

Local Economy Policy Development Advisory Group
10 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors: Chris Brown (Chairman), John Blackall, Jonathan Chowen, Billy Greening, Gordon Lindsay, Mike Morgan and Belinda Walters

Apologies: Councillors: Matthew Allen, Colin Minto and Jack Saheid

Also Present: Councillor Ruth Fletcher

The Cabinet Member thanked Metricell for their hospitality and for giving him the opportunity to hold the meeting in their offices.

11 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 8 September were received.

12 **UPDATE ON POP-UP HORSHAM**

The Head of Economic Development briefed the group on the Pop-Up Horsham project, which had been launched on 2 November. This was a pilot scheme funded by the government's Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) that gave new, small retail businesses an opportunity to sell their products in a pop-up store in West Street.

Pop-Up Horsham appeared to be a good model and similar schemes could be run at other venues in the district in the future. As well as offering retail opportunities for small businesses, the scheme will be offering workshops and mentoring programmes for business owners.

13 **OTHER ARG OR WBF INITIATIVES**

The Head of Economic Development outlined a number of projects that were being funded by the government grants offered to help the economy recover after the impact of Covid 19 (ARG and Welcome Back Fund). Projects discussed included the production of an ice rink and show at the REC Rooms, off Albion Way.

Grants had been used to increase the funding available through the LEAP programme of small business grants, and double the amount of funding for Shop Improvement Grants. There was also a series of workshops to support entrepreneurs develop and execute strategies.

14 **POTENTIAL ARG PROJECTS**

The Head of Economic Development briefed the group on a number of projects that were at an early stage of development. These included projects that would:

help bring empty premises back into use; encourage and facilitate the use of local produce by the hospitality sector; and offer skills development to those in the hospitality sector.

The group were also given details of recent monitoring of economic activity in the district, including how Horsham town centre and high streets in the towns and larger villages in the district were performing since lockdown.

The Head of Economic Development agreed to send Members details of the number of vacant premises in the district.

It was agreed that a briefing on Swan Walk and an update on the BID process would be brought to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.24 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN