

## Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	8 June 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Directors
Subject	-	Economic Recovery Steering Group Terms of Reference

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### **Recommendation:** It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) a cross-party Economic Recovery Steering Group made up of the Leader of the Council plus seven Members, as per the Terms of Reference be established;
  - 2) the Terms of Reference attached at Appendix 1 be agreed; and
  - 3) the seven Members to sit on the Economic Recovery Steering Group be confirmed.
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**Head of Service: Ben Hook**

**Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Bayliss**

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### **Overview**

1. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the national economy. The UK Office for Budget Responsibility analysis is showing a 35% fall in real gross domestic product in the second quarter and an unemployment spike of up to 10%. The effects of this crisis will be felt most keenly in those areas that rely heavily on those sectors disproportionately affected by the crisis, such as retail, tourism and business services.
2. The Council itself has not been immune to the crisis and this is addressed elsewhere on this agenda. This report looks at the role of the Council in supporting the external economic recovery.
3. In order to respond to this crisis, the Council needs a clear and consistent economic recovery strategy to provide reassurance and confidence to local business about the actions we will undertake as Government restrictions are eased, taking into account the possibility of further periods of lockdown.
4. The Council also recognises that economic recovery will depend on the actions of other agencies and partners such as East Sussex County Council (ESCC) in developing the East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan and where possible ensuring that it reflects the needs of the District. Through the development of the Rother Economic Recovery Plan we need to ensure that there is alignment, where appropriate, between the two plans and the direction provided by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) and Government.
5. The role of Rother's Economic Recovery Steering Group (ERSG) will be to consider the impact of the crisis on the local economy and agree a recovery strategy and action plan? to be recommended to Cabinet and Council. The

action plan needs to articulate the activities that the Council is able to undertake within our existing resources and powers and how we can support partners, businesses and third sector organisations recover.

6. This strategy will need to consider:
  - a. the impact of Covid-19 on the local economy. Business survival in the short term and medium term recovery;
  - b. to identify new opportunities that may have arisen through the crisis;
  - c. to identify what actions should be taken by the Council and the resource requirements and to deliver the Council's 'asks' to ESCC and SELEP; and
  - d. to work with partners through networks to deliver the plan objectives.

### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

7. This strategy will impact on all areas of the district economy and needs the full support of all Members. Therefore, the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the ERSG, at Appendix 1 to the report, seek to propose a political and geographical balance to ensure all views are considered in the Council's approach to the rebuilding of the economy.
8. It is recommended that the ToR to establish the ERGS be agreed and Members appointed to those places.

Dr Anthony Leonard  
Executive Director

Malcolm Johnston  
Executive Director

### **Risk Assessment Statement**

Without a clear strategy for economic recovery the Council will be at a disadvantage in funding opportunities. It will also be harder to gain support in our asks of local, regional, and national agencies or infrastructure providers.

## ECONOMIC RECOVERY STEERING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 1. Purpose

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused disruption to all areas of the Council work and to the communities it serves. Following a period of lock down, the District has changed peoples' work arrangements and habits, changed businesses and community's behaviours, and the way of life altered for many residents, commuters and visitors.

The full impact of the national and international response to the pandemic is not yet known or felt. The purpose of the Economic Recovering Steering Group (ERSG) is to use the latest information and guidance to ascertain how this crisis will affect the economy of the District, then develop a strategy and action plan that will be the road map to a longer term recovery.

The ERSG will encompass the whole District ensuring no communities are excluded. There will be notable differences in need between the villages and towns and we need to develop plans that accommodate all.

The Rother Economic Recovery Plan (RERP) cannot be conceived in isolation and the East Sussex Economic Recovery Plan will be an important part of the process as will the direction coming down through the Government and South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP).

### 2. Objectives

- 1) To look at recovery in three stages:
  - a. Impact.
  - b. Survival; that is the next 12-18 months.
  - c. Recovery.
- 2) To identify new opportunities that have opened up during the pandemic that can lead to new, desirable ways of doing business.
- 3) To recommend a RERP that articulates:
  - a. Work that we are already doing that should be continued or expanded.
  - b. Further direct actions that Rother District Council (RDC) can and will take to support medium term survival and longer-term recovery.
  - c. RDC's 'asks' to East Sussex County Council, to the SELEP and to Government.
- 4) To recommend an action plan that officers will work to effectively, establishing necessary partnerships and networks to achieve the set objectives.

### 3. Membership and Structure

The ERSG will be a small working group designed to manage change and move recovery forward. The ERSG will be chaired by the Leader of the Council,

supported by a further seven Council Members from around the District made up of:

- 2 Liberal Democrat Members
- 2 Independent Members
- 2 Conservative Members
- 1 Labour Member (portfolio holder for Regeneration & Bexhill Affairs [Business & Voluntary Liaison])

Member make-up should ensure representation from both towns and rural areas in the District having a geographical overview rather than a sector specific focus.

Additional Members, partners and businesses may be invited by the Chair to join the ERSG for specific meetings.

The quorum for meetings will be four.

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

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

Support to the ERSG will be provided by the Regeneration and Tourism Officer. Meetings will not be open to the public, however minutes will be available on request.

#### 4. **Meetings**

Meetings will be held as and when felt necessary by the ERSG in line with the activities being undertaken.

#### 5. **Accountability and Transparency**

The ERSG is appointed by and accountable to RDC's Cabinet, to whom it will make recommendations.

#### 6. **Communication and Press Protocol**

A communications plan will need to be agreed by the ERSG.