

# Thriving Together

**A Vision for the future  
of Adur and Worthing**

**August 2025**

**IDEAS**  
ALLIANCE



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

THE PLACE  
BUREAU

# Thriving Together

**Thriving Together is about building the future of Adur and Worthing with the people who live, work and care for these places.**

Launched in May 2025, it set out to shape the proposals Adur & Worthing councils will take to government as part of devolution and local government reorganisation. But it goes further – laying the foundations for long-term collaboration between communities, councils, and partners to imagine and deliver the future we want to see.

At its heart, Thriving Together believes that when we open up space for more voices, better ideas emerge. That means creating welcoming, creative and accessible ways for people to shape change –

whether through street conversations or digital platforms, local workshops or poetry.

We've invested in Go Vocal, a digital platform that broadens who gets to be heard, and trained local facilitators in tools to spark meaningful conversations in their own communities.

Thriving Together sets out to hold space for both the shared values and ambitions that run across the whole area, and to listen deeply to what makes each place unique.

Thriving Together is just the beginning – an invitation to think boldly, act locally, and shape the future in common.

# The People's Priorities

As a brief summary of the findings explored in more detail throughout this document, these are the **top priorities** that emerged through online and in-person engagement, sensemaking and deliberation.

On this page, we share a summary of the **aims** that will guide our shared direction for the future. On the next page we expand these to reveal the **actions** that have been prioritised as positive next steps.

- A. Enjoying the Outdoors**
- B. Ensuring Good Governance**
- C. Making Livable Places**
- D. Moving Around**
- E. Bringing Town Centres to Life**
- F. Investing in Community and Culture**
- G. Focusing on Young People**

# The People's Priorities

## A. Enjoying the Outdoors

- A1: Clean up our coast
- A2: Face climate change
- A3: Get active outdoors

## B. Ensuring Good Governance

- B1: Keep decisions local
- B2: Open up communication
- B3: Make our streets feel safer

## C. Making Livable Places

- C1: Deliver the right homes in the right places
- C2: Match new development with infrastructure
- C3: Protect places that tell our story

## D. Moving Around

- D1: Invest in our streets
- D2: Improve public transport, walking and cycling
- D3: Put accessibility at the heart of our public realm

## E. Bringing Town Centres to Life

- E1: Clean up public spaces
- E2: Support a local economy
- E3: Make culture a reason to visit

## F. Investing in Community and Culture

- F1: Make our shared resources work harder for all
- F2: Invest in public health infrastructure
- F3: Create spaces for creative businesses

## G. Focusing on Young People

- G1: Provide spaces for young people
- G2: Upskill young people
- G3: Ensure there are spaces for after dark

Each *Aim* is assigned a letter A-G.

Each *Action* is assigned a letter and number – eg A1, A2.



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**I wish  
we could...**





**"I wish we could** learn from the land and tide,  
Let young and old cast lines side by side.  
To fish, to forage, to play in the dirt,  
And let outdoor joy mend what hurts.

**I wish we could** make the invisible seen,  
Where every neighbour belongs to the team.  
Not defined by struggle or pushed to the edge,  
But offered a seat, a voice, a pledge.

**I wish we could** unlock every closed door,  
To art, to music, to learning and more.  
Let every child dream wild and wide,  
With mentors and friends right by their side."

*Resident in Southwick*

# Introduction

# What did we hope to achieve?

We set out to run an **open, creative, representative and inclusive** process that gave people across Adur and Worthing a real say in the future of their neighbourhoods.

With big changes coming through **devolution and local government reorganisation**, this work was about listening to what matters most to local people – residents, councillors, businesses and community groups – and using those insights to help shape the plan for what comes next.

Along the way, we also wanted to test new ways of involving people in local decisions and build the tools and relationships that will help strengthen community voice for the long term, by focusing on:

1. Digital
2. Inclusion
3. Deliberation

# Who is behind this project?

**Adur & Worthing Councils** created Thriving Together to work quickly to give people a voice in the government's planned changes for Sussex.

As a social enterprise set up to help organisations bring people's voices and lived experiences into policy, service design and decision-making, **The Ideas Alliance** shared the Councils' desire to see local voices shape local priorities.

The Ideas Alliance partnered with **The Place Bureau** to draw from their wealth of experience on futures and transitions to shape places people wish existed.

**IDEAS**  
ALLIANCE

 **ADUR & WORTHING**  
COUNCILS

**THE PLACE**  
**BUREAU**

# The Process



# The Process

## Engagement and Recruitment

We spent the end of April and the beginning of May creating a visual language for Thriving Together that was inviting and playful. We worked with teenagers and community organisations to place our invitations to take part in as many places as possible – local newspapers, local venues, noticeboards, community centres, and libraries.

## Visioning

We used the [Collaborative Place Futures Toolkit](#) to design our engagement process, which would take place both online **using the digital platform**, and in-person in the neighbourhoods. During May and June, we set out to hear from as many people as possible about all the ideas – big and small – they had. People wrote poems; thought about what they loved and what they would lose about their places; shared what they wished for and whether they agreed or disagreed with others' wishes.

## Sensemaking

In July, we brought together all the ideas from the online platform and neighbourhood workshops into a draft set of aims and actions. We paid particular attention to the ideas that most people agreed on, even when they disagreed about others.

## Deliberation

We tested our work with a citizen panel who brought a critical perspective to the aims and actions. This included a “more-than-human” perspective to represent other species and living entities who also call Adur and Worthing home.

We made changes to the visions based on the citizen panel's recommendations and we also held a public workshop, bringing citizens and elected members together to prioritise the actions with the greatest potential impact.



## WHAT WE DID ONLINE

We created a quick and easy way to engage online which allowed a larger number of people to participate that would have been reached via our in-person events alone. We recognise many people have busy lives but still want to contribute and so we created a way to do that which took only a few minutes.

1.

We embedded a tool called Polis into the [Go Vocal](#) participation platform and 'seeded' it with **40 statements** from the leaders of Adur & Worthing Councils.

2.

We launched this on 20 May and there was an extensive **campaign** over the following 6 weeks to encourage participation.

3.

In Polis people vote (agree/disagree) on statements made and can submit statements of their own. **707** ideas came in from residents and from the in-person conversations. **61,000** votes were cast.

4.

Polis groups people together based on how they vote and then finds common ground between them. The analysis led to **21** distinct ideas which were both popular and had broad appeal across the groups.

## WHAT WE DID IN PERSON

To complement the online conversation, we set out to hear the ideas of people who would be unlikely to engage online or come to a session hosted by the councils. We were lucky residents volunteered to be community facilitators. Using their networks and their creativity we reached a further **350+ people**.

To help ensure we had representation from diverse lived experiences – including the more-than-human – we curated a citizen panel to review a first cut of the visions people came up with online. We brought all this together at an in-person workshop in July.

**1. Training community facilitators** (22nd May)  
A fabulous group of residents came together to learn about The Place Bureau's [Collaborative Place Futures toolkit](#) - a toolkit for transition. They learned to adapt exercises to their own context.

**3. Citizen panel** (10th July)  
A carefully curated group of people who bring anti-racist, youth, neurodivergence, disability and more-than-human perspectives to futures thinking about Adur and Worthing.

**2. Neighbourhood conversations** (June & July)  
Community facilitators held 16 conversations at festivals, in pubs and community spaces across Fishersgate, Lancing, Shoreham, and Worthing.

**4. Public workshop on visions and priorities** (17th July)  
Local people join elected representatives in creating a shared vision and set of priorities for Adur and Worthing as part of Sussex.

# The Results

Citizens Panel and  
Deliberative Workshop

# The Results

We paused the online conversation and neighbourhood conversations at the end of June to analyse and synthesise people's creative works and wishes for Adur and Worthing.

From the **ideas contributed** and **votes cast**, we developed a draft set of *Aims* and *Actions* that reflected where the strongest shared priorities emerged.

These draft ideas were then tested through a **citizens' panel** and a **deliberative workshop**, where participants helped refine the proposals, highlight any gaps, and then prioritise the actions with the greatest potential impact.

This section summarises the raw insights that emerged from those events, which are explored further in the following *Vision* section.

## CITIZENS PANEL



On the 10th July, a group of 27 people came together with diverse lived experiences and expertise. They spent two hours critically appraising the aims and actions.



## RESULTS FROM PANEL

On the 10th July, a group of 27 people came together with diverse lived experiences and expertise. They spent two hours critically appraising the aims and actions. They explored what resonated with their own experiences and they identified gaps in the thinking.

These gaps were formulated into recommendations to Thriving Together along the following themes:

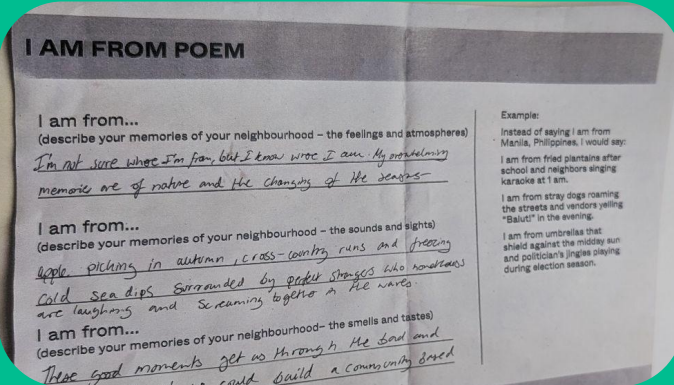
1. A greater focus on young people and their needs for spaces to keep them busy and active, express themselves creatively, be together after dark and learn life skills for the future.
2. Accessibility for wheelchair users – both to get around and to access nature.
3. Awareness of neurodivergence – from more training for teachers in mainstream education to transport that is autism friendly.
4. Investment in culture, creativity and community, especially linked to economy and town centre development.
5. Emphasis on the importance of mental health services as the foundation of a thriving future.
6. Climate and food resilience.



## DELIBERATIVE WORKSHOP



On the 17th July, a group of 47 residents and elected members came together to deliberate on the aims and actions Thriving Together re-worked after the citizen panel.



## WHERE DO WE START?

On 17th July, 47 residents and elected members came together to help prioritise the updated Aims and Actions. Working in groups, they sorted each of the 21 Actions (refer to '[The People's Priorities](#)') into one of four categories based on how *impactful* and how much *effort* they will take to deliver. Our goal was to identify the actions that could be '**Seeds of Change**' — high-impact ideas that are also easy to put into action. And also the longer term strategic initiatives that require greater effort, but also have big impact.

High Effort	3 Save for Later	4 Strategic Initiatives
Low Effort	1 Minimum Loveable Product	2 Seeds of Change
	Low Impact	High Impact



## WHERE DO WE START?

The results from each group were submitted via a digital form and combined to show an overall consensus. The most impactful actions in each quarter are ranked at the top of each quadrant. These results were shared during the workshop.

### KEY

**2 = Seeds of Change** High Impact / Low Effort

**4 = Strategic Initiatives** High Impact / High Effort

	Aim	Action
2	Community & Culture	Make our shared resources work harder
2	Young People	Provide spaces for young people
2	Outdoors	Face climate change
2	Outdoors	Get active outdoors
2	Town Centres	Make culture a reason to visit
2	Governance	Keep decisions local
4	Liveable Places	Match new development with infrastructure
4	Community & Culture	Invest in public health infrastructure
4	Outdoors	Clean up our coast
4	Liveable Places	Right home in right places
4	Moving Around	Invest in our streets
4	Moving Around	Improve public transport, walking and cycling
4	Moving Around	Accessibility
4	Young People	Ensure there are spaces for after dark
4	Governance	Make our streets feel safer

## WHO DOES WHAT?

The second activity on 17 July asked: *Who should do what?* Many people in the community want to take action themselves, while others see a role for the council to lead in certain places.

1	2	3
Community does themselves	Community and Councils do together	Councils do alone
(score 0-1)	(score 1-2)	(score 2-3)

*The lower the score, the more the community felt confident in taking action themselves.*

## WHO DOES WHAT?

In this exercise, participants worked in groups to decide which of the 21 *Actions* the community could lead, which should be shared, and which are mainly for the council. After 15 minutes, the group results were submitted digitally and combined to show an overall picture

### KEY

- Community does themselves**
- Community & Councils do together**
- Councils do alone**

Aim	Action	Score	Lead
Town Centres	Clean up public spaces	1.07	Together
Outdoors	Face climate change	1.21	Together
Outdoors	Get active outdoors	1.21	Together
Community & Culture	Make our shared resources work harder	1.21	Together
Town Centres	Make culture a reason to visit	1.36	Together
Young People	Upskilling our young	1.36	Together
Liveable Places	Protect places that tell our story	1.50	Together
Young People	Provide spaces for young people	1.50	Together
Young People	Ensure there are spaces for after dark	1.50	Together
Governance	Make our streets feel safer	1.67	Together
Outdoors	Clean up our coast	1.79	Together
Town Centres	Support local economy	1.79	Together
Governance	Keep decisions local	1.83	Together
Governance	Open up communication	1.83	Together
Community & Culture	Create spaces for creative businesses	1.83	Together
Moving Around	Put accessibility at the heart	2.07	Council
Liveable Places	Match new development with infrastructure	2.21	Council
Liveable Places	Right home in right places	2.36	Council
Moving Around	Improve public transport, cycling and walking	2.36	Council
Community & Culture	Invest in public health infrastructure	2.36	Council
Moving Around	Invest in our streets	2.50	Council

# The Vision

# A Vision for Adur and Worthing

**Adur and Worthing is defined by openness**  
– in our wide skies, the broad Downs, and long,  
expansive beaches – but also in how we live, work  
and connect with one another.

That spirit of openness takes care, investment and  
collaboration: to keep our environment clean, our town  
centres thriving, and our neighbourhoods as places  
where everyone feels ownership and belonging.



**People here want to open up opportunities and build resilience in the places we call home:** from Worthing's pier and Shoreham's port to Lancing's parks and playgrounds.

**They're asking for cleaner seas, more affordable housing, better public transport, creative and welcoming high streets, and strong community infrastructure that supports wellbeing.**



Worthing



Shoreham



Lancing



**Thriving Together** is about caring for our people and places, so they can care for us in return.

**This future must be built in partnership** – open, transparent and shaped by the energy of our local communities and the responsibility of the council. And it must put young people at its heart, because ultimately, we're not just building for today, we're opening up the road ahead for the next generation.

# Introducing Aims & Actions

This section sets out seven key **Aims** that reflect what matters most to people across Adur and Worthing – the changes they want to see in their communities. Each aim is grounded in what we heard through online and in-person engagement, and shaped through feedback from the Citizens' Panel.

Beneath each aim are three focused **Actions**, 21 in total, that highlight where attention should be directed. While these are not detailed delivery plans, they are based on what we heard and offer a clear, community-rooted starting point for what should come next.

For each action we have drawn in direct quotes from the online engagement which represented the sentiment around this particular point.

**A. Enjoying the Outdoors**

**B. Ensuring Good Governance**

**C. Making Livable Places**

**D. Moving Around**

**E. Bringing Town Centres to Life**

**F. Investing in Community and Culture**

**G. Focusing on Young People**



# 7 Aims, 21 Actions

## A. Enjoying the Outdoors

- A1: Clean up our coast
- A2: Face climate change
- A3: Get active outdoors

## B. Ensuring Good Governance

- B1: Keep decisions local
- B2: Open up communication
- B3: Make our streets feel safer

## C. Making Livable Places

- C1: Deliver the right homes in the right places
- C2: Match new development with infrastructure
- C3: Protect places that tell our story

## D. Moving Around

- D1: Invest in our streets
- D2: Improve public transport, walking and cycling
- D3: Put accessibility at the heart of our public realm

## E. Bringing Town Centres to Life

- E1: Clean up public spaces
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## F. Investing in Community and Culture

- F1: Make our shared resources work harder for all
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- G1: Provide spaces for young people
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Each *Aim* is assigned a letter A-G.

Each *Action* is assigned a letter and number – eg A1, A2.

Aim A

# Enjoying the Outdoors



## Enjoying the Outdoors

Framed by the sea and the South Downs, Adur and Worthing is defined by **big skies, fresh air and open space**. These landscapes are more than just backdrops, they're where people exercise, meet, play, grow, and take a breath from busy lives.

But these cherished places are under pressure – from **climate change, pollution, and the fact that not everyone can access them equally** depending on your income or mobility. We should invest in restoring nature, and making these spaces more welcoming and resilient so that they can continue to look after us in return.

These green and blue spaces are our calling card as a place, and when we value and care for them, they will keep supporting our health, identity and way of life for generations.



## People are calling for a future where...



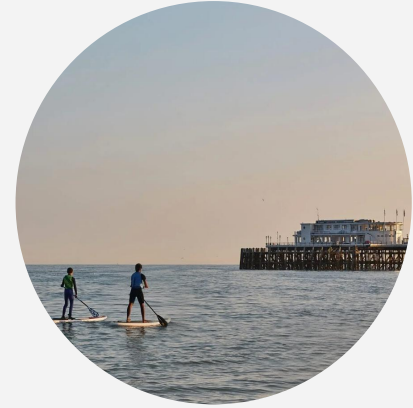
**A1.**

**We clean up our  
coast and protect  
our waters**



**A2.**

**We face climate  
change with greater  
resilience**



**A3.**

**We create more  
ways for people to  
get active outdoors**

## **We clean up our coast and protect our waters**

Local people are calling for cleaner seas and rivers, Blue Flag beaches, better flood resilience and strong action against pollution. From holding water companies accountable to ensuring clean drinking water, or restoring the marine ecosystem of Sussex Bay – water is our life line and we must protect it.

### ***You Said...***

*“Clean up our coast! Take water companies to task for the disgusting state of Worthing waters”*

*“Restore the marine ecosystem of Sussex Bay”*





## **We face climate change with greater resilience**

The planet is heating up, and we need to prepare. By planting more trees, using coastal plants, and protecting the South Downs, we can support biodiversity, and by growing more food locally and sharing knowledge, we can strengthen our food security too.

### ***You Said...***

*“Long term thinking is needed for sustainable climate ready communities. Food security, green transport & increasing biodiversity needed.”*



## **We create more ways for people to get active outdoors**

From play spaces and croquet to community allotments and free things to see and do along the seafront, people want affordable, inclusive outdoor spaces where all ages can connect, but most importantly, these activities need to be accessible to everyone

### ***You Said...***

*“Have a range of (affordable/free) seafront activities for local people and visitors, of all ages”*





Aim B

# Ensuring Good Governance





## Ensuring Good Governance

A good society is built on **fairness and trust**. When people feel heard and informed, they are more able to shape the places they live in and feel confident about the future. Trust also comes down to feeling safe and secure in the local area.

But **people have felt disconnected from how decisions are made**, or don't feel safe on our streets. We should open up our decision-making processes, **improve how we share information**, and create a stronger social contract.

By listening better, acting on local concerns and communicating clearly, we will build a more inclusive, transparent and trusted local democracy.



## People are calling for a future where...



**B1.**

**We keep decisions  
local and  
accountable**



**B2.**

**We open up  
communication and  
make local  
government easier  
to understand**



**B3.**

**We work in  
partnership to make  
our streets feel  
safer**



## **We keep decisions local and accountable**

Residents want more transparency, better value for money, and decisions made by and for local people, not distant authorities.

### **You said...**

*"It is important that the needs of Adur and Worthing residents do not get overlooked or bypassed by being part of a much larger entity."*

*"Ensure value for money in projects."*



## **We open up communication and make local government easier to understand**

From utilising empty high street spaces for local messaging, to clearer online updates, we'll make it easier for everyone to find information about what's happening locally and how to get involved as well as clearer information about the mayoral process and citizen panels.

### **You said...**

*"Have regular stand at weekly markets, to inform about council activity and to gather local opinions."*





**We work in partnership  
to make our streets  
feel safer**

People want a stronger response to antisocial behaviour – especially in public spaces by improving police and community relations. Young people want their schools to feel like safe environments especially for disabled and neurodivergent pupils.

**You said...**

*“Tackle shoplifting, theft and antisocial behavior through stronger Police-Council-Community connections”*

Aim C

# Making Livable Places





## Making Livable Places

Everyone deserves a warm and secure home. In Adur and Worthing, we need to **build homes that meet local needs** while protecting what makes this place special.

But too often, housing is unaffordable, developments ignore local character, and vital infrastructure doesn't keep pace. We should **prioritise affordable and accessible social housing**, make better use of brownfield sites, and ensure new development respects our natural environment, heritage and infrastructure needs.

This includes **protecting and investing in our much-loved historic buildings**, seafront assets and local landmarks. Our goal is to build in a way that supports thriving, well-served communities, now and in the future.



## People are calling for a future where...



**C1.**

**We deliver the right  
homes in the right  
places**



**C2.**

**We match new  
development with  
the services people  
need**



**C3.**

**We protect and  
invest in the places  
that tell our story**






## **We deliver the right homes in the right places**

By reusing empty buildings and prioritising social housing, we can meet local needs, not just build for profit, ensuring housing is affordable for everyone. A variety of housing options for different people should be on offer.

### **You said...**

*“Reuse derelict properties to help provide social housing”*

An aerial photograph of a residential neighborhood. In the foreground, a white bus is stopped at a bus stop. The neighborhood features a mix of old and new housing, including a large white house with a modern extension and several smaller, older houses. There are green spaces, trees, and a paved path. The overall scene depicts a growing community with integrated infrastructure.

## **We match new development with the services people need**

New homes must come with the right infrastructure like schools, GPs, dentists, transport, green spaces and local jobs to support a growing population.

### **You said...**

*“When building new housing, build new facilities alongside such as GP's, dentists to avoid putting more pressure on the existing services.”*



**We protect and  
invest in spaces that  
tell our story**

From seafront landmarks to heritage buildings, we'll care for the places that make Adur and Worthing unique.

**You said...**

*"Invest in key seafront assets (eg pier) to make the 'coastal strip' an attractive place for people to visit and stay"*

*"Local heritage and environment should be celebrated, valued and protected"*



Aim D

# Moving Around



## Moving Around

How we get around shapes our daily lives. In Adur and Worthing, people want **safer, cleaner, more accessible streets and easier ways to walk, wheel, cycle or take public transport.**

But our current transport systems are often costly, disconnected or poorly designed for those who need them most. We should **invest in more affordable options** and better street design for everyone – from children to wheelchair users.

Our aim is an affordable, connected, sustainable transport system that **makes journeys quicker and easier for everyone.**





## People are calling for a future where...



**D1.**

**We invest in our streets and make them better for everyone**



**D2.**

**We make public transport, cycling and walking real options for more people**



**D3.**

**We put accessibility at the heart of how we design our public realm**

## We invest in our streets and make them better for everyone

Potholes, blocked pavements and poor infrastructure slows us down, so we'll invest in roads and make walking and wheeling easier.

### You said...

*"Invest more in the public roads, most of them have potholes"*

*"Stop pavement parking (obstruction for pushchairs, wheelchairs, etc.)"*





**We make public  
transport, cycling and  
walking real options for  
more people**

From cheaper buses that run into the night-time to joined-up cycle routes, we'll support clean, safe, active ways to get around.

**You said...**

*"More cycle lanes that are well joined up, especially in routes where children cycle to school and commuters cycle to work."*

*"Make buses cheaper than parking and increase frequency of routes into and out of town"*



## We put accessibility at the heart of how we design our public realm

Whether it's a wheelchair-accessible beach, properly dropped kerbs or autism-friendly ways to travel, we'll work with the right people to remove everyday barriers.

### **You said...**

*"Let's create one beach that's wheelchair accessible"*

*"Include charities in the planning process, that can provide specialist accessible guidance"*



Aim E

# Bringing Town Centres to Life





## Bringing Town Centres to Life

Our town centres are more than just places to shop – they're spaces where people meet, work, create and celebrate. Adur and Worthing **need high streets that support local businesses and offer a multitude of worthwhile things to do** for all ages.

But **too many units sit empty**, and some parts of town feel like they could be anywhere. We should clean up and care for town centres, support independent businesses, and **invite culture and creativity into our public spaces** to draw people in.

We want town centres full of **life, pride, colour and community**.

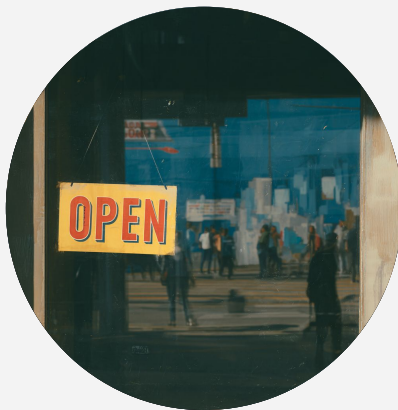


## People are calling for a future where...



**E1.**

**We clean up and  
take pride in our  
public spaces**



**E2.**

**We support a local,  
diverse and adaptable  
community**



**E3.**

**We make culture  
and creativity a  
reason to visit**

## **We clean up and take pride in our public spaces**

From street cleaning to floral displays and neighbourhood litter picks, we'll make our town centres feel cared for and welcoming.

### **You said...**

*"Encourage/support neighbourhoods to keep their area clean and tidy by having local street cleans"*

*"Make the town centres and streets a lot cleaner. Have regular litter picking groups, more floral displays and solve graffiti issues. A community group could help do this"*





**We support a local,  
diverse and adaptable  
economy**

By reducing barriers for small independent businesses, limiting the number of chain stores and using empty shops creatively, we'll help our high streets evolve and thrive as unique local centres.

**You said...**

*"Encourage independent shops selling locally produced products and food by offering reduced rent / rates."*

*"No more vape or coffee shops."*





## **We make culture and creativity a reason to visit**

We'll bring back pop-ups or art markets, music events, public art and night-time programming that bring people into the town centre, especially young people – and celebrate what makes our place unique.

### **You said...**

*"More community events that celebrate our diversity"*

*"Have events that give people the chance to volunteer to increase pride in the areas we live in. We can all do something."*



Aim F

# Investing in Community And Culture





## Investing in Community and Culture

Great places are built on a foundation of strong community infrastructure. In Adur and Worthing, that means **shared spaces, services and support** that helps people of all ages live well.

But too many community buildings, arts organisations and local services are **stretched and underfunded**. Not enough meet the needs of young people, carers, or those facing health challenges. We should invest in youth centres, libraries, public toilets and more innovative spaces like repair cafes or drop in music and art studios.

We want every neighbourhood to have the resources it needs to **support mental and physical wellbeing, connection, a cultural economy and community pride**.



## People are calling for a future where...



**F1.**

**We make shared spaces and resources work harder for everyone**



**F2.**

**We will invest in the infrastructure that supports public health**



**F3.**

**We create more spaces for creative businesses**





## **We make shared spaces and resources work harder for everyone**

From libraries and repair cafés to ‘libraries of things’, we’ll create welcoming places where people can learn, share and connect. More allotments and community growing programmes will help people learn about food, health and sustainability.

### **You said...**

*“Encourage local food projects and more allotments.”*

*“Arrange workshops on importance of food sustainability and eating locally produced food.”*

## We will invest in infrastructure that supports public health

We'll push for better access to NHS dentists, GPs, more public toilets, and spaces where people of all ages can be active and well. Investing in our mental health, from clinical services to community-wellbeing programmes could have huge knock-on impacts in the future.

### You said...

*"We need NHS dentists, many children and adults are being denied dentistry as there are no NHS dentists."*







## We will create more spaces for creative businesses

By providing spaces for creative people to make and sell their work affordably, from discounted market stalls to drop-in music studios, we can encourage a thriving and inclusive local cultural scene. Spaces to learn and pick up skills will ensure a strong pipeline of talent.

### **You said...**

*"Support small businesses with pop-ups and "meanwhile" use of spaces"*

Aim G

# Focusing on Young People





## Focusing on Young People

The future of Adur and Worthing belongs to its young people, but too often, their needs, voices and ambitions are left out of local decision-making. Whether it's **spaces to hang out, opportunities to express themselves, or support in learning life skills**, young people need more from us as a community.

From safe, inclusive **places to spend time after dark**, to hands-on creative learning and a chance to shape the town around them, young people want to be kept busy and involved.

By backing the organisations already doing this work – and making space for new ideas – we'll build a borough where the next generation feels **supported, empowered and proud to stay**.



## People are calling for a future where...



**G1.**

**We provide young people spaces to keep them busy & active**



**G2.**

**We upskill our young population with the skills fit for the future**



**G3.**

**We ensure there are spaces for people after dark**



**We provide young people with spaces to keep them busy & active**

Young people need places to be – not just skateparks and sports pitches, but indoor hangouts, spaces for arts, and opportunities to shape public spaces with their ideas and creativity. We'll support the organisations already doing this work and help them grow.

**You said...**

*“As a parent of teens there aren't enough facilities for them. I would love to see more youth centres and better park facilities.”*



## **We upskill our young population with the skills fit for the future**

From creative programmes to financial life skills, we'll open up new ways for young people to learn outside school. By involving them in local decision-making, we'll also help build understanding of how change happens.

### **You said...**

*"Work with local and national networks that specialise in supporting and enabling young people to access creative industries"*





## **We ensure that there are spaces for young people after dark**

We'll create safe, inclusive evening spaces for 14-18 and 18-25 year olds – places to dance, chill or get together with a group of friends, especially for those who don't feel at home in traditional youth clubs or too young for nightlife venues.

### **You said...**

*"Coffee/non alcohol venues for young people with music, open all day and in an inviting environment."*

# **Our Neighbourhood s**

# What makes our neighbourhood unique?

Across Adur and Worthing, people share many priorities – **a cleaner environment, stronger communities, better opportunities**. But each place also has its own character and concerns, shaped by local history, geography and daily life. Recognising both what unites and distinguishes our neighbourhoods is key to building a future that fits all.

The following data was gathered through in-person workshops held in Shoreham, Lancing and Worthing, designed to spark honest, grounded conversations about each place. We used a mix of **creative exercises** – such as writing personal poems based on place and memory – alongside **structured discussions where people shared what they “love” about where they live, and what they’d like to “lose.”**

By being physically present in each community, we were able to connect with residents who are less digitally engaged and hear from a broad range of voices, including those we met informally while out and about. While these ideas have shaped a clear picture of each neighbourhood, they have also helped to influence the wider picture across Adur and Worthing and our seven ‘Aims’.

Across Shoreham, Lancing and Worthing, **everyone values their access to nature** – the sea, the Downs, and green open spaces – and equally **share a deep pride in their local communities**. All three places want cleaner environments, safer streets, better public transport, and stronger support for young people.



# What makes our neighbourhood unique?

Yet each neighbourhood brings its own character:

**Shoreham is proud of its heritage and creative community**, and fiercely protective of its low-rise, village-like feel.

**Lancing is defined by its family-friendly atmosphere** and local volunteering spirit, but feels overlooked and under pressure from overdevelopment.

**Worthing offers the most urban mix** – with a vibrant arts scene, a growing town centre, and a desire to balance its seaside charm with a stronger cultural and economic identity.

This 'sense of place' is essential to understand to anchor changes as each neighbourhood moves forward towards the future. If we can hold onto the things we love about our neighbourhoods, and feel ok to lose the things we don't, it helps us feel grounded, like we belong, even though the world around is evolving.

# Worthing

Worthing is loved for its lively mix of culture, coast and community. People enjoy the creative scene, grassroots music, indie shops, and iconic spots like the Dome Cinema, Beach House Park and Coast Café. They value how everything is close – seafront, South Downs, train station and town centre all within reach.

But there's frustration with traffic, poor public transport, empty high street shops and unloved spaces like the Guildbourne Centre. Many feel the town needs investment in affordable housing, youth spaces, and a more vibrant and inclusive night-time economy.



## What we love about Worthing

**Vibrant Seafront** – The beach, pier, and cafés are seen as major assets. *“The sea, the beach and pier are unspoilt and not over-developed.”*

**Arts & Culture** – Theatres, festivals, and a grassroots creative scene are a point of pride. *“The art scene here is alive and kicking, especially with venues run by volunteers.”*

**Green Spaces & Downs** – Parks like Homefield and access to nature matter deeply.

**Walkability & Town Feel** – The town’s manageable size and layout is appreciated. *“Worthing is a relatively small town, most things are within easy walking/public transport distance.”*

**Friendly Community** – Many highlight the town’s openness and safety. *“Friendliness – I feel safe here even at night.”*

## What we can lose in Worthing

**Town Centre Decline** – Too many empty shops and a lack of vibrancy or diversity. *“Empty shops- they should be let out to charities or CICs.”*

**Traffic & Transport Frustration** – Congestion, poor bus services, and unsafe roads. *“The traffic system near the town hall is a nightmare, especially the underpass.”*

**Unaffordable or Poor-Quality Housing** – Rising costs and low design standards. *“Too much focus on luxury flats pushes out affordable housing.”*

**Litter & Pollution** – Water quality and green space maintenance are concerns.

**Anti-social behaviour** – Linked to drugs and alcohol abuse, causing safety concerns

## Ideas to take forward

**Town Centre Regeneration and regenerating the Lido** – More independent businesses, live music, and social spaces. *“Make better use of The Lido.”*

**Better Public Transport** – Frequent, affordable buses and safer bike/walking routes. *“Less cars, more walking, buses and bikes.”*

**Affordable, Well-Designed Housing** – Repurpose empty spaces and build with character.

**Support for Youth & Community** – Creative spaces, mental health support, and local talent hubs. *“Retain skills talent – especially young people.”*

**Green & Blue Recovery** – Cleaner seas, more street trees, and rewilding schemes. *“Bee highways.”*

# Shoreham

Shoreham stands out for its blend of natural beauty, rich heritage and village-like charm. Locals love being close to the river, sea and South Downs, with everything from historic buildings to green spaces like Buckingham Park within walking distance. It's a friendly, tight-knit place with a strong community spirit.

But people are deeply worried about over development, especially tall, dense housing that risks erasing the town's character. Traffic, pollution and poor cycling infrastructure are also major concerns. Residents want planning that respects the town's scale, more care for public spaces, and better ways to move around without a car.





## What we **love** about Shoreham

### **Strong Sense of Community** –

People describe Shoreham as friendly, neighbourly, and proud. *“Community and Shoreham Soc, of course (doing great work)”*

**Access to Nature** – The river, sea, South Downs and allotments provide beauty and wellbeing. *“Beautiful Shoreham with amazing biodiversity.”*

**Heritage & Character** – The old town, church, and traditional architecture give it a distinct identity.

**Walkability & Accessibility** – Easy access to shops, nature and green spaces on foot. *“Access to the outdoors -the accessible path by the river.”*

## What we can **lose** in Shoreham

### **Overdevelopment and Poor Planning Decisions** –

Opposition to high-rise flats, blocks of flats, and poor-quality design. Locals want to see more community-led development. *“High-rise hideous blocks.”*

**Pollution of River & Sea** – Anger over dirty water and lack of protection for natural assets. *“Stop polluting the river, so often it is filthy.”*

**Traffic & Speeding** – Concerns about congestion, dangerous driving and noise from boy racers. *“Boy racers at Old Fort Road (noise and danger).”*

**Rubbish & Declining Cleanliness** – Litter and street cleanliness are worsening.

## **Ideas to take forward**

### **Better Active Travel Infrastructure** –

Safer cycle routes, pedestrian zones, and 20mph limits.

**Greener Spaces & Rewilding** – More trees, wildflower verges and protected habitats. *“Open, green, wildlife friendly spaces. Green/cultural & community spaces & facilities.”*

**Creative Public Realm** – Ideas like a river zip wire, community use of empty buildings, and cultural spaces. *“Use empty council buildings for community projects.”*

**Design with Character** – Low-rise, sustainable housing that fits Shoreham’s identity.

**Youth & Recreation Investment** – Skate parks, pump tracks and more inclusive outdoor facilities. *“Look after young people’s mental health. Doing and being.”*

# Lancing

Lancing is proud of its natural surroundings, from the sea and Downs to Brooklands Park and its tidy seafront. It's known as a friendly, family-oriented place with good schools and strong community ties.

But many feel that the town is under strain. Overdevelopment, healthcare shortages, and traffic congestion are eroding quality of life. Residents want safer streets, better waste and recycling systems, and a high street that reflects the community's identity, with more independent shops and fewer empty or low-quality units. Above all, people want to feel listened to, with decisions made with the community, not just for it.



## What we **love** about Lancing

**Natural Assets** – Brooklands Park, the Downs, and a clean seafront are deeply valued.

**Family-Friendly Feel** – Good schools and safety make it ideal for raising children. *“Never felt unsafe here.”*

**Local Events & Spaces** – Green spaces and hubs like LPC are important gathering points. *“Events on Lancing Green.”*

**Volunteer Support and Community Spirit** – Pride in groups like Adur Voluntary Action and carers’ networks. Lancing is full of helpful, neighbourly people. *“Helpfulness of the community.”*

## What we can **lose** in Lancing

**Anti-Social Behaviour** – Vandalism, noise, and public nuisance are major concerns. Online forums are becoming dominated by threatening comments. *“Damage to parks, vandalism etc.”*

**Neglected Infrastructure** – Poor roads, broken pavements, and limited or neglected recycling.

**Overdevelopment** – Too much building without matching public services.

**Healthcare Gaps** – Hard-to-access GP and dentist appointments. *“Doctor oversubscribed.”*

**Lack of Vibrancy on the High Street** – Too many vape and fast food shops and not enough variety.

## Ideas to **take forward**

**Improved Public Services** – Better bin collection, accessible toilets, and GP provision. *“More recycling and food waste options.”*

**High Street Revitalisation** – More useful shops (greengrocers, banks), fewer vapes and takeaways. *“Would be lovely to see more healthy restaurants and useful local businesses.”*

**Stronger Local Voice** – More decision-making power and inclusive community consultation.

**Green Investment** – Wildflower verges, wind turbines, and better green space maintenance. *“Leave grass verges to grow for the bees. More wildflowers”*

**Safe, Inclusive Transport** – More bus routes, better access for older and disabled residents.

# **Exploring Adur and Worthing**



# I Am From Poems

As part of our in-person engagement work across different neighbourhoods within Adur and Worthing, we used the 'I Am From' exercise to help people reflect on where they come from through the small details that define a place – smells, sights, sounds and feelings. Based on a poem by George Ella Lyon, it's a powerful way to open up conversations about identity and belonging as well as helping participants get creative, open-minded and open-hearted.

Used in neighbourhood workshops, the exercise helped build empathy and understanding, especially where views might differ. It reminded us that place is something we all share – and even with competing priorities, we often find common ground in the everyday details of where we live.

Residents in Fishersgate and Southwick adapted the poem structure to develop ***'I Wish We Could'*** poems that delved into their hopes for the future in a creative way.



**I am from...** the thwack thwack sound of tennis balls hitting rackets and electronic music pumping out from a sound box.

**I am from...** the noisy squawking of seagulls on neighbouring roofs.

**I am from...** watching people on my way into town drinking outside multiple pubs.

*Resident in Worthing*



**I am from...** Old buildings from time gone by, grand facade but faded and comfy inside.

**I am from...** a street full of women, active Whatsapp Community and flint walled front gardens with the smell of vinegar from the fish and chip shop at the end of the street.

**I am from...** too many cats (including mine), a beautiful lovingly tended churchyard by incredible Antony who turns 99 tomorrow!

*Resident in Worthing*



**I am from...** a place where no one locked doors, we'd get a drink or snack from whoever's house or garden we were in. Neighbours or relatives told us off, loved us, and hung out with us.

**I am from...** laughter, sadness, fun, endless skies, endless Summer evenings with the whole community playing cricket, knitting, having a beer (well the dads), mums chatting.

**I am from...** bacon frying, laundry washing, car wax for our pedal cars and cleaning our bikes, strawberries, chestnuts, summer fence creosote, fresh salty air, the beach, winter fires, the smell of beet, potatoes and summer wheat.

*Resident in Lancing*





**I wish we could...**

Hold hands through crisis and calm,  
Find shelter in words and strength in a palm.  
Where support is not scarce,  
And no one's alone,  
Every voice welcomed, every pain known.

**I wish we could...**

Meet in green, open air,  
With picnic rugs, music, and stories to share.  
No walls, no labels, no gates to divide,  
Just sun, grass, laughter — side by side.

**I wish we could...**

Walk down to the shore,  
Learn to fish, to breathe, to explore.  
Let salt wind carry our worries away,  
And nature teach what no book can say.

*Resident in Fishersgate*

# What can we learn here?

Creative works like these bring the heart into decision-making. They reveal shared emotions and values that data alone can miss, helping us find common ground across different views. **In planning, where place is often treated as practical, these stories remind us it's also deeply personal.**

The ***I Am From*** poems across Adur and Worthing neighbourhoods reveal a deep emotional connection to place, **rooted in the everyday**. People describe the comfort of sea air, the rustle of trees, the smell of vinegar from a chip shop. The ordinary moments that make these places feel like home.

But look closely, and there's a **strong shared appreciation for community** – not just in name, but in practice. Many poems evoke a time or feeling when neighbours looked out for each other, children wandered freely, and people connected across generations. This sense of mutual care is echoed in a vision of a place “where every heartbeat adds to the song,” and where “no one locked doors.” **It's clear that residents treasure the small-town feel of times gone by.**

# What can we learn here?

At the same time, the poems express a longing for a more inclusive, connected future. **People wish for spaces that are open – not just physically, but socially.** They imagine green areas where everyone is welcome, places where “every voice is heard,” and events that reflect the whole community. There’s a strong call to break down barriers, between generations, backgrounds, or access to opportunity, and to ensure no one is left out or overlooked. **Slowing down, listening more, and recognising the value of each person emerge as quiet but powerful desires.**

In all, these poems show that while people may come from different corners of Adur and Worthing, they share a **deep love for nature, neighbourliness**, and the everyday details of local life. And more than anything, they long for Adur and Worthing to feel open, kind, and deeply human – where everyone has a place and a voice.

# Limitations



# Limitations of this work

We set out to achieve a People's Vision for Adur and Worthing, but we had to do this work within the constraints of a tightly resourced project and an inflexible timeframe. To meet deadlines set by central government for submission of reorganisation plans, we had to condense our work on visions and priorities between May and July. This means we missed some goals we were aiming for:

1. **We wanted over 1000 people to contribute.** We got 587 people contributing online. The community facilitators extended the conversation to over 350+ more people in their in-person engagements in neighbourhoods. When we add the 27 members of the citizen panel to the elected members who joined for the public workshop, we almost made it. But the conversation could have been even bigger!
2. We were fortunate to have representation of young people on the citizen panel and in the public workshop, but **the community facilitators wanted to do much more with schools.** The neighbourhood conversations were too early for summer fairs and the whole process finished before the school holidays began, hindering youth participation.

# Limitations of this work

3. We were lucky to have a community facilitator well connected in the business community, but **fewer voices from business informed this process than we would have liked.**

4. **We wanted to hear from all the neighbourhoods in Adur and Worthing about hyperlocal priorities as well as area-wide priorities.**

In the end, most people wanted to talk about Adur and Worthing, but we still think more neighbourhood visions and priorities - like the ones we collected for Worthing Central, Shoreham and Lancing - would help the transition to a unitary authority remain alive to the uniqueness of our places.

5. **We hoped to collaborate with artists to do deeper work on the more than human.** We were pleased to have representation at the events who made important interventions like: “nature should guide us” and reminders that we should “be a good ancestor”.

# **What's Next?**

# Next Steps

Thriving Together has revealed how a big conversation about a topic as big as the future of our places can show what people have in common, without losing the uniqueness of diverse lived experiences.

It has helped build public trust in the [Council's plan](#) to be participative, adaptable and resilient, while signposting the communication challenges that make collaboration difficult.



# Next Steps

We propose this report is used in the following three ways:

1. As a starting point for a **meeting in Autumn 2025** between elected members, council officers, residents, young people and organisations about how community and councils work together on priority aims and actions. The focus will be on the co-design of the relational and communications systems that will promote accountability to the people's vision, as Adur and Worthing transitions into a Sussex authority.
2. As the foundation for **community-led action and funding applications**. The neighbourhood pages of this report may go on to inspire other neighbourhoods to work out their futures priorities. When we write down what we collectively agree is important, we take a big step towards the future we wish for.

# How can you help?

The six *actions* prioritised (as high impact, low effort) at the 17 July workshop (see page 22) were all ones that could be shared between the community and the council. With so much insight in this report, we need a place to begin – so let's start here.

How could you get involved? What resources, networks, or skills could you bring to the table? What small step could you take – on your street corner or local high street – that might spark something bigger?

If you have a big (or a small) idea, and want to get in touch, please contact [participation@adur-worthing.gov.uk](mailto:participation@adur-worthing.gov.uk)

# How can you help?

## Enjoying the Outdoors

How can we face climate change with greater resilience?

How can we create more ways for people to get active outdoors?

## Ensuring Good Governance

How can we keep decisions local and accountable?

## Bringing Town Centres to Life

How can we make culture and creativity a reason to visit?

## Investing in Community and Culture

How can we make our shared spaces and resources work harder for everyone?

## Focusing on Young People

How can we provide young people with spaces to keep them busy and active?

# Thank You

It has been an immense privilege to work with so many people across Adur and Worthing. Huge thanks for those involved in terms of their passion for place, creativity, input and ideas.

The focus on the community doing this themselves has been invaluable, and we hope enables communities to do more for themselves in the future.





# Thriving Together

**A Vision for the future  
of Adur and Worthing**

August 2025

**IDEAS**  
ALLIANCE



ADUR & WORTHING  
COUNCILS

THE PLACE  
BUREAU