

# ARUN DISTRICT COUNCIL

## REPORT TO THE COVID-19 RECOVERY WORKING PARTY ON 8 SEPTEMBER 2020

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	The Council's economic recovery from Covid-19
-----------------	---

<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Nigel Lynn – Chief Executive Officer
<b>DATE:</b>	20 August 2020
<b>EXTN:</b>	01903 737600

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Following the establishment of this Working Party by Cabinet on 22 June 2020, this report includes the various points raised at the meeting of 23 July 2020 for approaching the review to help tackle the Council's recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Working Party recommends approval by Cabinet to the following:

#### Theme 1: Business Communities, Sector and Innovation

- 1(i) That a reliable database of skills shortages is compiled so that the District can effectively play its part in recovering and continuing the economic wellbeing of business and residents in the future. The Arun Business Partnership should be involved in this process. (*items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 in Appendix A*).
- 1(ii) That a further study is initiated into the convergence of the results of the survey of skills shortages with the extra Government funding for "Skills Academies." (*items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 in Appendix A*).

#### Theme 2: Labour Markets, Unemployment and Skills

- 2(i) That the "Climate Change and Sustainability Manager" (when appointed) should fully engage with local enterprises in the drive for improved "green" insulation and heating for homes, business premises and public buildings (*General Comments section in Appendix A*).

#### Theme 3: Hospitality/Visitor Economy and Rural Areas

- 3(i) The Planning Policy Sub Committee consider how the provision of higher numbers of self-catering holiday units for families and individuals in the District might be increased (*item 3.6 in Appendix A*).

- 3(ii) The Council supports the emergency provision of IT equipment to disadvantaged pupils and students during lockdown , and formulate a policy statement It is also recommended that Cabinet seek clarification from West Sussex County Council about any plans they have to continue the supply of IT equipment to disadvantaged pupils in schools or colleges (*item 3.2 in Appendix A*).
- 3(iii) To seek the approval of the Council to seek a Commercial Buyer of the Sussex by the Sea brand (*item 3.5 in Appendix A*).

#### **Theme 4: Place Making, High Streets**

- 4(i) To seek clarification from the Planning Policy Sub Committee on the impact of the emerging changes from Central Government to “ease” Planning Law and Procedures (*item 4.5 in Appendix A*).
- 4(ii) To commission a consultative exercise with Parish and Town Council to establish their capability and willingness to continue to provide Community Hubs for the future to ensure that community/social support gained during the emergency are not lost (*item 4.9 in Appendix A*).
- 4(iii) To review previous strategies for the two seafronts by;
- Re-examine the 2016 Bognor Regis Seafront delivery plan and prioritise a series of deliverable interventions and actions.
  - Re-examine the 2014 Nine Big Ideas for Littlehampton, Concept Investment Plan and the 2016 Seafront Greens and Promenade project ideas and identify ways to progress the recommendations into deliverable projects.

#### **Theme 5: Green/Sustainable Recovery**

- 5(i) To note the emerging heightened importance of the appointment of a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager to deliver a green, carbon neutral, plan for the District including the business case for the provision of electric vehicles within the Arun fleet (*item 5.2 in Appendix A*).
- 5(ii) To commission a study aimed at gaining improved synergy from the numerous “bio-diversity” groups within the District so that better value is obtained from the District’s contributions to their diverse interests and activities (*item 5.5 in Appendix A*).

### **1.0 BACKGROUND AND PROPOSALS FOR RECOVERY WORK**

- 1.1 Cabinet on 29 April, 1 and 22 June 2020 received detailed update reports on Covid-19. As part of its work in looking forward to the recovery stage of this pandemic, Cabinet agreed, at its meeting held on 22 June 2020, to establish this Working Party to investigate exactly how the Council should move forward into its recovery stage. It is recommended that this Working Party should continue to investigate five core themes that are being used by the Government Recovery Group, working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and the District Council Network (DCN) and County Council Network (CCN).

- 1.2 The core themes used by the Government for their “Recovery Cell” are set out below: The themes are the same as the Government’s Recovery Cell:

- 1. Business Communities, Sector and Innovation**
- 2. Labour Markets, Unemployment and Skills**
- 3. Visitor Economy and Rural Areas**
- 4. Place Making, High Streets and City Centre**
- 5. Green/Sustainable Recovery**

- 1.3 It is felt that the above core themes and ideas will be useful to assist Members in focusing on any particular theme.

- 1.4 Members are asked to consider the points raised at the last meeting, along with the added Officer comments (see Appendix A).

- 1.5 The Working Party recommends approval by Cabinet of the following at their meeting on 21 September 2020:

**Theme 1: Business Communities, Sector and Innovation**

- 1(i) That a reliable database of skills shortages is compiled so that the District can effectively play its part in recovering and continuing the economic wellbeing of business and residents in the future. The Arun Business Partnership should be involved in this process. (*items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 in Appendix A*).
- 1(ii) That a further study is initiated into the convergence of the results of the survey of skills shortages with the extra Government funding for “Skills Academies.” (*items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.6 in Appendix A*).

**Theme 2: Labour Markets, Unemployment and Skills**

- 2(i) That the “Climate Change and Sustainability Manager” (when appointed) should fully engage with local enterprises in the drive for improved “green” insulation and heating for homes, business premises and public buildings (*General Comments section in Appendix A*).

**Theme 3: Hospitality/Visitor Economy and Rural Areas**

- 3(i) The Planning Policy Sub Committee consider how the provision of higher numbers of self-catering holiday units for families and individuals in the District might be increased (*item 3.6 in Appendix A*).
- 3(ii) The Council supports the emergency provision of IT equipment to disadvantaged pupils and students during lockdown , and formulate a policy statement It is also recommended that Cabinet seek clarification from West Sussex County Council about any plans they have to continue the supply of IT equipment to disadvantaged pupils in schools or colleges (*item 3.2 in Appendix A*).
- 3(iii) To seek the approval of the Council to seek a Commercial Buyer of the Sussex by the Sea brand (*item 3.5 in Appendix A*).

#### **Theme 4: Place Making, High Streets**

- 4(i) To seek clarification from the Planning Policy Sub Committee on the impact of the emerging changes from Central Government to “ease” Planning Law and Procedures (*item 4.5 in Appendix A*).
- 4(ii) To commission a consultative exercise with Parish and Town Council to establish their capability and willingness to continue to provide Community Hubs for the future to ensure that community/social support gained during the emergency are not lost (*item 4.9 in Appendix A*).
- 4(iii) To review previous strategies for the two seafronts by;
- Re-examine the 2016 Bognor Regis Seafront delivery plan and prioritise a series of deliverable interventions and actions.
  - Re-examine the 2014 Nine Big Ideas for Littlehampton, Concept Investment Plan and the 2016 Seafront Greens and Promenade project ideas and identify ways to progress the recommendations into deliverable projects.

#### **Theme 5: Green/Sustainable Recovery**

- 5(i) To note the emerging heightened importance of the appointment of a Climate Change and Sustainability Manager to deliver a green, carbon neutral, plan for the District including the business case for the provision of electric vehicles within the Arun fleet (*item 5.2 in Appendix A*).
- 5(ii) To commission a study aimed at gaining improved synergy from the numerous “bio-diversity” groups within the District so that better value is obtained from the District’s contributions to their diverse interests and activities (*item 5.5 in Appendix A*).

#### **2.0 OPTIONS:**

1. To support the points raised at the last meeting (23.7.20) and the recommendations within this report as a basis for the recovery work for the Council and build on these to propose future priorities and further investigation; or
2. To propose alternative ideas and recommendations for taking the recovery work forward.

#### **4.0 CONSULTATION:**

Has consultation been undertaken with:	YES	NO
Relevant Town/Parish Council		✓
Relevant District Ward Councillors		✓
Other groups/persons (please specify) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leader of the Council and Deputy Leader</li><li>• Four Group Leaders</li></ul>	✓	

<b>5.0 ARE THERE ANY IMPLICATIONS IN RELATION TO THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL POLICIES: (Explain in more detail below)</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Financial	✓	
Legal	✓	
Human Rights/Equality Impact Assessment		✓
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act	✓	
Sustainability	✓	
Asset Management/Property/Land	✓	
Technology	✓	
Other (please explain)		✓

## **6.0 IMPLICATIONS:**

- 6.1 It must be recognised that the Council also has limited funds to be able to make direct interventions. Instead, it is likely that the Council will need to focus on providing local leadership and policy changes to provide an economic stimulus and facilitate any necessary structural change. This may require seeking out external funding wherever possible. In the main, therefore, this Council will be facilitating the recovery process and helping to provide community leadership.
- 6.2 The final picture regarding the Council's financial position will not be known until the emergency is over. Any future funding from the Government is unknown and is likely to be based on a more sophisticated formula this time than just population. Additionally, expenditure is difficult to predict as we do not know how long the situation will last. Officers continue to work on the Council's financial position using the limited data available to them.

## **7.0 REASON FOR THE DECISION:**

To implement the decision of Cabinet on 22 June 2020.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS:**

Agendas and Minutes from Meetings of Cabinet held on 29 April, 1 and 22 June 2020 - please click on this link - <https://democracy.arun.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteeId=140>

Minutes from the Covid Recovery Working Party meeting held on 2 July 2020 - please click on this link <https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n15817.pdf&ver=16320>

Minutes from the Covid Recovery Working Party meeting held on 23 July 2020 - please click on this link <https://www.arun.gov.uk/download.cfm?doc=docm93jjm4n15818.pdf&ver=16321>