

## Rother District Council

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| Report to     | - | Cabinet                   |
| Date          | - | 29 July 2019              |
| Report of the | - | Executive Director        |
| Subject       | - | Festive Lights in Bexhill |

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**Recommendation:** It be **RESOLVED:** That Members' instructions are sought on the provision of festive lights to Bexhill Town Centre.

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**Head of Service: Ben Hook**

**Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Bayliss**

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1. At its last meeting on 1 July, Cabinet resolved to terminate the funding agreement that had previously been in place with Shining Lights Limited for the delivery of festive lights in Bexhill Town Centre due to problems encountered in the 2018 display; and to enter into an agreement with Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism (BCCT), who had expressed their interest in stepping in and taking on this role (Minute CB19/17 refers).
2. However, since that resolution BCCT has now advised the Council that they are no longer in a position to pursue this for this year, mainly due to changes in their executive membership and consequent lack of capacity and time.
3. The Council has a budget of £13,500 available to work with a third party organisation willing and capable of overseeing delivery of a scheme. As previously stated, the Council does not have capacity in-house to oversee the implementation of the festive lights in Bexhill. In Rye, the Chamber of Commerce provide the lights; in Battle, the Town Council provide the lights and the local centres in Bexhill are wholly undertaken by local traders; the Council's support is financial only.
4. In the absence of any such organisation coming forward in the near future, it will be too late to put alternative arrangements in place. An alternative for this year is either:
  - a. return the budget as a saving in this financial year;
  - b. redirect the budget into the event programme specifically for Bexhill;  
or
  - c. advertise for other constituted interested parties to submit an interest in providing festive lights, for Bexhill, by the end of August.
5. Members' instructions are sought as to how they wish to proceed.

Dr Anthony Leonard  
Executive Director

## **Risk Assessment Statement**

The risk of no festive lights in Bexhill could have a detrimental effect on the shopping experience at this festive time of the year. The allocation of officer time to implement a festive lighting scheme would divert staff resource away from the delivery of other activities and projects, which could have a detrimental impact on delivery of other Council priorities.