

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 15 July 2020

**Title:** Recovery group update

**Report of:** Phil Evans, Director of Tourism and Enterprise

**Cabinet member:** Cllr Margaret Bannister, Cabinet member for tourism and leisure services

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** To inform and seek support for the initiatives recommended and facilitated by the Eastbourne Recovery Group

**Decision type:** Non-key

**Officer recommendation(s):** Cabinet is recommended to note the report and in particular;

- (1) Work to establish a PPE Buying Consortium**
- (2) East Sussex Colleges Group Million Pound Pledge to provide accredited Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications**
- (3) Provide an online shopping platform for independent businesses in Eastbourne**
- (4) Develop a COVID Ready Quality Standard**
- (5) Develop a Love Eastbourne destination marketing campaign**

**Reasons for recommendations:** The Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown has resulted in a significant downturn in the local economy, especially on the tourism and retail sectors and has had a subsequent impact on local people. This report sets out what actions are being taken by the Recovery Group in Eastbourne, including representation on the group by Eastbourne Borough Council

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 The Recovery Group was set up in the early days of the lockdown and principally includes: the Eastbourne Business Improvement District, the Eastbourne Unltd Chamber of Commerce, the Eastbourne Hospitality Association and Eastbourne Borough Council. The purpose of the group is to recommend initiatives and where necessary, help facilitate the delivery of programmes and schemes to support the recovery of Eastbourne.

1.2 This is a cross party group, chaired by Cllr. Stephen Holt (Lib Dem), with Cllr Jane Lamb (Cons) acting as deputy chair. Members include:

- Miles Berkeley (Tech Resort and Eco Area Action Network)
- Adam Chugg (3VA)
- Mark Cottman (Eastbourne Hospitality Association)
- Yvette Cowderoy (Eastbourne Hospitality Association)
- Phil Evans (Eastbourne Borough Council)
- Christina Ewbank (Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce)
- Harry Farmer (Eastbourne Cultural Group)
- Nicky Fisher (Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce)
- Leanna Forse (Edeal)
- Denise Harwood (Eastbourne Enterprise Centre)
- Kristian Hayter (Eastbourne Hospitality Association)
- Roger Howarth (Age UK)
- Luke Johnson (Town Centre Management)
- Shoes Simes (Your Eastbourne BID and Night Time Economy)
- Joanna Rodgers (East Sussex College Group)

Paul Corney (Knowledge et al) and Vicky Kostiou (Gr/eat) provided additional support to help establish the group.

In the opening weeks, organisations met to discuss the key challenges presented by their sector and complete detailed SWOT analysis, as well as making recommendations for some of the activities that could be undertaken. This is an evolving, and ongoing process which is constantly under review.

## 2 Proposal

### 2.1 Activities

At present, the group is supporting a number of schemes initiated by the organisations represented:

#### a. PPE Buying Consortium

Established by the EHA, with the support of Your Eastbourne BID, the Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce and TechResort a PPE buying consortium was established to support businesses and individuals into purchasing locally sourced PPE items. The benefit of this consortium is that businesses are receiving wholesale prices even for low quantities.

Delivered locally by the EHA, customers simply need to log onto <https://www.visiteastbourne.com/eastbourne-hospitality/shop> to purchase items including hand sanitizers, gloves, masks and physically distancing stickers. So far, 65 businesses have utilised the service, spending over £7.5k.

This scheme was funded by a grant of £500 from the Devonshire Ward Devolved Budget, as many hotels and businesses are located in the Devonshire area.

#### **b. East Sussex College Group Million Pound Pledge**

Stephen Burkes from East Sussex Colleges Group made a presentation to the panel to enable them to discuss the £1m pledge to provide accredited Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications:

The fund can be used to deliver accredited Level 1 and Level 2 qualifications across a very broad range of sectors.

The fund can also be used to make up bespoke non-accredited training, however, this is subject to identifying enough demand. The group is working with the College to engage with businesses and the voluntary sector to ensure the courses are relevant to the local need.

#### **c. 1EBN**

The group is supporting the efforts of TechResort to provide an alternative online shopping platform specifically for independent Eastbourne businesses.

#### **d. COVID Ready Quality Standard**

Working with the team at Trading Standards, the group is establishing a COVID Ready quality standard to unite the business community in sharing a common set of standards and to reassure the public (residents and visitors). This is unique from other offerings as it is multi-sector, utilising the skills of the Eastbourne Business Alliance (Eastbourne Hospitality Association, Eastbourne *unLtd* Chamber of Commerce, Your Eastbourne BID and Visit Eastbourne) and supported by the primary authority.

Businesses that sign up will subscribe to:

- Operate responsibly within the guidelines set out by Government
- Implement effective controls for robust safety planning
- Be alert and ready to implement changing guidelines
- Observe physical distancing within business environments
- Reassure visitors and residents that their safety is the number one priority

This scheme will be free to enrol via the Visit Eastbourne website with business packs assisting in risk management, templates and contact details of key organisations. The scheme is self-regulating, but EHA inspectors and BID ambassadors will be used to investigate any feedback from the public.

Eastbourne Borough Council have agreed to fund this proposal using the money from the ERDF Re-Opening of the High Streets campaign, along with a contribution from Your Eastbourne BID.

#### **e. Love Eastbourne**

The COVID Ready quality standard is complemented by a marketing campaign to capitalise on Eastbourne's unique assets and to promote the buy local, shop local, visit local campaign. The EHA, Visit Eastbourne and Your Eastbourne BID will be working in partnership with members of the recovery group to promote this positive message.

### **2.2 Next steps**

The recovery group continues to meet regularly to discuss other initiatives identified and to find solutions to problems. Regular updates are given by each of the organisations represented and where necessary assistance or support will be offered by the group.

### **3 Outcome expected and performance management**

3.1 Throughout the lockdown period, close attention has been paid to performance data to enable us to judge the effectiveness of the interventions the council has been making, such as the Community Hub helpline, the provision of food, the payment of business grants, processing of benefit claims, etc. The focus on using data will be applied to the Recovery Group in areas such as measuring the success of campaign marketing and take up by businesses in various elements of the scheme.

3.2 Collection of data will continue through the life of the Recovery Group and will be analysed to measure success outcomes.

### **4 Financial appraisal**

The direct costs/revenue consequences arising to the Council as a direct result of supporting the Recovery Group's plans and any other costs associated with the report's recommendations are to be funded from the previously allocated resources for tourism marketing.

### **5 Legal implications**

There are no substantive legal implications arising from this report, as the contents are purely for noting.

## **6 Risk management implications**

It should be noted that many of the issues related to Covid-19 and the lockdown are beyond the direct scope of the council to address alone and therefore a partnership approach will be essential to achieve significant impact.