

Subject:	Greater Brighton Sustainable Recovery Plan Update		
Date of Meeting:	26 January 2021		
Report of:	Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Andy Hill	Tel: 01273 291873
	Email:	andy.hill@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 At the last meeting of the Board a COVID-19 Recovery Sustainable Recovery Plan, in line with the Board's previously agreed Five-Year Priorities, was agreed.
- 1.2 It was acknowledged that the pandemic was a fast-moving situation, and it was decided that the plan would be reviewed before each Board meeting, with progress reported and any new actions considered against the national and regional context.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Board note the information in the report, including the update on the pandemic, and progress made against the plan agreed in October 2020.
- 2.2 That the Board agrees with the suggested actions for the next quarter (February-April 2021), and that progress be reported back at the April Board meeting.

3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Since the Board last met in October 2020, the Covid-19 situation has shifted significantly and rapidly. The report at Appendix 1 briefly sets out what has happened nationally, including the fact that the autumn Spending Review also had implications for the City Region. Once again, the narrative from Government was around green recovery and levelling up.
- 3.2 The report also sets out that Greater Brighton Partners continue to work tirelessly and innovatively to support businesses. Local authority partners have awarded over £200 million in business grants to over 20,000 eligible businesses, and over £6 million in discretionary grants. Local Authorities have also been collaborating with partners to provide innovative further support to businesses that need it most.
- 3.3 The Board approved its Five-Year Strategic Priorities in January 2019, with the vision for the region to have a growing, modern economy that is international, creative, connected, talented and resilient. The actions within the Sustainable Recovery Plan were set against the five themes. Progress updates are highlighted below, and the main report also lists actions for the next quarter.

INTERNATIONAL

3.4 Progress in the last quarter:

- Work on establishing the Inward Investment Desk has been ongoing. A CRM and tracking dashboard have been developed to scan for potential opportunities and monitor them.
- The final Inward Investment Desk proposition is to be discussed at the 26 January Board Meeting with the recommendation being that small, dedicated team is established to work on inward investment full time

CREATIVE

Business Support

3.5 Progress in the last quarter:

- The Business Hothouse Programme continues to attract excellent interest. As of December, over 150 businesses/individuals have received coaching support, with 55 receiving over 10 hours. There have been 119 applications made to the Invest4 Grant programme, with a number of these approved. The value of the approved grants is around £330,000, and this brings in around £520,000 of match-funding.
- Lewes DC has been awarded just over £5m in principle funding from the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF). Being home to the Enterprise Zone, Newhaven is a focal point for regeneration activity within the City Region, and the core objective of the FHSF is to renew and reshape town centres and high streets in a way that improves experience, drives growth and ensures future sustainability.
- The Crawley Economic Task Force (CERT) continues to meet quarterly to evaluate and monitor the ongoing impact of the crisis on the local economy and drive the development of a coherent recovery plan for the town.

Creative Industries and the Visitor Economy

3.6 Progress in the last quarter:

- Local authority partners have continued to distribute Government grants to business adversely affected by the crisis.
- At the 26 January Board Meeting the universities will be presenting a paper around the opportunities presented by university led innovation as a catalyst for growth.
- A Recovery Plan for Culture has been prepared which will benefit creative businesses and self-employed people across the Greater Brighton area.
- Emerging from the Sussex Resilience Forum, The Sussex Tourism and Culture Recovery Group is chaired by Nigel Lynn from Arun District Council. This working group is preparing for funding opportunities to support Sussex-wide recovery actions.

CONNECTED

Digital

3.7 Progress in the last quarter:

- City Fibre have confirmed their £80m investment in full fibre for Brighton & Hove, and will start the roll out of their programme in February 2021.

Transport

3.8 Progress in the last quarter:

- Board officers have been organising a meeting with Network Rail and regional stakeholders to push the Brighton Mainline (BML) upgrade agenda.
- In November 2020 a recommendation was made to extend the successful BTN Bikeshare scheme beyond the boundary of Brighton & Hove City Council.
- In late 2020 BHCC secured £2.37m (100% of its indicative allocation) for improvements to walking and cycling in the city from Tranche 2 of the renamed Active Travel Fund (previously Emergency Active Travel Fund). Five schemes have been proposed, and public consultations will run through February and March. Schemes need to be delivered by spring 2022. The latest award follows an award of around £660k from Tranche 1 of the fund.
- The imposition of the November national lockdown and then the latest lockdown since the last Board meeting, has made it difficult to engage with providers and encourage users back on to public transport. This work will resume when restrictions on movement start to be lifted.

TALENTED

3.9 Progress in the last quarter:

- An initial meeting has taken place around decarbonisation, and there is an understanding of the requirements for Greater Brighton to take a lead role.
- Brighton & Hove City Council have been working with East Sussex and West Sussex County Councils to explore the options for skills collaboration to aid Covid-19 recovery. Possible areas of collaboration identified include;
 - Knowledge share for Young People e.g. DWP Youth Hubs, sector-based partnership working, Careers Hub engagement and delivery,
 - Common approaches and similar delivery models for new interventions – e.g. Plan for Jobs, National Skills Budget, Shared Prosperity Fund.
 - Overcoming differences in the focus in the LEPs to enable cross border collaboration
 - Health and Social Care, Visitor economy and Creative sectors – ensuring a skilled and retained workforce.

RESILIENT

3.10 Progress in the last quarter:

- Hydrogen Group established in September to move forwards with the work to place the Greater Brighton Region as a new Hub for hydrogen
- Project pipeline continues to grow, so the City Region has a strong bank of shovel-ready opportunities that can be mobilised at short notice
- Brighton & Hove City Council agreed a new Circular Economy Route-map in December to facilitate a transition towards eliminating waste generation, supporting a resilient economy through sustainable growth and innovation and supporting the city's pathway towards carbon neutrality by 2030.

4 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF OTHER OPTIONS

- 4.1 The economic impact of COVID-19 could be ignored and a 'do nothing' approach was not a feasible option. The Board agreed at July Board Meeting to produce a Sustainable Recovery Plan for the region, which was presented to the Board in October. The recommended actions within the plan were agreed by the Board and are being currently being progressed against the Board's Five-Year Priorities.

5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Greater Brighton Recovery Plan has been circulated and shared with board members who have provided their feedback, which has been incorporated into the plan.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Greater Brighton region continues to be significantly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Sustainable Recovery Plan agreed in October outlined a number of actions that the Board could take to mitigate against the impacts and encourage the economy to grow in a sustainable way. As highlighted in paragraphs 3.8-3.21, good progress has been made on many of these actions and there is a programme of activity scheduled for the period February-April 2021.
- 6.2 Other papers on the agenda for the January 2021 Economic Board meeting show the progress that is being made in these areas, and that this work is not just limited to implementing the Recovery Plan.
- 6.3 The Greater Brighton Economic Board will continue to lobby government for support in the hard-hit sectors. The Board should consider the opportunities provided by new Government programmes and new funding streams; recognise national calls for a 'greener, fairer and more resilient' recovery and use this to frame recovery actions referring to Government narrative on 'levelling-up'.

7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications within this report. Paragraphs 3.8 to 3.21 detail the progress that has been made in the last quarter for the Sustainable Recovery Plan including funding and grant awards. Local authorities continue to award business and discretionary grants from central government to assist businesses during the Covid-19 period.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Rob Allen, Principal Accountant
Date: 21/01/21*

Legal Implications:

- 7.2 At this stage there are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

Lawyer Consulted: Joanne Dunyaglo, Senior Property Lawyer
Date: 21/01/21

Equalities Implications:

7.3 None directly arising from this report.

Sustainability Implications

7.4 None directly arising from this report.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. [Greater Brighton COVID-19 Sustainable Recovery Plan](#)

