build on the successful interventions delivered through the first Action Plan (2022-2025).

We will focus on the areas where the Council can most actively contribute, either directly or in support of, other organisations that are better placed to make an impact.

Delivery Principles

Actions will be:

Realistic

- Ambitious, but deliverable.

Sustainable

- Focus on the greatest need and impact.
- Contribute to the achievement of net zero, in line with national government targets.

Collaborative

- Strengthen partnerships and focus at the right spatial level.
- Support delivery of other key strategies.
- Add value to, rather than duplicate, other interventions.
- Encourage wider public or private sector engagement and investment.

Evidenced based

- Evidenced by data and insight.
- Tracked by robust measures.

Mid Sussex District Council has a framework of strategic documents that guide the direction of policy development and financial commitment. The Sustainable Economy Strategy and Action Plan will complement and support delivery of these key strategies and policies and delivery of other key local, regional and national strategies.

Funding

We will always seek to secure new sources of external funding to assist in delivering this Strategy. We will explore a wide variety of funding opportunities, including working in partnership with the government, private sector, community and third sector organisations to ensure we maximise inward investment and support partners to achieve shared goals.

6. How We Will Track Progress

All stakeholders need to know whether the actions we take make a difference. We recognise that many socio-economic and environmental conditions are beyond our control. External economic challenges and Government policies have a significant impact on the economic and social well-being of our residents and the performance of our businesses.

Demonstrating delivery is key. There are multiple data sets that could be used to monitor delivery. However, learning from the previous Strategy has shown that including too many measures can be confusing and lead to a lack of transparency. To address this, delivery of the Action Plan will be monitored using a dashboard of key measures made up of existing publicly available datasets. These datasets provide the best, most transparent, and cost-effective way of monitoring how Mid Sussex is performing across a range of measures.

The Council will publish the dashboard of measures which will be updated in real time when new data becomes available. The short timescale of the Action Plan allows for expedient responses when trends change.

It is important to note that this Strategy and Action Plan supports delivery of other key strategies. These strategies are referenced in the Action Plan.

Progress will also be tracked via delivery of the actions in these strategies, some of which will be subject to their own projects and programmes, with different reporting and governance arrangements, for example roll-out of simpler recycling.

Dashboard of Key Tracking Measures

- Maintain employment rate above 78%.
- Maintain Mid Sussex Life Satisfaction Score within the top two Districts/Boroughs in West Sussex.
- Increase the number of homes benefitting from grant funded energy efficiency improvements per year from 25 per year.
- Reduce Council direct emissions each year to achieve Net Zero by 2040.
- Percentage of biodiversity net gain secured through the planning system, to be delivered within the district.
- Maintain overnight stays above 12% of total visitor trips per year.
- Maintain employment floorspace in Mid Sussex District at 655,00sqm or above.
- Increase the proportion of adults who cycle or walk at least five times per week from 36.8% to 38% or above the West Sussex average by March 2028.

Case Studies

The following case studies demonstrate how Mid Sussex is an exceptional location for businesses. Through the delivery of this Strategy we will continue to work with and support our businesses to grow and prosper.

Innovation - Universal Quantum

Pioneering technology and innovation happening here in Mid Sussex and how we are working to capitalise on this.

Universal Quantum (UQ) has experienced tremendous commercial success since spinning out of the University of Sussex into Haywards Heath five years ago. They have recently won the largest single-company government contract for quantum computing to develop and supply 2 machines to the German government for €68M. UQ is building towards a future where quantum computing is solving some of humanity's top computational challenges.

VP of operations, Ilan Elson said: "Mid Sussex has been the perfect home for Universal Quantum. We moved to Mid Sussex in 2021, when we were looking for a start-up-friendly environment that was in a vibrant area, and could also let us build a vibrant home, for years to come. As we continue our journey to build the first scaled-up quantum computer, we will be expanding our footprint in terms of facilities and hiring."

Delivering Social Value and Sustainable Development - Homes England, Brookleigh

Embedding social value into our practices to deliver opportunities for local residents, and businesses while delivering a sustainable new community in the heart of Mid Sussex.

Homes England is working with Mid Sussex District Council and developers to provide affordable, quality homes in a well-planned community at Brookleigh, Burgess Hill.

Homes England's Head of Development in the South, Neil Miller said "At least 10% of the workforce for the lifetime of the Brookleigh project will be locally employed labour, and we'll be ensuring work placements are available and prioritising job applications from local candidates to help achieve this target. We want to make sure we're giving young people a taste of the varied careers it's possible to have in construction and offering guidance on where to start. The Plan aims to provide construction job opportunities at all levels".

Contractors and developers on site are helping to make sure their employees can grow and develop during their time working at Brookleigh. The Homes England team spoke to some early careers team members at Brookleigh in their February 2024 community newsletter; find out more here [Brookleigh Community NL 14 Final 2024.pdf](#)

In 2025 Homes England will be working closely with local partners and Mid Sussex District Council to focus on delivering locally relevant and measurable social value across Brookleigh.

A heritage garden and parkland focused on sustainability and inclusion - Borde Hill

Mid Sussex's thriving and compelling visitor economy makes for a great place to live, work and do business.

With 70,000 annual visitors, Borde Hill is a beautiful, unique destination. Having secured funding support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and with planning permission approved by Mid Sussex District Council, Borde Hill Garden Charity has ambitious plans to become more sustainable and inclusive than ever before, through its ['Reinventing Borde Hill' project](#).

This pioneering, community led project will provide much needed affordable, accessible outdoor space for an additional 65,000 local visitors to engage with nature and improve their mental and physical wellbeing each year. The project will encourage and facilitate outdoor learning, discovery and play to inspire children and young people including diverse and disadvantaged groups across the local community and those with disabilities, delivering activities for those who may find it difficult to access outdoor green spaces.

With plans to offer 65 new volunteering opportunities and creating jobs across horticulture, education, and visitor-welcome roles, the Reinventing Borde Hill project will also make a positive environmental impact, encouraging biodiversity, while educating visitors about our natural heritage, and protecting against climate change.

Supporting businesses – Micro Business Grant recipients

Supporting businesses to start-up and grow in Mid Sussex with Micro Business grants.

Cuckfield Coffee Co is a coffee roastery which was awarded a micro business grant of £2,000 to develop an e-commerce site, advertising campaign and to purchase product on a larger scale to allow economies of scale to be realised.

Director, Paul: "We have been able to get to two trade shows where we reached over 200 new customers, launched subscriptions and new single origin coffee offerings, as well as employ a local Sussex social media agency to help us grow our social media following to 4x its size. Without some of the grant money we don't think we'd have had the ability to start selling to wholesale customers. The trade shows have helped us develop sales skills and confidence to really talk about our business in a professional way. This has massively helped when talking to cafes and pubs about stocking our coffee."

Create Space Studio based in Hurstpierpoint offer multi-arts experiences to young people used a grant of £1,277 to fund staff training, new signage and commissioned editing.

Business owner, Zoe: "We are now able to offer a new contemporary dance syllabus including Rambert grades from September for our current students and hopefully attract new students to take these classes too. Our lead dance teacher is now fully qualified in this new syllabus of dance training, and we are currently looking to take on another dance teacher too. Our feather flags are wonderful for advertising our classes/school when we attend events, the speaker has enabled us to play our music louder at events and the editing meant we could complete our video made during the pandemic by our students and hold a lovely premiere event for the students and their families to watch the finished product."

Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out the key actions the Council and its partners are taking to deliver the objectives and how they contribute to delivery of other strategies and the UN Sustainability Goals.

Objective 1: Ensure residents have the opportunity to acquire the necessary skills to secure good quality jobs, encouraging equal opportunities and diversity		
UN Sustainability Goals – 4 Quality education,8 Decent work and economic growth,10 Reduced inequalities [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
1	Raise awareness of career pathways into key sectors, through access to skills training and apprenticeships.	Influence
2	Support the promotion of STEM subjects and careers to school children.	
3	Support initiatives which reduce barriers to work and promote opportunities for life-long learning, including encouraging young people to continue into education, workplace apprenticeships, access to mentoring and continued professional development to support career progression into senior roles.	
4	Support education providers and local businesses to increase the number of graduates who find suitable employment within Mid Sussex/local area to retain skills from HE and FE facilities in the area.	
Reference Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Sussex Chamber of Commerce Local Skills Improvement Plan- West Sussex Economic Strategy- Government White Paper "Get Britain Working"		

Objective 2: Improve the economic and social wellbeing of our residents across the district addressing inequalities and barriers		
UN Sustainability Goals – 3 Good health and well-being, 5 Gender equality, 8 Decent work and economic growth, 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure, 10 Reduced inequalities [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
5	Promote workplace and community well-being programmes including Mid Sussex Wellbeing Service, to increase people's ability to stay active in the workforce if they choose.	Directly Deliver
6	Increase the positive impacts and benefits for local communities within Mid Sussex of social value generated through MSDC contracts.	
7	Promote volunteering to support essential services and as routes into employment across the district.	Influence
Reference Documents:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSDC Social Value and Sustainability Charter & Procurement Code - WSCC Health & Wellbeing Strategy - Brookleigh Community Engagement Strategy 2025 		

Objective 3: Promote the benefits of sustainability practices and encourage action to support reduction in carbon emissions and achievement of Council and District Net Zero Targets		
UN Sustainability Goals – 7 Affordable and clean energy, 11 Sustainable cities and communities, 12 Responsible consumption and production, 13 Climate action [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
8	Provide training and support for a cultural and behavioural shift by individuals and organisations, towards sustainable living and working, including attitudes to waste, food, the purchase of goods and services and sustainable and active travel.	Directly Deliver
9	Support and promote the transition to a circular economy including reducing waste, encouraging reuse of materials, promoting community initiatives for waste reduction and use of local supply chains.	
10	Develop a pipeline of costed projects to reduce use of fossil fuels, improve the energy efficiency and increase renewable energy generation of MSDC owned assets.	
11	Co-ordinate knowledge sharing and promote advice to help local businesses on their journey to Net Zero, including reducing supply chain emissions through sustainable procurement.	Influence
12	Support and promote retrofit/decarbonisation of housing across all tenures, including promotion of available funding and local installers.	
13	Engage with national, regional and local energy providers (including community energy groups) to increase the amount of renewable energy generated in the district.	
Reference Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- MSDC Corporate Plan & Budget- MSDC Asset Management Plan (emerging)- MSDC Household Rubbish and Recycling Collection Policy- Joint Commercial & Industrial Waste Strategy for West Sussex 2010-2035- Waste Management Plan for England 2021		

Objective 4: Respond to the impacts of climate change through making best use of our natural assets by improving biodiversity, promoting nature recovery and increasing environmental resilience		
UN Sustainability Goals – 11 Sustainable cities and communities, 12 Responsible consumption and production, 13 Climate action, 14 Life below water, 15 Life on land [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
14	Ensure that new development and land management demonstrates significant improvements to green infrastructure, biodiversity and nature recovery, having regard to the Biodiversity Duty and delivery of the West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy.	Directly Deliver
15	Refresh the management plans for the Council's countryside sites to ensure they deliver maximum benefit in terms of environmental impact, including increasing carbon sequestration, and incremental growth in the proportion of Council-owned land managed for biodiversity.	

16	Engage with local businesses, industry groups, conservation groups, the High Weald AONB and South Downs National Park Authority to raise awareness of sustainable land use and showcase best practice on land that it owns, including promoting opportunities to increase carbon sequestration.	Influence
Reference Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSDC District Plan - Countryside Management Plans - West Sussex Local Nature Recovery Strategy 		

Objective 5: Promote the district's assets, ambitions and potential		
UN Sustainability Goals – 8 Decent work and economic growth, 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
17	Continue to promote inward investment in Mid Sussex as a desirable place to live, visit, work and do business at a local, national, and international level through promotional channels to support key sectors to help them to locate, survive and grow in the district.	Directly Deliver
18	Ensure Mid Sussex is positively positioned/represented within wider emerging sub-regional / economic partnerships to support sustainable growth, increase in high value jobs and attracting working age people into the district.	
19	Support the work of Town and Parish Councils in enhancing the economic resilience, appeal and attractiveness of the district's town and village centres to support local businesses.	Influence
Reference Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Neighbourhood Plans - MSDC Corporate Plan - West Sussex Economic Strategy - Visitor Economy Strategy for Growth 2024-2034 - Industrial Strategy 		

Objective 6: Support businesses to start up, grow and thrive in the district		
UN Sustainability Goals – 8 Decent work and economic growth, 9 Industry, innovation and infrastructure [Insert SDG images]		
No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
20	Identify opportunities to attract new and grow existing high value employment sectors.	Directly Deliver
21	Signpost support and advice services to businesses and third sector organisations to improve their access to grants, funding, business advice, start-up information, premises and business rates.	
22	Work with site promoters to promote and deliver new business parks and commercial property including the Science and Technology Park, to provide flexible space, a competitive environment for businesses, securing the retention of existing, and attracting new businesses and sectors.	Influence
Reference Documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - MSDC District Plan - MSDC Site Allocations DPD 		

- MSDC Corporate Plan
- West Sussex Economic Strategy
- Industrial Strategy

Objective 7: Support delivery and use of sustainable infrastructure including digital, to drive growth, support residents and visitors and provide a well-connected district.

UN Sustainability Goals – 7 Affordable and clean energy, 9 Industry innovation and infrastructure
[Insert SDG images]

No.	Action	Directly Deliver / Influence
23	Promote the availability, adoption and benefits of digital technology to local businesses, organisations and investors.	Direct Delivery
24	Work with WSCC and local stakeholders to deliver sustainable and active travel networks including cycleways, bridleways, rural bus networks and community transport connecting the district's rural and new communities.	Influence
25	Work with West Sussex Chargepoint Network to increase provision of electric vehicle charging points to support the change to low emission vehicles and improve air quality.	

Reference Documents:

- MSDC Air Quality Strategy
- Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan
- WSCC Active Travel Strategy
- WSCC Local Transport Plan

Glossary

1-2-3 Waste Collection Trial: 1-2-3 waste collection is (1) weekly collection of food waste (2) two-weekly collection of recycling (3) three-weekly collection of general rubbish.

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB): Areas designated to conserve and enhance natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage; and to meet the need for quiet enjoyment of the countryside and have regard for the interests of those who live and work within them.

Biodiversity: Biodiversity encompasses all species of animals and plants alive on our planet.

Biodiversity Net Gain: An approach to development that aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

Biodiversity Opportunities Area: Areas that identify where the greatest opportunities for habitat creation and restoration lie at a landscape scale; they enable the efficient focusing of resources to where they will have the greatest positive conservation impact, representing a more efficient way of delivering action on the ground.

Carbon Emissions & Carbon Footprint: The amount of carbon dioxide emissions associated with all activities of a person or other entity (e.g., building, business, organisation, local authority, country).

Carbon Net Zero: Net Zero, also known as carbon neutrality, simply means achieving a balance between emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) to the atmosphere and removals of carbon dioxide (the most widespread GHG) from the atmosphere, for example by nature-based solutions such as tree planting or by technological means such as carbon capture and storage. If the emissions and removals balance out, carbon neutrality has been achieved.

Carbon Offsetting: The action or process of compensating for carbon dioxide emissions arising from industrial or other human activity, by participating in schemes designed to make equivalent reductions of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

Circular Economy: A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended.

Climate Change: The United Nations describes Climate Change as long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas. Burning fossil fuels generates greenhouse gas emissions that act like a blanket wrapped around the Earth, trapping the sun's heat and raising temperatures. Examples of greenhouse gas emissions that are causing climate change include carbon dioxide and methane. These come from using gasoline for driving a car or coal for heating a building, for example. Clearing land and forests can also release carbon dioxide. Landfills for garbage are a major source of methane emissions. Energy, industry, transport, buildings, agriculture and land use are among the main emitters.

Community Well-Being Programmes & Hubs: Programmes or places that provide access a range of services that will help you stay safe and well and improve your health and wellbeing.

Conservation & Heritage Areas: Areas in which there are extra planning controls and considerations in place to protect the historic and architectural elements which make the place special.

Corporate Plan: The Corporate Plan is a Council business planning document which sets out the future priorities, objectives and budget.

Decarbonisation: All measures through which an entity reduces its carbon dioxide emissions.

District Plan: This document is the principal Development Plan Document, setting out the long-term strategic vision for the district, as well as objectives for the area and strategic policies.

Dwell Time: Time spent in the same area.

Ecological Footprint: A way to measure the natural resources we use and consume, in relation to our environment's capacity to provide and support our needs.

Energy Performance Certificates (EPC): Identifies how energy efficient a building is and gives it a rating from A (very efficient) to G (inefficient).

Green Economy: A low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive economy.

Green Flag Award: The benchmark international standard for publicly accessible parks and green spaces.

Green Home Grants: A Government funded scheme that helps residents make energy improvements to their homes.

Green Infrastructure: A connected network of multi-functional greenspace, both urban and rural, that delivers a wide range of environmental, social and economic benefits, including promoting ecosystem services and improving quality of life.

Gross Value Add (GVA): A measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy.

Infrastructure: Includes roads and other transport facilities; flood defences; schools and other educational facilities; medical facilities; sporting and recreational facilities; and open spaces

Knowledge-Based Economy: Economies that are based on a greater dependence on knowledge, information and high skill levels, and the increasing need for ready access to all of these by the business and public sectors.

Regulated Qualifications Framework (RQF): A system that categorises and standardises the levels of education and training qualifications in the United Kingdom, regulated by Ofqual in England.

Life Satisfaction Score: The life satisfaction score is provided by the Office of National Statistics as part of their Annual Population Survey. It includes areas such as health, relationships, education and skills, what we do, where we live, our finances and the environment.

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP): A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area. The Coast to Capital LEP covers MSDC.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy: A system of spatial strategies for nature, which will cover the whole of England. They are established by clauses 100 to 104 of the Environment Bill and are designed as tools to drive more coordinated, practical and focussed action to help nature.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR): Designated by the local authority and managed for either nature conservation or to provide recreational opportunities to communities.

Low Carbon Economy: An economy that is based on energy sources, technologies, products and services that emit low levels of carbon dioxide emissions.

Low Carbon SME Support Fund: A fund to support small to medium enterprises that emit low levels of carbon dioxide emissions.

Low Carbon Technologies: Technologies that emit low levels of carbon dioxide emissions.

National Blue Campaign: The Blue campaign was founded in 2014 and requires a patch of land to be allowed to grow naturally and see what plants and creatures return.

Natural Capital: Natural capital can be defined as the world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.

Nature Conservation Sites: Locally important natural heritage sites that could be damaged by development.

Nature Recovery Networks: An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats

Net-Zero Pathway: Projects the what, when and how of achieving carbon net-zero.

Objectively Assessed Need (OAN): The total amount of housing that would be needed to meet, as a minimum, expected levels of growth in population over the plan period. This level of growth expected should take into account demographics (i.e., birth/death rates and migration) and other signals that could influence future trends in demographics.

Opportunity Mid Sussex: This interactive prospectus promotes Mid Sussex and all that it offers in terms of a place to live, work and invest.

Planning Performance Agreements: Voluntary undertakings that enable local planning authorities and applicants for planning permission to agree the timescales, actions and resources necessary to process a planning application

Resource Efficiency: Resource efficiency means using the Earth's limited resources in a sustainable manner while minimising impacts on the environment.

Rewilding: Rewilding is a form of environmental conservation and ecological restoration that has significant potential to increase biodiversity, create self-sustainable environments and mitigate climate change.

Science & Technology Park: A business support environment that encourages and supports the start-up, incubation and development of innovation-led, high-growth, knowledge-based businesses. Initiatives called by other names such as Research Park, Innovation Centre, Technology Park, Technopole or technology-based Incubator – where they aspire to meet the essential criteria set out above - are also included within the definition.

Standard Occupational Classification (SOC): The Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) is a common classification of occupational information for the UK.

Sustainability: The creation or maintenance of conditions that fulfil current and future economic, environmental and social requirements.

Third Sector Organisations: The charity sector often referred to as the 'third sector', 'voluntary sector', 'not-for-profit sector', 'community sector' or 'civic sector',

Travel Plans: A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives and is regularly reviewed.

Notes

Organisational emissions are calculated and presented in CO₂e. The 'e' stands for equivalent. While CO₂ is the primary greenhouse gas (around 64%), it does not have the greatest Global Warming Potential (GWP) - i.e. its impact on climate change. Methane, Nitrous Oxide, and fluorinated gases, for example, are less abundant but have greater GWP.

So, CO₂e is used to convert the relative contribution of different greenhouse gases into the equivalent amount of carbon dioxide it would take to have the same impact. This means that total greenhouse gas emissions can be expressed as one value, rather than lots of different weighted values. It makes sense to have a standardised, comparable unit of measure based on CO₂ as the most abundant and recognisable greenhouse gas. MSDC's total carbon footprint is 9,807 tonnes of CO₂e.