

West Sussex Economic Partnership (WSEP)

The role of an economic partnership is to act as an independent voice for business and the economy to guide the public sector in making policy and investment decisions. WSEP operates through the three economic contours of the County – the Coast, the Gatwick Diamond and the Rural economy.

Funded by the South East England Development Agency and West Sussex County Council, WSEP has a business led board and a professional team of six.

WSEP's role can be defined as:

Performance: To identify and facilitate the delivery of specific initiatives to help local businesses and promote the West Sussex economy.

Influence: To influence decisions taken by central, local and regional government as well as regulatory bodies that affect West Sussex businesses.

Intelligence: Working with the business community and its representative bodies to understand the key issues affecting the long-term sustainable development of the County. WSEP also acts as a conduit between business and the public sector to help both base economic strategies on the best available data and information.

The Zeppelin from Worthing based B&W

“WSEP acts as a vital conduit between business and the public sector to help strategic regional economic planning. This role is especially important in these challenging times. To achieve the best for the south east, we need the best available data and information as well as the views of business.”

Paul Lovejoy, Executive Director, SEEDA

Rt Hon. Lord Young of Graffham PC DL
President

David Butcher
Managing Director, FD Outsourcing Ltd

Mark Froud
Chief Executive, Sussex Enterprise

Mark Hammond
Chief Executive, West Sussex County Council

Rosemary Hodge
Representative of PEP – Arun and Chichester Business Association; Managing Director, BX Plant Ltd

Shelagh Legrave
Chief Financial Officer, Chichester College

Dr Norman Boyland DL
Chairman; Chair, Learning & Skills Council, SE Region

Jeremy Leggett
Chief Executive, Action in Rural Sussex

Ian Lowrie
Chief Executive, Worthing BC and Adur DC

Tim Lockwood
Head of Corporate Responsibility, BAA Gatwick

John Peel OBE
Chair, Central Sussex College; SEEDA Board Member

Peter Thair
Representative of CADIA Senior Partner, DPDS Ltd

Tim Watton
Director, Commercial Banking NatWest/RBS

the team

Alistair Smith
Chief Executive

Christopher Chapman
SEEDA West Sussex Investor Development Manager

Sarah Karn
Partnership Development Manager

Lynn Bricknell
Partnership Coordinator

Anne de Sausmarez
Economic Development Advisor

Lauren Buist
Apprentice Administrator

the sponsors



WSEP
4 THE CHAMBERS,
CHAPEL STREET,
CHICHESTER PO19 1DL

T: 01243 382255
E: info@wsep.org.uk
W: www.wsep.org.uk

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WSEP

performance
intelligence
influence

WEST SUSSEX ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP
ANNUAL REVIEW



intelligence

Understand and communicate information to help businesses and inform public sector policy development.

- Engage with businesses and business organisations to ensure that WSEP is informed about the local economy and business issues affecting the growth of the County's economy.
- Manage the West Sussex Vacant Commercial Property database and website which is the first port of call for businesses inside and outside the County looking for new premises as inward investors or relocating within the County.
- Maintain a database of relevant economic data and be able to respond to requests from companies, local authorities and regional agencies.
- Put statistical information in its magazine Insight and online.

“WSEP has played a vital role in the success of establishing and promoting the Gatwick Diamond sub-region; it is an important link between the public and commercial sectors which helps our strategic planning.”

John Jory, Chief Executive, MSDC and Member of Gatwick Diamond Steering Group

The Dome at University of Chichester, Bognor Regis Campus



performance

WSEP is tasked to identify and facilitate the delivery of initiatives which will advance the strategic objectives set by its funders.

Organised two major events to secure the development of the Gatwick Diamond Futures Plan – the blueprint for the long-term development of the Gatwick Diamond. Gained acceptance of the plan and created a new governance structure for implementation. This will include workgroups to reflect the themed actions of **Inspire** (improving knowledge, skills and innovation), **Connect** (maintaining excellent communications) and **Grow** (providing the necessary infrastructure).

Co-ordinated the Big Skills Breakfast where Dragons Den and Yo Sushi founder Simon Woodroffe led the promotion of skills development by employers. 118 business leaders attended and promised action within their companies.



Simon Woodroffe at the Big Skills Breakfast

Facilitated ‘Business and Education – Creating Solutions’, bringing local businesses, schools and colleges together to help the University of Chichester develop courses to be offered at the University’s Bognor Campus.

Supported the creation of the Sussex Economic and Skills Board to link local activity to regional initiatives for the benefit of local employers.

Leading an initiative to set up an Innovation and Growth Team to provide specialist support for companies with high growth potential.

Facilitated the creation of the EASIT congestion reduction scheme to aid companies to address transport issues in Manor Royal, Crawley.

Held an event to encourage **innovative** companies to work together to accelerate their development in the Gatwick Diamond area.

Facilitated access to SEEDA funding to **research** the viability of a university centre in the Gatwick Diamond.

Successfully led the Better Business Parks project which has led to Lancing Business Park voting to become a Business Improvement District generating over £0.5m over 5 years.



From top right: An apprentice at Rolls-Royce Motor Cars, the Rolls-Royce Phantom Coupé, the Fastway bus system in Crawley, and a product design from Maddison Ltd

influence

WSEP represents the views of business to national, local and regional government as well as regulatory organisations.

- Lobbied the Office of Rail Regulation directly and in partnership with leading businesses, business organisations and Gatwick Airport to support the case for the funding of the redevelopment of Gatwick Airport station.
- Made representations on economic and business issues regarding the proposed eco-town at Ford.
- Continued to make the business case for A27 improvements as well as promoting reduced car use to help contain congestion.
- Provided a comprehensive evidence based response to West Sussex County Council’s draft sustainable community strategy.
- Appointed SEEDA’s sub regional economic partner in West Sussex to aid delivery of the Regional Economy Strategy and to keep SEEDA informed on economic issues within the County.
- Using its business intelligence base provided stakeholders with an economic breakdown of the County’s economy.

“WSEP supports us in our ambition to develop an infrastructure to let us get on and grow our businesses. They listen to our concerns and communicate them to government nationally and regionally who can make a difference.”

Michael Punter, MD, Parafix Tapes and Conversions Ltd

