

Local Economy and Parking Policy Development Advisory Group
10 MARCH 2021

Present: Councillors: Paul Clarke (Chairman), Matthew Allen, John Blackall, Roy Cornell, Tony Hogben, Richard Landeryou, Gordon Lindsay, Colin Minto, Mike Morgan, Jack Saheid and Belinda Walters

Also Present: Councillor Frances Haigh

21 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on 4 November were received.

22 **USE OF ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT FOR PROJECTS TO ASSIST ECONOMIC RECOVERY**

The Cabinet Member advised that a Cabinet decision was required at short notice in order to ensure that the remaining Additional Restrictions Grant, which had been awarded in November, was allocated to projects within the required timeframe.

The Director of Corporate Resources explained the background to the grant, which supported local businesses and the local economy. The government had announced that additional funding would be made available to those local authorities that had spent all of the initial grants. The report to Cabinet sought to delegate the allocation of the remaining funding to the Director in consultation with the Cabinet Member, Leader and Chairman of Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The Cabinet Member said the funding would be allocated to projects that would support local businesses in the community, and a number of potential projects had already been identified.

23 **UPDATE ON HENFIELD CAR PARK**

The Group were updated on progress on resurfacing work at Henfield Car Park. Works were two weeks ahead of schedule and the car park would reopen by the end of March. The Local Member said that the contractors had done an excellent job and the project had been well supervised.

24 **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

The Group received a presentation from the Economic Development Team, which included the End of Year Report for 2020, and details of ongoing and forthcoming projects. Inevitably, much of the work focussed on supporting businesses through the pandemic and helping the retail businesses prepare for reopening.

The Group were briefed on a number of projects including:

- Action plan for the effective use of the Reopening High Streets Safely fund;
- Business Training and Support project, provided with Chichester College to deliver virtual training to over 50 businesses so far;
- Buy-local initiatives, in particular the Virtual Horsham portal that encouraged on-line shopping with over 125 local businesses;
- Social media including Horsham TV, which supports about 40 local businesses, with each of five episodes receiving over 5,000 views;
- Journey To Work programme had been active throughout last year, supporting 62 young people, 25 of whom now have paid work;
- LEAP small business and apprenticeship grants for new businesses were currently being allocated, with applications for further grants invited from the end of March.

The Cabinet Member sought the opinion of the Group on initiatives and projects that could support businesses as we recover from the pandemic, including increasing the footfall in the Town Centre.

The Group made a range of comments and suggestions, which were noted by officers. Members discussed incentives to encourage people back to the high street, and to help develop or diversify businesses. They discussed: one-off events, both in the town and on-line; use of on-line advertising and selling; ways to enhance the look and feel of public spaces; and different potential uses for town centre premises. It was noted that Horsham's BID (Business Improvement District) status would make it easier for businesses to work together.

The Cabinet Member thanked the Economic Develop Team for their work over the last challenging year. He also thanked Members for their input, which would help inform policies supporting the local economy going forward.

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FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND PARKING PORTFOLIO

The Forward Plan extract was noted.

The meeting closed at 7.05 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN