

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	5 November 2018
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group Terms of Reference

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the revised Terms of Reference for the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group and the proposed timescales as detailed within the report, be approved.

Head of Service: Ben Hook
Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Hollidge

Introduction

1. The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group (BTCSG) was initially established in 2010, a non-incorporated partnership formed of Members and officers. One of the main roles of the BTCSG was to produce a strategy for the Town Centre.
2. The Bexhill Town Centre Strategy was published in 2013 after a period of consultation with key stakeholders within the town. The BTCSG continued to meet to discuss progress against the objectives within the Strategy.
3. The Terms of Reference (ToR) were later refreshed in April 2017 to extend the membership of the BTCSG to include key private sector stakeholders within the town including; De La Warr Pavilion, Locate East Sussex, Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism and the Coastal Community Team, with the aim of refreshing the purpose and momentum of the BTCSG in achieving the ambitious objectives set out in the Bexhill Town Centre Strategy 2013.
4. The Bexhill Town Centre Strategy is now five years on and much has changed in terms of the external environment and the projects and objectives cited within the Strategy. Members of the current BTCSG feel that it is an opportune time to reflect upon the Strategy, review what has been achieved so far, and consider a new strategic approach to the BTCSG moving forward.

Revised Terms of Reference

5. At its last meeting on the 15 October 2018, the BTCSG approved a revised ToR and timescale for delivery.
6. The revised ToR, attached at Appendix 1, propose a new Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan to enable the BTCSG to take a more strategic approach to defining the shared vision for the Town Centre.
7. To develop this shared vision it is proposed to hold a series of focused workshops with key stakeholders, both from within the current BTCSG membership and other additional partners. The workshops will direct the

production of a new Town Centre Strategy with a final workshop being held with all partners to agree a draft Town Centre Strategy.

8. The process will also include the production of a Communications and Engagement Plan and a clear approach to funding; both in terms of identifying opportunities for funding from a range of sources and preparing bids to commissioning necessary studies or expertise to lever in investment.

Timescales

9. The proposed timescales outlined in the table below were supported by the Steering Group.

ACTION	BY WHO	WHEN
Agreement of ToR	Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group	October 2018
Approval of refreshed ToR	Cabinet	November 2018
Workshops	RDC officers and key stakeholder	January 2019 – March/ April 2019
Drafting refreshed Bexhill Town Centre Strategy	RDC officers / consultants	April / May – August 2019
Agreement of refreshed strategy	Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group	September / October 2019
Recommendation of Strategy to Council	Cabinet	October / November 2019
Approval of Strategy	Full Council	December 2019

Conclusion

10. Members are asked to approve the revised ToR for the BTCSG as outlined in Appendix 1 and agree the timescales as proposed in the above table.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

There is a risk that the BTCSG are unable to agree a shared vision for the future of the Town Centre. This is mitigated by providing evidence throughout the development of the Strategy, justifying the decisions taken and the reasoning behind the shared vision.

There is also a risk that following the development of the new strategy, funding is not available for delivery of projects. A funding strategy is to be developed to ensure that funding opportunities are identified as early as possible. The development of a coherent and focused strategy will also improve the likelihood of attracting funding.

BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP

Terms of Reference

1. Purpose

The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group (BTCSG) is responsible for the development and delivery of a shared vision and action plan for the future of the Town Centre.

Working with a wide variety of stakeholders the BTCSG, led by Rother District Council (RDC), will create a new Town Centre Strategy and Action Plan that will clearly define and articulate the vision for the future sustainable economy of the area. The BTCSG will also set out a proposed funding approach and will be responsible for initiating engagement with key partners to secure funding for the delivery of the Strategy's aims and objectives.

2. Objectives

- 1) Develop a shared vision for the future of the Town Centre with consideration for four key areas:
 - a. The future sustainable economy of the Town Centre.
 - b. Movement and access between key economic assets.
 - c. Improving the residential offer in the Town Centre.
 - d. Urban design and public realm.
- 2) Evaluate progress made against previous Town Centre regeneration initiatives, and to deliver a renewed Town Centre Strategy fit for purpose in the current economic climate and commercial context, including an approach to delivery, and a clear Communication and Engagement Plan.
- 3) Engage and work with partners including; East Sussex County Council (ESCC), Southern Rail, Network Rail, The South East Local Enterprise Partnership, Transport for the South East, Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and other local groups to identify a programme of projects in keeping with the vision and Strategy.
- 4) Set out an approach to funding and undertake action:
 - a. To commission any necessary studies or specialist expertise required to support the leveraging in of investment and the development of projects.
 - b. Identify opportunities for funding from a range of national, regional, and local funding sources and prepare bids to these in order to deliver the programme.
 - c. Where appropriate, through the development of business cases to promote inward private investment into the Town Centre.

3. Scope

For the purposes of this initiative, Bexhill Town Centre is defined as the area encompassed on the map in Appendix A.

The Steering Group may also consider issues relating to areas adjacent to the defined area where appropriate and where they are likely to have a significant bearing on the Town Centre, such as the seafront and cultural quarter and where defined by planning policy.

The work of the BTCSG will complement Policy BX2 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014) and other relevant policy documents.

4. Membership and Structure

The BTCSG will be an unincorporated partnership. The BTCSG will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Bexhill Town Centre. By invitation, the core membership of the partnership will be formed of the following:

- Chairman: Portfolio Holder for Bexhill Town Centre
- Leader of RDC (Cllr Maynard)
- RDC Members for Bexhill Central Ward – (Cllr Mrs Hughes, Cllr Azad)
- Chairman of RDC Planning Committee (Cllr Kentfield)
- Two business representatives to be nominated by the Chairman
- Inward Investment – Locate East Sussex
- ESCC Portfolio Holder for Transport and the Environment
- One representative from Bexhill Town Team / Coastal Community Team
- CEO of the De La Warr Pavilion

Additional members may be invited by the Chairman to join the BTCSG for specific workshops/meetings or on a more permanent basis as co-opted members.

Quorum: Four (provided that at least one of the four present is not representing RDC).

The term of office for the appointed RDC Members will be coterminous with the election cycle of the Council.

The Leader of the Council is authorised to fill any RDC vacancy arising mid-term, following necessary consultation, without referral to Cabinet.

Support to the BTCSG will be provided by the Steering Group Co-ordinator, with other officers attending as necessary.

5. Meetings

The BTCSG will meet regularly, the frequency, time and venue to be decided by the Members. The Steering Group Co-ordinator will oversee administration and the agenda.

Meetings will not be open to the general public.

Operate in a collaborative, open and effective way that views each member as an equal partner and values the contribution of partner organisations. Conduct business in a climate that seeks to find effective and realistic solutions through consensus.

Throughout the Strategy development period the BTCSG will hold a series of workshops, each focused on an area of consideration as outlined in 2.1 above. A final workshop will be held to agree the final version of the Strategy and agree next actions.

Each workshop will take account of equality and diversity, promote inclusion and take responsibility for serving the best interests of Bexhill residents, visitors and businesses.

6. Accountability and Transparency

The BTCSG will be accountable to RDC's Cabinet.

Where required, RDC will act as the accountable body in respect of external funding for the delivery of projects. The BTCSG will not directly employ any staff or incur any direct staffing and associated costs. Members will not charge for their time and services arising from the proceedings of the BTCSG.

The work of the BTCSG will be publicised by the Steering Group Co-ordinator, principally through RDC's website. However, at times there may be commercial sensitivities surrounding some projects that will be treated as confidential by all Members, unless informed otherwise.

A Register of Interests will be maintained by the Steering Group Co-ordinator for all members of the BTCSG.

7. Communication and Press Protocol

The BTCSG will develop a Communications Plan to engage with the local community, businesses, and stakeholder groups. All enquiries should be referred to the Steering Group Co-ordinator who will ensure that a response is given in accordance with the relevant protocol.