

2020

*Lancing Business Park
Looking to the Future*



Lancing Business Park BID

28th October 2020

Lancing Business Park Looking to The Future



Introduction

In November 2019 Lancing Business Park BID (LBP) facilitated an Innovation Workshop at the offices of Eschmann Technologies, involving 25 local business leaders from across the Business Park, Jonathan Sharrock from Coast to Capital and Tim Loughton MP. Following on from this workshop it has been proposed to create a broad ‘think piece’ to try and articulate the vision, ideas and wishes of the business community for the future direction of Lancing Business Park, within the context of the wider development potential of the Lancing area.

The Coronavirus pandemic has further emphasised the need to consider the changing world around us and how the Lancing area can be developed to safely meet the needs of businesses, residents, and visitors.

This is not a bid proposal or definitive representation of everyone’s view; however, we believe that this document aims to build on the discussions that have already been held and can form the basis for the Council to consider producing a more detailed and resourced paper.

Important themes

- **Workforce of the future**

All businesses need talented people. The world of work now looks very different. Business survival during the Coronavirus lockdown forced employers to radically evolve their business, adopting home working and flexible hours as essential to run their day-to-day operations. Working from 9.00am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday now feels like a thing of the past, with a real shift to employees being connected 24/7. When people come onto the business park the nature of their activities is already different and will likely continue to evolve rapidly as we adjust to the new normal, with the new digital economy helping to shape the world around us.

We can already see the need on Lancing Business Park for more flexible shared office space, hubs where people can share resources, ideas and socialise, whilst keeping employees safe. The need to attract a new, younger generation of workers to this 24/7 business environment is clear,

encouraging local talent to avoid a long commute and regard Lancing Business Park as ideal business location in which to connect to the rest of the UK.

Additionally, the physical constraints of a business park that is at 99.1%* occupancy already demonstrates that shared office space and resources make sound economic sense, without even considering how this can help meet business demands of the future.

Our ability, as a business community to attract new people, new skills, creating sustainable jobs for future generations, will depend on a coordinated approach from all stakeholders.

- **Connecting the Business Park to the High Street**

Essential to the creation of new, skilled, and sustainable jobs will be a thriving and vibrant nearby High Street with improved connections and access to the Business Park. Somewhere close by for people to eat, shop and socialise safely is fundamental for businesses across Lancing and for those considering Lancing as an area to relocate to, or invest in.

Many of the people who work on the Business Park already live close by and for the next generation of workers to want to stay local, put down roots and create social and economic value for the area, the High Street must be improved. Lancing Parish Council has already proposed an update of the 2012 'Lancing Vision' document to address many of the issues/opportunities discussed in recent years and this will be key to delivering further successful development of the area.

- **Showcasing the natural assets and location**

People feel rightly proud of Lancing's natural assets and location being so close to both a beautiful beach and the stunning South Downs National Park, but it can occasionally feel like a local hidden gem as opposed to a unique selling point for the area. Business parks rarely come with such clear and obvious attractions to people who often spend more time at work than at home. In terms of the need to attract the right skills and talent we have a wonderful opportunity to champion Lancing Business Park as a business community with unique access to the coast and countryside, along with the £3 million Brooklands Park Masterplan being launched right next door. Recreational sports activities and the promotion of a safe, fitter/healthier lifestyle chime well with businesses because

a happy and healthy workforce helps to safeguard their business and is also very beneficial for the community.

- **Highlight “second largest business park in West Sussex”**

Did you know Lancing Business Park is the second largest business park in West Sussex?

With circa 3,000 people working here, the park is not just important to Lancing but also a vital economic force for the wider West Sussex region. There is a great opportunity to put Lancing ‘on the map’ with the arrival of the world class Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club training ground and the approved redevelopment of the Monks Farm site with 600 new houses, 35,000m² of new commercial space (i.e. IKEA) a country park and new education provision. There are of course many initiatives that will continue to help drive awareness as well as listening to concerns from the local community, but from a business perspective we believe that major investments like these should only help to promote Lancing as a place of business opportunity for the future.

- **Public realm/ sustainable travel improvements**

The pandemic has raised awareness of the need for more local pathways and cycle lanes, as well as an improved electrical charging infrastructure for people visiting and working within the park, which remains a hot topic for local businesses. The recent concern over shared public transport is expected to lead to an increase in driving to work, as businesses recall their employees to the workplace.

Car parking is already oversubscribed, and we believe the workforce of the future will not all be able to drive to work, or indeed want to. A more innovative approach to travel must therefore be adopted, balancing improved pedestrian and cycle provisions with the constant flow of HGV vehicles on the park, to enable safe growth on the Business Park as we move forward. Linking with the above needs to attract new workers, creating better/more skilled jobs, improving the link between the High Street and the Business Park, promoting the natural assets of the area and recognising the importance of all of this to the wider West Sussex region, therefore a coordinated sustainable travel plan is our final wish in terms of creating a new future for Lancing Business Park.

Conclusion

Lancing Business Park is an essential element of the regional economy, with the potential to provide a dedicated 24/7 business environment that meets the needs of our future workforce. The local business community is clearly only a part of the story and LBP have undertaken initial engagement with key local stakeholders to ensure a cohesive approach can be taken forward. This discussion will continue and hopefully this paper can now be progressed by Adur District Council to enable a Lancing wide investment proposal, encompassing the breadth of projects already in the pipeline and an updated 'Lancing Vision', into a strategic long-term plan for Lancing. Baseline statistics, wider engagement, feasibility work and commitment from those who can help unlock the financial resources that are needed to make it happen, will all be important during the next phase. Translating this discussion paper into action requires input from those on the business park, local/regional partners, potential new business partners looking at the region as a business investment opportunity and crucially leadership from Adur District Council. The challenges of the pandemic have also created an environment where long-term sustainable change can be delivered at pace, and we trust this paper can now help to kick start rapid progress.

Acknowledgement

LBP would like to thank Philip Kennedy Managing Director Eschmann Technologies Ltd for consolidating business views and helping to draft this paper.

Consultation Details

LBP undertook a business consultation of this document between 30th September 2020 and 20th October 2020, welcoming comments from all businesses based on Lancing Business Park.

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*LBP Total Floorspace Occupancy Rate as at 24.2.20