**Visitor Economy Chapter to the Council’s Economic Regeneration**

**Strategy**

**Support the visitor economy**

**Why?**

The total value of tourism activity in Rother is £329.2 million, which supports over

5,500 full time jobs, equating to 29% of all jobs within the district. Tourism is a key

contributor to the district’s economic and social wellbeing. It supports businesses,

both directly and indirectly, and has an interdependent relationship with a range of

sectors, including farming, transport, retail, food and drink, arts and museums and

culture.

Tourism helps to create a positive image for the district which encourages inward

investment and provides a great place for locals to live and work.

**How is this achieved?**

By effective promotion of the area to visitors.

By the availability of good quality information that meets customer

requirements.

By maintaining and improving the range and quality of the tourism offer,

including attractions, accommodation and customer service.

By enabling a range of quality events and festivals throughout the year to

attract visitors.

By supporting businesses to take advantage of growth areas and new

technologies.

By working in partnership to develop new products and services, particularly

those that use, protect and promote the natural environment.

**Who else is involved?**

Private sector businesses, including accommodation providers, attractions

and other service sector businesses, events promoters and organisers.

Local Authorities including Hastings Borough Council, Wealden District

Council, East Sussex County Council and other neighbouring authorities.

Parish Town Councils.

Chambers of Commerce and other business representative organisations.

Regional bodies, including Tourism South East, Skills East Sussex, Visit

Britain, Visit England, South East Local Enterprise Partnership and relevant

sectorial sub groups.

Cross-sector partnerships, including 1066 Country Marketing and other local

marketing and tourism partnerships.

**The Council’s Role**

***As an advocate:***

We will promote the importance of the tourism industry when representing Rother in policy discussions at regional and national level.

We will encourage growth in the number of high value-added visitors to Rother, in order to increase spend per head and maximise the benefit of visitors to the local economy.

We will continue to lobby for resources to support the development of the tourism sector, particularly around support for emerging sectors and trends in the digital environment.

We will help to raise awareness amongst peer-to-peer accommodation providers of their legal duties and liabilities when offering accommodation, especially in relation to fire safety and health and safety.

We will lobby, with partners, for greater regulation of peer-to-peer platforms that promote tourism accommodation (such as Airbnb), to protect consumers and ensure that regulations are applied consistently for all visitor accommodation providers.

We will lobby for greater awareness and uptake of careers in the tourism sector.

We will help support the tourism sector in understanding the implications of macroeconomic forces driving changes in the visitor economy (such as new technologies, Brexit).

***As a service provider and legislator:***

We will continue to commission and fund visitor research to inform future decision

making and service delivery and share information through our networks.

We will review the delivery of the Visitor Information Services provision in

preparation for when the current contract expires in 2021, having regard to trends in

visitor behaviour and requirements and the advances of digital technology and new

media channels. Consideration will also be given to expanding the provision through

working with partners.

We will offer support to businesses to capitalise on new media platforms, including

shared economy platforms and how to adapt and diversify their product.

We will ensure that the Local Plan encourages the provision of new quality

accommodation across the district with a focus on good quality serviced

accommodation, particularly in central Bexhill.

In the absence of national regulatory controls, we will consider implementing a local

self-regulating scheme for peer-to-peer accommodation providers in Rother.

We will continue to deliver or support related amenities such as car parks, parks and

gardens, leisure facilities and museums; and we will continue to support the visitor

economy through our statutory roles in Licensing, Planning, etc.

***As a partner and enabler:***

We will continue to support the 1066 Country Marketing Partnership through funding

and officer time, and contribute to reviews of its marketing strategy. We will also

press for more private sector funding to help support the 1066 Country campaign.

We will support, fund and promote visitor events and festivals that aim to bring in

additional visitors from outside the district. Encouragement will be given to shoulder

season events to help level out the seasonality of tourism in the area.

We will continue to work with national and regional partners and networks to

develop, deliver and promote projects and programmes relating to the visitor

economy, cultural tourism and nature tourism.

We will continue to work with local partnership groups and stakeholders who have a

role in the promotion of the destination to visitors, where this activity is

complementary to the 1066 Country campaign.

We will work with developers and landowners to encourage the development of more

serviced accommodation in the district, in accordance with Local Plan policies and

Corporate Plan objectives. We will also encourage the development of new non-traditional tourism products and services, including diversification of existing tourism

businesses looking to respond to market changes. This could include the

development of ‘niche’ holiday accommodation and existing businesses looking to

diversify to capitalise on market trends.

We will encourage and support initiatives and attractions to increase visitor numbers,

particularly staying visitors, where they support the objective to increase spend per

head in the district.

We will maximise the use of external funding opportunities where appropriate to

support the development and delivery of tourism projects and initiatives across the

area.

***As a deliverer of projects:***

We will continue to deliver the actions and projects set out in the Council’s Corporate

Plan.

Specific projects linked to tourism include:

Coastal Environments, including improvements to East Parade, Bexhill.

Development of a new leisure centre and related facilities at Bexhill.

Economic Regeneration at Camber.

Development of a Walking and Cycling Strategy.

Combe Valley Countryside Park.

We will continue to develop and deliver other projects in support of the visitor

economy as opportunities arise.