

WHERE IDEAS LIVE: WHY THE FUTURE OF SUSSEX DEPENDS ON ITS WORKSPACES

ALEX YOUNG is a workplace culture and career development specialist dedicated to creating places people love to work from. As Managing Director at **Projects**, she leads a portfolio of sustainable, high-performing workspaces in Brighton and is spearheading national expansion with a flagship London site.

She is also the founder of Favourite Positions, a fast-growing platform of podcasts, articles and events sparking honest conversations about the future of work. Featured by the BBC, Cosmopolitan and Channel 4, Alex is currently completing her MBA at Imperial College London as a Women's Scholarship recipient.



THE REORGANISATION OF SUSSEX IN 2026 WILL REDRAW THE MAP;

but the region's real heartbeat already lies in a different kind of network: shared workspaces that connect people and ideas. These hubs do more than host desks. They link students with industry, spark collaborations and act as social anchors for entire towns. It's time to treat them as essential infrastructure, not optional extras.

Across the UK, the flexible workspace sector has exploded. Almost **3,800 coworking** and shared offices now operate nationwide, yet regional planning still tends to treat them as a luxury. That underestimates their value, especially here.

In East Sussex, self-employment sits at around 12.5 per cent compared with 9.6 per cent nationally — evidence of a region powered by independent workers.

Meanwhile, Greater Brighton's creative industries employ more than **16,000 people** across 1,500 firms, generating over £1.5 billion in turnover. Much of that success is built on collaboration rather than cubicles.

Sussex already proves what's possible when workspace is treated as more than a building. At PLATF9RM, open lounges blend with private offices and a cultural programme that dissolves the boundary between work and social life. Plus X Innovation on Lewes Road takes a different tack — a seven-storey hub where office space meets prototyping labs and media studios, uniting creative, tech and product ventures.

The Skiff, the county's longest-standing coworking space, champions shared desks and collective energy. WRAP reimagines flexibility by weaving work and family life together through its on-site nursery and community events. And Freedom Works extends this spirit beyond Brighton, from Worthing to Hastings, anchoring local economies with community-driven spaces.

At Projects, a proudly B Corp-certified organisation, our mission is to be the home for better business — spaces designed for people who want to work and connect with purpose.

We're proud to stand alongside a remarkable network of workspace providers serving Sussex, each proving that when you design for collaboration rather than occupation, you create more than offices — you create ecosystems.

Different in scale and style, what unites these spaces is a shared belief that collaboration is Sussex's greatest resource. Together, they help ideas grow faster, **communities feel stronger** and opportunity reach further across the county.

Many already act as civic hubs, opening their doors to charities, local groups and public events that make workplaces part of community life.

If Sussex's next mayor were to treat workspaces as civic infrastructure, the results could be transformative: a network of hubs within easy reach of

every town; funding for affordable workspace in rural and coastal communities; planning rules that embed flexibility into new developments; and stronger university partnerships to turn research and student ideas into real businesses. Sussex's workspaces already show how work, learning and community can coexist.

But beyond the city, many towns still lack these anchors of modern life. Investing in them would give Sussex not just new infrastructure, but a **stronger sense of belonging** — a network that helps people, ideas and places grow together.

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