BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE STEERING GROUP
Terms of Reference

1.   Purpose

The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group is responsible for the development and delivery of a shared vision and action plan for the future of the town centre.

Working with a wide variety of stakeholders the Steering Group, led by Rother District Council, will create a new Town Centre Strategy and action plan that will clearly define and articulate the vision for the future sustainable economy of the area. The group will also set out a proposed funding approach and will be responsible for initiating engagement with key partners to secure funding for the delivery of the Strategy's aims and objectives.

2.   Objectives

1) Develop a shared vision for the future of the town centre with consideration for four key areas:
   a. The future sustainable economy of the Town Centre;
   b. Movement and access between key economic assets
   c. Improving the residential offer in the town centre
   d. Urban design and public realm;

2) Evaluate progress made against previous Town Centre regeneration initiatives, and to deliver a renewed Town Centre Strategy fit for purpose in the current economic climate and commercial context, including an approach to delivery, and a clear communication and engagement plan;

3) Engage and work with partners including; ESCC, Southern Rail, Network Rail, The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SE LEP), Transport for the South East (TfSE), Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and other local groups to identify a programme of projects in keeping with the vision and Strategy; and

4) Set out an approach to funding and undertake action:

   a. To commission any necessary studies or specialist expertise required to support the levering in of investment and the development of projects;
   b. Identify opportunities for funding froma range of national, regional, and local funding sources and prepare bids to these in order to deliver the programme; and
   c. Where appropriate, through the development of business cases to promote inward private investment into the Town Centre.

3. **Scope**

For the purposes of this initiative, Bexhill Town Centre is defined as the area encompassed on the map in Appendix A.

The Steering Group may also consider issues relating to areas adjacent to the defined area where appropriate and where they are likely to have a significant bearing on the town centre, such as the seafront.

The work of the Steering Group will complement Policy BX2 of the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted September 2014) and other relevant policy documents.

4. **Membership and structure**

The Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group will be an unincorporated partnership. The Steering Group will be chaired by the Portfolio Holder for Bexhill Town Centre. By invitation, the core membership of the partnership will be formed of the following:

- Chair: Portfolio Holder for Bexhill Town Centre
- Leader of RDC (Cllr Maynard)
- RDC Members for Bexhill Central ward – (Cllr Hughes, Cllr Azad)
- Chairman of RDC Planning Committee (Cllr Kentfield)
- 2 business representatives to be nominated by the Chair
- Inward Investment – Locate East Sussex
- East Sussex County Council Portfolio Holder for Transport and the Environment
- 1 representative from Bexhill Town Team / Coastal Community Team
- CEO of the DLWP

Additional members may be invited by the Chair to join the Steering Group for specific workshops/meetings or on a more permanent basis as co-opted members.

Quorum: Four (provided that at least one of the four present is not representing Rother District Council).

The term of office for the appointed Rother District Council Members will be coterminous with the election cycle of the Council.

The Leader of the Council is authorised to fill any Rother District Council vacancy arising mid-term, following necessary consultation, without referral to Cabinet.

Support to the Steering Group will be provided by the Partnership Coodinator, with other officers attending as necessary.

5. Meetings

The Steering Group will meet regularly, the frequency, time and venue to be decided by the Members. The Partnership Co-ordinator will oversee administration and the agenda.

Meetings will:
Not be open to the general public

Operate in a collaborative, open and effective way that views each member as an equal partner and values the contribution of partner organisations. Conduct business in a climate that seeks to find effective and realistic solutions through consensus.

Throughout the strategy development period the group will hold a series of workshops, each focussed on an area of consideration as outlined in 2.1 above. A final workshop will be held to agree the final version of the strategy and agree next actions.

Each workshop will take account of equality and diversity, promote inclusion and take responsibility for serving the best interests of Bexhill residents, visitors and businesses.

6. Accountability and Transparency

The Steering Group will be accountable to Rother District Council's Cabinet.

Where required, Rother District Council will act as the accountable body in respect of external funding for the delivery of projects. The Steering Group will not directly employ any staff or incur any direct staffing and associated costs. Members will not charge for their time and services arising from the proceedings of the Steering Group.

The work of the Steering Group will be publicised by the Partnership Co-ordinator, principally through the Rother District Council website. However, at times there may be commercial sensitivities surrounding some projects that will be treated as confidential by all Members, unless informed otherwise.

A Register of Interests will be maintained by the Partnership Co-ordinator for those selected onto the Steering Group.

7. Communication and Press Protocol

The Steering Group will develop a communications plan to engage with the local community, businesses, and stakeholder groups. All enquiries should be referred to the Partnership Co-ordinator who will ensure that a response is given in accordance with the relevant protocol.