

Local Economy Policy Development Advisory Group
9 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillors: Jonathan Chowen (Chairman), Matthew Allen,
Ruth Fletcher, Gordon Lindsay and Colin Minto

Apologies: Councillors: Chris Brown, Peter Burgess, Billy Greening, Mike Morgan,
Roger Noel and Jack Saheid

Also Present: Councillor: Martin Boffey

1 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 10 November 2021 were received by the Group.

2 **REC ROOMS PRESENTATION**

Nick McDowell, one of the owners of the REC ROOMS provided an overview of the business and the challenges faced since opening in 2018, including Brexit and the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The upstairs of the venue would continue to host seasonal events and a variety of indoor activities, including a roller rink, for all ages going forward whilst retaining the live entertainment venue downstairs all year round.

3 **ECONOMY OF THE DISTRICT - WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS**

The Director of Place provided an overview of the five key priorities and projects of the Economic Development Team.

The first priority was 'Inward Investment' with the aim of attracting new companies as part of the strategic sites developments and promoting the district as a place to invest in.

The second was 'Enterprise'. The Economic Development team would continue to support local businesses to become more productive and resilient to support long-term economic growth.

The third, 'Skills and Employment', was to develop the skills that would be needed in the future and to find supportive ways of providing skills and employment opportunities to those finding it difficult to find employment.

'Infrastructure' would be vital to the continuing economic growth of the district. There would need to be active support to enable improved access to higher speed broadband and mobile coverage. This priority linked to priorities 1 and 2

in ensuring that the infrastructure improvements needed to deliver the strategic sites be secured.

'Promoting the district offer'. This priority was to develop, strengthen and promote the visitor economy. The team would focus on all elements of the district offer, including built, natural, and cultural assets to provide the best possible experience for all visitors to Horsham.

The Director of Place also provided some key statistics and trends surrounding economy within Horsham District from 2021 to 2022 and the main issues being faced by the Local Economy team.

The Director of Place agreed to circulate written updates on the Horsham Business Initiative and Apprenticeship Fair following the meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.23 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN