

**Rother District Economic Recovery Action Plan
Priority areas**

General:

- Though we have a specific Ambition focusing on low carbon and energy efficiency we will aim to consider impact to the environment throughout.
- We anticipate that people’s mental health is considered in all aspects of project development and delivery.
- We would expect at all times to follow procurement processes and enter into dialogue with local suppliers wherever possible.

The order given for the Ambitions below reflects that of the East Sussex Recovery Plan: East Sussex Rest.

AMBITION 1: Support businesses to recover, grow and ensure increased investment in the local economy

East Sussex Reset: Thinking local, acting local

Objectives:

- Create and safeguard local jobs
- Support local businesses to adapt, recover and grow
- Work to increase local public and private sector spend within the District.

Capitalise on inward investment potential created by the COVID-19 crisis

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Be ready for a second / further waves of COVID-19 and possible future local lockdowns.	Much of the lockdown infrastructure has now been put in place and can be picked up again should further waves occur. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of local infection rates. • Communications with Director of Health on local lockdown protocol. • Engage directly with businesses. • Be clear with any further public messaging via communications team. • Work with Environmental Health on guidance and possible additional prevention support. 	Continuous from now.	Speedy decisions to ensure public safety.	2 x Covid information officers paid for through the Reopening the High Streets Safely funding worked with businesses to ensure they were compliant with Covid restrictions and guidelines. We continue to employ 1 Covid officer with the Welcome Back Funding. During lockdown the officers also worked with specific sectors: nursery and preschools / garden centres / churches / car washing to help through some of the more grey areas. Cabinet (6 th Sept 21) agreed Additional Restrictions Grant of

				£554,531 to be administered through Community Grants Panel.
Help promote training from external providers.	Direct information through the RDC website and social media platforms. Brief newly appointed communication officers to supply up to date information to local businesses.	Started and will be ongoing.	Local businesses accessing recovery support.	Let's Do Business have run a series of social media online workshops. Firstly, funded through CHART which limited engagement to Bexhill Central and Sidley but now with Welcome Back these have opened up to the whole of Rother District.
Push for increased capacity at the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	Work with other Districts and Boroughs to support additional funding for Growth Hub expansion. Signpost more local businesses to Growth Hub for bespoke advice. Be clear on Brexit in readiness for January 2021.	Already flagged as an issue and additional staff employed.	More capacity to support businesses.	Brexit Officer was employed for changes from 1 st January 2021 as difficulties still remained around a lack of detail of the changes that came into play on the 1 st Jan. Env Health worked directly with Rye Fisheries to ensure supply chains were unbroken and are continuing to do this placing additional ongoing demands on Env Health.
Support businesses to reopen and trade whilst conforming to government guidelines on social distancing and safety measures.	Employ two communications officers (six month contracts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor business feedback • Survey broadband speeds 	Started 1 st October until 19 th July.	Businesses are confident in their approach.	Feedback from the Bexhill Christmas Shop Local campaign Appendix 2 identified a need for driving traffic online which resulted in the online training delivered by Let's Do Business (below). RDC ran 2 customer confidence surveys (Nov 2020 and June 2021) -second survey showed a small increase in confidence and a small decrease in concern when visiting the high street. Points to note: 57% of respondents had increased how much they shop online. There was a 23% increase

				from 2020 on those returning for leisure and social purposes. Social media campaign to support coming out of lockdown on 19 th July.
Work with Locate East Sussex to match premises to businesses relocating to Rother.	Propose to sponsors board research project to identify vacant buildings. Work with Locate to start discussion with leisure operators.		Maximise opportunity for inward investment.	Monthly reports received from Locate throughout Covid tracking business movement. New Director of Locate East Sussex to revise focus areas – specifically North East Bexhill. The demand for larger industrial units is growing. Marketing team at Locate working with RDC and Bexhill College on the Beeching Road Studios project.
Promote the ‘Better Business for All’ Toolkit on the Sussex Chambers of Commerce website	Toolkit adapted for local use - led by BES.	Continual promotion and adaptation.		Done

AMBITION 2: Retain our skills infrastructure, support employment, build workforce resilience

East Sussex Reset: Building skills, creating jobs

Objectives:

- Expand our local skills base to increase employment opportunity
- Support young people into training and work
- Increase digital inclusion and digital skills

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Future proofing with digital skills development.	Work with businesses who wish to develop or enhance their online presence.	Started and will continue	Digital awareness and increased skills.	As per training update above. Most requests from business for support was around growing business on line effectively. An

	Work with James Wilkinson Digital Skills Partnership Co-ordinator to see what can be offered in Rother.		Retail moving online.	<p>example of this done well is seen in The KiteSurf Centre case study Appendix 3. RDC continues to offer training in this area through Let's Do Business.</p> <p>RDC has also signposted to external training providers through Social Media posts and emails to Town / Parish Councils and Chambers.</p>
Work with LEP sub groups to develop sector skills funding binds.	<p>Cultural bid being developed around high streets.</p> <p>Be mindful of Shared Prosperity Fund.</p>	<p>October deadline on SSF round 2</p> <p>Poss January announcement</p>	Maximise grant funding into the District.	<p>LEP funded funds: £2m Skills Covid Recovery Fund / £2.4m Covid Business Skills Fund RDC has signposted these to businesses</p> <p>£17m Levelling Up Fund bid submitted June 2021 for dlwp capital project, - awaiting result. Cultural Development Fund bid EOI submitted July 2021 – not invited to next stage.UK Community Renewal Fund (precursor to Shared Prosperity) – administered by ESCC, 6 projects with Rother element passed for funding with total UKCRF ask of £2.5m.</p>
Provision of affordable childcare	RDC supporting the provision of affordable childcare across the District to ensure parity of access to work.	To be picked up in the BTSSG meeting as a starting point	Equitable increase in employment by gender.	RDC has facilitated the reinstatement of nursery provision at Sidley Children's Centre by taking a sublease from ESCC.
Opportunities for young people.	Work with Skills East Sussex and intermediary organisations: Sussex Chambers / Artswork, using	October start applications		Local business and organisations using the Kickstarter programme including Optivo / The Pelham /

	<p>the Kickstart scheme to develop six month job placements for young people. Encourage local businesses to get involved. Encourage local young people to apply.</p> <p>Encourage creative pathways through partnerships established in the Beeching Road studios.</p>	Workspace from Spring 2021	Clear career pathways in creative industries.	<p>local schools. MP endorsement of scheme Sept 2020.</p> <p>Creative pathways bid to Arts Council successful (£50k) able to subsidise 6 young graduate placements when Beeching Road Studios open.</p>
Local Skills and Employment Plans (LSEP) alongside construction projects.	<p>Implement RDC planning policy changes that introduce a standardised requirement for Section 106 to support skills and employment plans. Encourage pathways into construction with on the job training. Increase number of CSCS (construction skills certification scheme) cards. Increase number of work placements and apprenticeships offered. Work with our most local communities first.</p>	Currently working with RDC Planning Policy on inclusion in next Local Plan.	<p>Standardised method for S106 for employment and skills.</p> <p>Local construction opportunities improved through local development.</p>	<p>Local Skills & Employment Plan (LSEP) in delivery: Bovis/Vistry at Worsham Farm Rosewood Park, Little Common</p> <p>LSEP Confirmed: Blackfriars, Battle Bexhill High School site Former Thomas Peacock school, Rye</p>

AMBITION 3: Re-start the leisure, hospitality, tourism, retail and cultural economy to get people back into work

East Sussex Reset: Fast-forwarding business

Objectives:

- Support jobs in these sectors
- Help freelancers to access advice, funding and guidance
- Maintain the status of the District as a visitor attraction through safe and sustainable tourism
- Sector skills development

Be mindful of local community health and wellbeing as key to growth and prosperity

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Encourage and promote use of the kite mark: We're Good to Go to show businesses are COVID compliant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.visit1066country.com/visitor-information/were-good-to-go • RDC social media 	<p>1-2 months</p> <p>Aug-March</p>	Businesses using kitemark as standard at	21/07/2020 = 59 signed up

<p>Work with the De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP) to re-promote Bexhill as a visitor destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DLWP for safe reopening of public events with consideration for staff and public. • Ensure DLWP avoids further lock-down by closely managing the amount of activity offered. 		<p>Staff brought off furlough. Some small amount of risk assessed activity. Building up to events re-starting in March 2021.</p>	<p>Nov 2020: light show to thank the NHS – Social reach 10,000. May 2021: England's Creative Coast, £1.3m cultural tourism project to increase coastal tourists by 3%. Dlwpl one of 7 venues involved.</p> <p>Summer 2021: Sea Art campaign with Dlwpl and Towner Gallery</p>
<p>Event strategy paper from Overview and Scrutiny Committee to November Cabinet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolve events budget to towns and roll over unallocated funds from 2020. • Towns (Rye & Bexhill) to programme own events in 2021. 	<p>November Cabinet Implement by spring 2021 onwards</p>	<p>Events budget devolved to Rye & Bexhill (Battle already devolved)</p>	<p>Done</p>
<p>Christmas Campaign to encourage people to shop in local high streets</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If viable in line with Government social distancing measures - work with 18 Hours for a 'Streets of' feel using the 2019/20 events pot. • Work with Town Councils to animate high streets for Christmas. • Website to direct traffic. • Christmas markets (local suppliers). 	<p>2-3 months</p>	<p>Officer lead in partnership with 18 Hours and town/parish councils.</p>	<p>Cllr led 'Shop Local' campaign Christmas 2020, posters and social media. Different levels of success in each town.</p> <p>Many events not able to happen Christmas 2020 due to Tier 4 restrictions.</p> <p>Autumn / Winter 2021 events supported through Welcome Back Fund: Rye Jazz / Rye Town App/ Bexhill Winter Festival</p>
<p>Enhancing the 1066Walk</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the project as detailed and agreed in the EAFRD funding application. 	<p>By summer 2021</p>	<p>Renewed attention on the 1066 walk.</p>	<p>Launch events Rye / Battle / Pevensey 17th Sept 2021 - 100 pieces of new infrastructure: way markers / signages / benches / sculptures: 12 left to install. National publicity being generated for the project.</p> <p>https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/best-uk-travel-staycation-2021-b1778681.html</p>

				Try a new type of glamping and soak up the rich history of the Sussex countryside (thescottishsun.co.uk)
Pudding and Pathways Marketing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by 18 Hours event company this project supports the RDC led 1066 pathways project by marketing businesses along the route. Discussion with restaurants and eateries along the route. Ensure all participating businesses support the 'Were Good to Go' kitemark. 	Spring 2021	Direct support to local business on 1066walk.	A series of eateries along the 1066 Walk route have embraced this project with themed 1066 Puddings, we hope this grows led by them, with full 1066 Country support and would hope we can help support a long term vision for this new festival, supporting rural business economy and tourism.
Support events spring / summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call out to promoters early 2021 – work with neighbourhood services to manage expectations with regards use of RDC land. Cabinet approval for Section 106 funds to support railways station poster campaign. 	January 2021	Events budget	<p>Events started again from 19th July onwards with Streets of Battle and Bexhill.</p> <p>On line programme of support for event programmers delivered by 18 Hours April 2021 – Feb 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Concept Development Covid Safe Events Perfect Programming Budget, Finance & Fundraising Marketing & Audience Dev Diversity & Integration Events, Environment & Sustainability Monitoring & Evaluation
Re-start of live performances / cinemas / outdoor markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support events with licences as necessary and use of RDC spaces. 		Promote the area with live events	<p>See above re events programme and budget support.</p> <p>Use of RDC land to support the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bexhill 100 Static Car Show Bexhill Regatta

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bowls Tournament • Made in Bexhill Summer Fair • Little Lily Harley • Bexhill Rotary Club Scrapheap Challenge • Shaw's Fair, Rye • Bexhill 100
Review of tourism businesses at the end of the summer season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with 1066 Country on a members survey to understand where tourism businesses find themselves at the end of the season. 	November 2020	Understand how businesses are likely to fare over winter.	1066 Country Covid related surveys of members. 1066 Country Covid Recovery Plan.
Promote Julie's Bicycle accreditation to creative businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification scheme, Creative Green, is the recognised benchmark for sustainability achievement within the creative industries. 		Ensure environmental impact is considered in adaptation strategies.	
AMBITION 4: Adapt and improve places				
East Sussex Reset: Better places, fuller lives				
Objectives:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support high street changes and adaptation • Create safe social spaces • Maintain strong community led change working with community leaders and the voluntary sector 				
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Monitor the impact of the temporary road changes made by ESCC under the Emergency Active Transport Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall counts • Business interviews • Local surveys 	Six months	Have a clear understanding to the impact of the scheme	ESCC yet to evaluate.
Bexhill Town Centre strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Resident Representatives. • Bexhill Town Centre SG to relook at consultant brief and appoint consultant to undertake work. 	Interviews September 1 SG meeting September 29	Resident voice on the SG Consider changes in	Resident representatives now appointed to BTCSG. Cabinet agreed remaining Section 106 funds to be allocated to projects by the Town Centre SG,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the learning from this piece of work with other Town Centres. 		High Street post COVID.	<p>supporting refurbishment of Devonshire Sq toilets / railway footbridge mural project.</p> <p>With the formation of Bexhill Town Council, it is proposed that the Town Council oversee the future of the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group - discussions are underway.</p>
Reopening the High Streets Safely (RHSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shop local banners for Bexhill / Film and social media campaign in Rye / Banners and bags for Battle. Employment of 2 x communications officers. Monitor impact on high streets through footfall. 	Waiting on grant Start 1 October	Towns highlight they are open for business message. Bespoke guidance for businesses across Rother.	RHSS funding was followed by Welcome Back funding which has been allocated in the following way: 1x Covid Information Officer retained / Work on road options at Camber Sands during peak season / additional bins and collection across the summer / support for off season events to drive footfall / training for businesses.
Push for investment in public realm to improve town centre environments	Keep aware of funding streams as they become available and make bids as and when appropriate.	Ongoing	Grant funding investment into Rother.	<p>Levelling Up application for dlwp includes public realm work around the building.</p> <p>ESCC planned improvements to London Road Corridor out to consultation key stakeholders summer 2021 and public autumn 2021.</p>
Work with communities to maximise the benefits of rural areas of Rother.	Work with Environment Officer to assess the viability of improving places' aesthetics through greening and rewilding, with associated wellbeing and health benefits as well as benefits for the wildlife.	Spring 2021		1066 Country Walk development.

AMBITION 5: Expand low carbon transport and energy infrastructure

East Sussex Reset: Cleaner energy, greener transport				
Objectives:				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware in all projects of the RDC carbon neutral target by 2030 Encourage clean methods of transport				
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Local Growth Fund (LGF) walking and cycling infrastructure packages in growth corridor areas.	Work with ESCC's 2020/21 and emerging 2021/22 capital programme for local transport improvements, supporting design and delivery of LGF funded walking and cycling packages for Bexhill.	12 months+		
Match economic goals with environment objectives already specified in the RDC environment strategy.	RDC Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (currently in draft) https://www.rother.gov.uk/consultations/draft-environment-strategy/		Aligning this action plan and subsequent regeneration strategies with the RDC Environment Strategy.	Strategy adopted September 2020; awaiting subsequent action plan
Reduce unnecessary commuting.	Supporting people to work at home bring life back into local village communities and reducing carbon emissions.		People supported to work from home.	It is likely that Covid-19 will have a lasting impact on commuting patterns due to the increase in home working.
Grow public transport network.	Lobby for continued, improved public transport service.		Public transport as a viable option across Rother.	
Local Plan	Work with officers to highlight areas where carbon neutral areas of economic growth could feed into the Local Plan.		All future growth is considered for its environmental impact.	
AMBITION 6: Capitalise on digital connectivity				
East Sussex Reset: The future is digital				
Objectives:				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Embrace the new digital landscape and use it to best advantage Ensure our communities; businesses and residents, are digitally skilled Work for digital access to all areas of the District 				
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	
Support push for 100% ultrafast broadband cover for the area	<p>Promote the government Gigabit voucher scheme (rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small SME to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections for those who meet the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing broadband speeds are less than 100Mbps A gigabit capable network isn't likely to be built to that area commercially in the near future There is no government-funded contract planned or in place to improve the network already 	Scheme runs until end March 2021 – then being relaunched.	Communities encouraged to collaborate and apply to the scheme.	The Scheme has been promoted through Parish councils to encourage sign up. Sign up in Robertsbridge and Sedlescombe. Cllr case study of Russett Farm application to the scheme attached Appendix 4 . Case study circulated to business through Locate East Sussex, internal comms team.
Support push for 5G rollout across the District	With 5G now available in Brighton and Eastbourne we will continue to lobby for roll out in Bexhill. Look for government schemes to be involved with 5G opportunities.		5G roll out in Rother	