

# ECONOMIC PROSPECTUS

April 2025

# ENTERPRISING HORSHAM

Creating Sustainable Prosperity  
Across Horsham District



Horsham  
District  
Council

# OUR VISION

To unlock the full potential of our communities, economy and places, ensure fairer and greener economic prosperity and deliver the aims of the Council Plan, our overarching Vision is:

**To improve prosperity and the quality of life for residents whilst enhancing the area as an attractive and sustainable place to live, work, visit, invest and do business with a focus on driving job creation and retention for the benefit of current and future generations.**

Enterprising Horsham is underpinned by sustainability and equality principles. To this end, all publications will be subject to a range of impact assessments to help embed the “fair” and “green” ambitions set out in the vision. This will also involve utilising the One Planet tools that are being developed by the Council as part of the wider corporate sustainability drive.

# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our Vision is underpinned by five Guiding Principles:

**Securing Green Prosperity** by ensuring that sustainability principles underpin all elements of the local economy.



**Nurturing Business Development** with focused business support and alignment of Council services behind the economy.



**Creating and Curating Sustainable Quality Places** across all our towns, rural communities and countryside recognising the important role all our different places play in building communities and attracting visitors and investors.



**Attracting Investment** to secure physical and digital infrastructure and attract businesses to our employment sites and workspaces.



**Enhancing the Skill Base** of residents and businesses to meet the needs of businesses and aspirations of local communities whilst addressing the current challenges within the labour market.



# KEY ASSETS

Our Vision makes the most of our existing assets:

- **At the heart of Sussex, Horsham District enjoys an excellent location with strategic connectivity** including access to London, Brighton, the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone and the Motorway network via the M23 and access to global markets via London Gatwick Airport and national seaports.
- **Attractive natural landscapes and historic towns** including access to the South Downs National Park and the Weald of Sussex which underpin the District's position as a strategically important destination for visitors.
- **Strong knowledge economy** with a high proportion of knowledge based businesses and workers.
- **Well performing new start up businesses** with relatively high start up and survival rates.
- **A range of thriving markets** across our market towns that attract footfall and provide opportunities for businesses to trade off line.

# KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Our Vision will help unlock several opportunities:

- Proximity to the Gatwick Region Airport Economic Zone and the associated benefits of collaborative access to national and global markets and investment.
- Focus on Green Growth and lowering of the area's carbon footprint with a particular emphasis on green energy including, for example, supply chain and skills opportunities provided by Rampion Offshore Wind Farm and associated renewable energy provision.
- Changing attitudes to flexible working and scope to rebalance out/in commuting and increase the size of the economy's travel to work area and associated labour supply.
- Increasing importance given to the environment in policy making.
- Sector focus growth including tourism, land based businesses, green technologies, transport and logistics, business services, food and drink and specialised manufacturing.
- High quality sites adjoining high quality transport and digital infrastructure.





# PRIORITY ACTIONS

Initially our Vision will be delivered through the following 12 Priority Actions developed against our Guiding Principles:



## Securing Green Prosperity:

- **Priority Action 1 – Enterprising Horsham Green Business Strategy:**

Convene relevant partners to develop and deliver the Green Business Strategy as outlined in the Council's Climate Action Strategy. Central to this is a 'Buy Local' policy which, along with regeneration and upcycling principles, contributes to a more sustainable circular economy, recognising the cumulative value that all locally based businesses add. There will also be a need to focus on developing green skills to support the move toward a low carbon economy.

## Nurturing Business Development:

- **Priority Action 2 – Enterprising Horsham Business Charter:**

Put in place a one council approach to engaging and supporting local businesses. This will include publishing a Business Charter and the establishment of a Business Charter Group that will meet on a regular basis to agree and drive forward alignment of Council services behind the local economy.

- **Priority Action 3 – Enterprising Horsham Business Support Programme:**

Review the business support offer to align the Council Business Training Programme with the West Sussex Growth Hub and other associated offers both within and external to the Council. In particular, consideration will be given to the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence.

- **Priority Action 4 – Enterprising Horsham Business Awards:**

Put in place an awards programme to spotlight and promote local businesses. This will include supporting business award events of others and consideration of the development of a local bespoke one on behalf of the Council.

- **Priority Action 5 – Sector Plans:**

Work with partners to identify, develop and deliver sector based plans to grasp the challenges and opportunities facing particular sectors that require support. The current focus will be on: Land Based Sector (including farming and emerging opportunities with local food and drink and in particular viticulture), the visitor economy, creative industries, retail, bio-tech, gaming, advanced manufacturing and construction. Further sectors will be included as required. Consideration will also be given to nurturing local clusters which unlock the potential of cross sector working (such as with the Sussex Six Campaign).





## Creating and Curating Sustainable Quality Places:

- **Priority Action 6 – Horsham Business Improvement District (Your Horsham):**  
Support delivery of Your Horsham via their five year business plan.
- **Priority Action 7 – Town Centre and High Streets:**  
Work with local communities to improve town centres and high street experiences, reinforcing and communicating their role as hubs for those communities and local commerce.



## Attracting Investment:

- **Priority Action 8 – Invest Horsham:**  
Work with strategic partners to develop an inward investment offer to promote the District and its key employment sites and assets to national and international markets.
- **Priority Action 9 – Site Delivery:**  
Ensure the allocation of sufficient employment land within the local plan to meet current and future demands and ambitions of businesses.
- **Priority Action 10 – Workspace:**  
Convene a Workspace Forum to help understand and shape the demand for and supply of workspace.
- **Priority Action 11 – Infrastructure Plan:**  
Support the development and delivery of the local infrastructure plan.



## Enhancing the Skill Base

- **Priority Action 12 – Enterprising Horsham Skill Group:**  
Work with the West Sussex Career Hub, the Local Skills Improvement Plan and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to convene local education providers to ensure the skills needs and aspirations of residents and the workforce are understood and met. In particular, this will focus on those disadvantaged and excluded from the job market to ensure improved access to training and employment opportunities.

These Priority Actions will be reviewed on an annual basis with new ones introduced as required.



# COLLABORATION IS KEY

Working with local and strategic partners will be essential to ensuring the necessary support and resources are in place to achieve successful delivery.

This will include working at all levels of Government, across the public sector and with the different elements of the private and voluntary and community sectors. In particular, there needs to be strong alignment with the West Sussex County Council Economic Strategy.

Critical to achieving effective collaboration, will be the involvement of service users in the design, development and delivery of the various initiatives thereby ensuring that local communities are at the heart of the process. This approach builds on the principle that those who are impacted by a project or service are best placed to know what is required and will work best.

To ensure effective collaboration it will be important for joint working across all Council services through a One Council Approach which in this context will be pulled together and driven forward via the Business Charter.

In practical terms this will involve continuing current ways of working with relevant stakeholders around each priority action to consider mutual objectives as the basis for producing an agreed action plan. Oversight will be provided by the Enterprising Horsham Economic Board which will comprise of local and strategic representatives.

All Enterprising Horsham publications have been (and will be) subject to extensive consultations to ensure stakeholder's help shape content and drive delivery.





## ABOUT THE FRAMEWORK APPROACH

This Economic Prospectus is the principal document in our Economic Development Framework and provides an overarching summary of the Council's economic plans.

Other documents will be produced as required as part of the Framework approach. It expands on the vision and priorities in the Council Plan as an easy place to do business and to keep our town centres and high streets thriving. It also expands on our Council Plan themes of supporting people and communities, inspiring greener futures and having an approach underpinned by listening and collaboration.

It reflects the changing local and strategic context, including the impact of the pandemic, Brexit and global conflicts and the opportunity to focus on greening the economy thereby unlocking the full potential of our towns and rural areas.

This Framework also provides a local platform for supporting investment decisions and delivering the strategic economic priorities for West Sussex and the nation.

## DELIVERY AND MEASURING PERFORMANCE

Delivery will be driven via a range of mechanisms, which in the case of the Council, will be the Business Charter and service planning process.

Performance management will be measured at two levels:

- Macro economic trends and drivers of change that set the context for local delivery.
- Project/ service level that will involve measuring how projects and services are performing against a range of relevant key performance indicators which will be defined via the delivery mechanisms associated with each Priority Action.

An annual Horsham District Economic Report will be produced to review performance which will be used to inform research and further stakeholder engagement which will help shape future project/ service development and delivery and, in time, the direction and focus of local economic policy.

Enterprising Horsham has been shaped by a range of data, policies and perspectives. Going forward, and working in collaboration with partners, a common evidence base will be developed as the basis for measuring impacts and, where required, adjusting policy and priority focus.

# WHY HORSHAM DISTRICT

## Great Place to Live:

Horsham District enjoys a fantastic location which along with outstanding landscapes and historic places, high quality schools, high levels of enterprise and entrepreneurship and low levels of unemployment and crime, makes the District a great place to live.

## Great Place to Visit:

Horsham District offers an excellent range of quality environments and places including direct access to the South Downs National Park and Weald of Sussex which provides a range of sporting, leisure and cultural activities in a natural setting of international significance.

## Great Place to Invest and do Business:

Situated between London and Brighton, Horsham District enjoys one of the most accessible locations in the UK with excellent transport connectivity to national and global markets. With ambitious plans to unlock the full potential of our District, this Economic Prospectus will also play a key role in driving prosperity across West Sussex and the wider region which, as a result, will contribute to the success of UK Plc on a global stage.

## Great Diversity in Place:

Horsham district is a rural area characterised by a range of unique villages and communities surrounding Horsham Town. The uniqueness of the different places is recognised and will be reflected in the approach to delivery via the 12 priority actions.

