

**Local Economy and Parking Policy Development Advisory Group**  
**9 SEPTEMBER 2020**

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Chairman), John Blackall, Roy Cornell, Tony Hogben, Gordon Lindsay, Mike Morgan and Jack Saheid

Apologies: Councillors: Richard Landeryou, John Milne, Colin Minto and Belinda Walters

7 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 24 June 2020 were received by the group.

8 **REOPENING HIGH STREETS SAFELY FUND**

The Head of Economic Development gave an overview of the projects that had been taken forward for RHSSF grants. A new temporary road closure order for Park Place, and extended hours for East Street would be implemented by the end of September.

9 **DISCRETIONARY GRANTS PROGRAMME**

The Head of Economic Development gave an overview of the applications and funding which had been awarded to businesses through the discretionary grants scheme. 159 grants had been allocated with Hospitality, Leisure and Retail being the sectors where most funding was allocated.

10 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Head of Economic Development outlined the department's recent activities & projects:

- Virtual Big Nibble: the presentation provided an overview of the timetable for the first 4 weeks of the event. The virtual event would be an opportunity to pilot a new way of holding events for the council.
- Campaigns: the presentation covered a number of campaigns aiming to encourage more residents to visit the town centres, including 'Tea at 2' and 'Respect, Protect and Enjoy'
- The presentation set out plans for a phased return of the Thursday market, beginning in September.
- There were plans to produce various graphics and displays for empty shop fronts and use some of the spaces for pop-up seasonal shops towards the end of 2020, in consultation with landlords.

- LEAP: the small business grant scheme would be launched in September. This was to support small businesses that had been open for less than 12 months.
- Economic Development would be working with Communications to continue providing positive messaging and up to date social distancing guidance across the district.
- There was a new EU funded programme 'The Business Hot House' run by the University of Chichester to support local businesses.
- Journey to work: over 140 customers had been supported over recent months and 28 people had been supported into work.
- A twice weekly business survey continues. The main assistance outlined by the businesses was in the marketing and promotion of local businesses to increase awareness of residents.
- Recent High street monitoring outcomes were relayed to the group.

Overall, the District centre had fared well through the easing of lockdown when compared to others.

#### 11 **PARKING USAGE UPDATE**

The Head of Parking provided the group with an update on car park usage within the district. Usage of car parks in the town centre had risen steadily since shops reopened on June 15. However, people were staying in town for shorter periods of time. Sales of annual parking discs and seasons tickets were roughly what had been estimated though slightly under last year's numbers. Annual parking discs had their validity extended to June 2021.

#### 12 **PARKING EVENING CHARGE**

The Head of Parking presented proposed changes to evening charges in car parks that were agreed to be introduced in May 20/21. The proposed changes had been put on hold due to Covid-19.

The group discussed when and if the proposed changes should be introduced.

The group were in favour of delaying the changes to ensure the growth of town centre parking can continue, with consideration of the Christmas period being especially important.

#### 13 **UPDATE ON CAPITAL PROJECTS**

The Head of Parking gave an update on the 2020 Capital Projects. The 5 planned Capital Projects had been reviewed and adjusted.

There would be 2 remaining projects going ahead in 2020. The Henfield library capital project had been confirmed and additional spaces in Billingshurst would also continue.

The remaining projects would be reviewed after the pandemic.

14 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PARKING PORTFOLIO**

There were no relevant items on the forward plan.

*The meeting closed at 6.23 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm*

CHAIRMAN