

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Greater Brighton Sustainable Recovery Plan Update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>27 April 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Chair, Greater Brighton Officer Programme Board</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Andy Hill</b>	<b>Tel: 01273 291873</b>
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

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

- 1.1 At the October 2020 meeting of the Greater Brighton Economic Board ('the Board') a Covid-19 Recovery Sustainable Recovery Plan was agreed and it was decided that the plan would be reviewed at subsequent board meetings, 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 that going forward recovery actions form part of business as usual, with recovery outcomes included in all workstreams, especially the actions linked to the Greater Brighton Digital Action Plan.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Since the Board last met in January 2021, the country has remained in a national lockdown, with the commencement of restrictions starting to be eased on a step by step basis from March onwards. The report at Appendix 1 briefly sets out what has happened nationally, including the Budget implications for the City Region, around green recovery and levelling up. Appendix 2 gives a snapshot of furlough and unemployment statistics across the region. The success of economic recovery is reliant on the vaccination programme rollout, both at home and abroad, and the control of new variants of Covid. Economic recovery is also dependent on the economy's ability to adapt to new ways of living and working.
- 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.

## **INTERNATIONAL**

- 3.4 Progress in the last quarter:
- Work on establishing the Inward Investment Desk has been ongoing, with an expression of interest submitted to Coast-to-Capital Local Enterprise Partnership for seed funding to help establish a small, dedicated resource.

## **CREATIVE**

### **Business Support**

- 3.5 Progress in the last quarter:
- The Business Hothouse Programme continues to attract excellent interest. As of early March, over 260 businesses/individuals have received start-up coaching support, with around half of those receiving over 12 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.

### **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.
  - 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.
  - Following approval from the Board in January, work is progressing to establish an Innovation Zone for the region. This work, led by the University of Brighton, had its first Development Group meeting in April.

## **CONNECTED**

### **Digital**

- 3.7 Progress in the last quarter:
- City Fibre have confirmed their £80m investment in full fibre for Brighton & Hove, and the roll out of their programme started in February 2021.
  - The Converged Fibre Connectivity (CFC) project to build 41km of duct and dark fibre network from Crawley, Manor Royal to Burgess Hill is progressing as planned, it will complete in July 2021. The additional spur to connect the Horsham Enterprise Park will also be completed as planned.

Commercialisation conversations for rural and urban parts of the network are now under way led by West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) and Mid Sussex District Council (MSDC).

- The Burgess Hill Fibre ring and dig once programme led by MSDC is also progressing as planned with key elements nearing completion.

## **Transport**

3.8 Progress in the last quarter:

- Greater Brighton is represented on the Transport for the South East (TfSE) South Central Radial Area Study Forum, which is an opportunity to make clear to TfSE and other regional stakeholders the challenges, priorities and opportunities for transport within the Greater Brighton region.

## **TALENTED**

3.9 Progress in the last quarter:

- A paper on developing the skills and supply chains to decarbonise the Greater Brighton housing stock is being prepared for the July Board Meeting.

## **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
- Hydrogen Sussex had a successful launch event with over 200 attendees including Members of Parliament.
- Hydrogen Sussex presented to the Board in January and are again in April.

## **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 the UK emerges from the Covid-19 pandemic recovery actions will form part of business as usual. Recovery outcomes included in all workstreams and the key workstreams for 2021/22 are;
- The establishment of the Greater Brighton Innovation Zone
  - The hydrogen projects to be delivered by Hydrogen Sussex and regional partners
  - The regional tourism recovery work taking place
  - The collaborative decarbonisation of homes project, and the link to skills and supply chains
  - The implementation of the Digital Action Plan
  - Our work with Coast-to-Capital LEP and Department for International Trade to attract Inward Investment to the region
- 6.2 Other papers on the agenda for the April 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: 12/04/21*

### 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 Update

