



Horsham
District
Council

BUY
Local
HORSHAM
DISTRICT



HDC Economic Development Annual Newsletter

2023

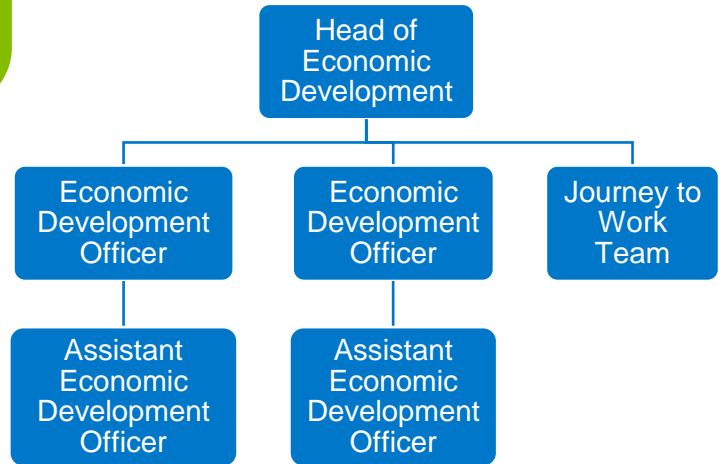
Introduction

“2023 was another busy year for the team. Our focus continued to be how we could support our existing local businesses, ensuring that we continued to provide funding, training and advice.”

- Clare Mangan, Head of Economic Development at Horsham District Council



FIGURE 1: 2023 TEAM STRUCTURE



Team Structure

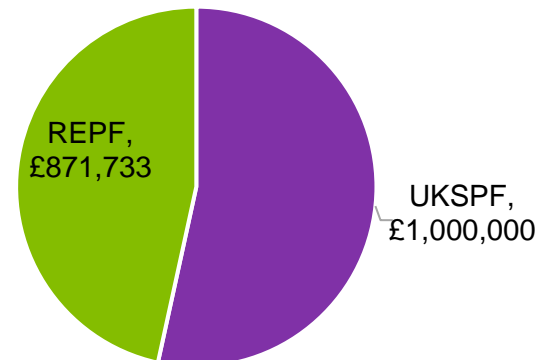
See Figure 1 for the Economic Development Team Structure during 2023.

External Funding

The Economic Development Team continued to deliver business support projects funded or part-funded by external funding (Figure 2) during 2023. These included the following:

- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**
- £1m over 3 financial years:
 - 2022/23 - £111,772
 - 2023/24 - £223,545
 - 2024/25 - £664,683
- **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)**
- £871,733 over two financial years:
 - 2023/24 - £217,933
 - 2024/25 - £653,800

FIGURE 2: EXTERNAL FUNDING



Business Engagement

938

welcome letters sent out to newly registered Horsham District Businesses

Nearly

2,100

subscribers to the fortnightly business e-newsletter

540

businesses signed up to the West Sussex Business Hub



Horsham BID

2023 saw a business led campaign to establish a Business Improvement District for Horsham. This culminated in a ballot in November 2023 and **77%** of all those who voted were in favour of the BID progressing.

It is anticipated that the BID will commence from April 2024 for a five year term.

For more information go to: <https://www.horshambid.org/>

Business Funding

LEAP Small Business Grant Scheme

External funding source: Part-funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and residual SIF

LEAP provides up to £2,000 worth of grant funding for successful applicants and in 2023 entered its eighth year.

The programme is countywide, run independently by each Local Authority. The reputation of the programme is well known and liked by local businesses.

The application asks for a three-year business plan, to understand how this project will develop a business.

A new 'green' addition to this programme is coming in 2024, which will enable business climate action, linked to business support on how to become net zero.



Previous LEAP recipients Peter and Chris Maxted of The Dog-G8 Company were **successful on the BBC's Dragons' Den programme** in 2023!

"Applying for the LEAP grant was very straightforward, the team were very helpful with the process, and we would recommend any Horsham-based business to apply"

Dog-G8 Company



In 2023, the LEAP Grant scheme had **42 successful applicants**

Since 2016:
255 successful LEAP applicants

Over £469,000 worth of LEAP funding approved



Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Grants

External funding source: REPF (Part-funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund)

At the end of 2023, a total of **£250,000** from the REPF allocation has been awarded to 4 projects. These range from installation of solar panels on a rural business building, to new padel tennis courts at a rural leisure centre.

The bulk of funding remains for 2024/25 and the REPF Panel has over 30 applications to consider.

Business Support Programmes

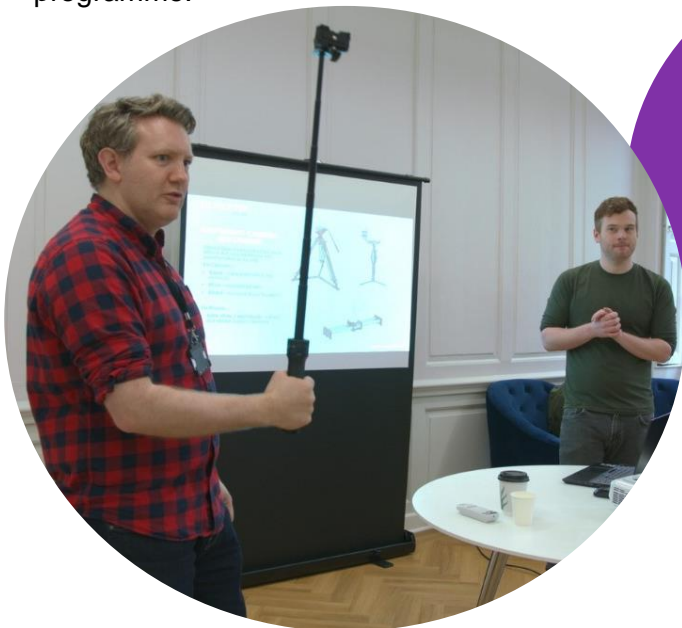
Star Project: Business Training Programme

External funding source: Part-funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The 2023 business training programme ran from January to June and consisted of a wide-range of workshops, both online and virtual, as well as videos, webinars and 1 to 1 support.

The Team reviewed the programme in partnership with our training providers in August 2023 and have collaboratively developed the programme for 2024.

Places are already filling up for this popular programme. In 2023 we saw **131 businesses** attend sessions and we expect even more in the new programme.



In 2023, **131 businesses** took part in the Business Training Programme



Support for Henfield and Storrington

2023 saw some specific challenges for some of our market towns. The former Budgens store in Henfield closed and left the village with no supermarket for several weeks before the new Sainsbury's store opened.

The Economic Development Team worked closely with BN5 Magazine in Henfield to create a special pull-out supplement to the magazine highlighting new and special arrangements for people to access goods and services while the store was closed. Small businesses in Henfield expanded their range of goods and services during this period and the Community rallied to help more people access on-line shopping and delivery services, as well as increasing the community transport frequency to larger stores in Horsham.

Storrington suffered from the extended closure of the A29 at Pulborough and the ED Team worked with the Business Partnership in the village to develop an action plan which included a range of special measures to support businesses, including social media workshops, membership of Visit Horsham and business photography.

Pulborough Emergency Support Plan

Council Officers worked with Members and the Business Community to identify and facilitate useful measures to mitigate the impact of the A29 closure during the first months of 2023.

These included free 2 hour parking, additional street and parking signage, new photos for promo work, social media business training, online promotion and local 1 to 1 business support.



Business Support Programmes

West Sussex Business Hub

Developed in partnership with all West Sussex District and Borough Councils, the hub is a new free online virtual learning and networking platform, where West Sussex businesses can access an expanding range of local business support, information, advice and opportunities to connect with other local business owners, for free.

The hub is being integrated with Horsham District's business support programmes, such as the Business Training Programme and LEAP Small Business Grant Scheme.



Business Space Needs Survey

The Horsham District Business Space Needs Survey sought to gain a valuable insight into current and future business space needs, building a picture to inform the Council's support to all local businesses.

The Council's Economic Development Team collaborated with the Strategic Planning Team and partnered with five organisations, each with a vested interest in business space in Horsham District.

106 complete responses were received from businesses.

A business-facing version of the report can be viewed [here](#). Versions of the report were also shared with key stakeholders, including the University of Brighton.

Market Support

The team runs a **network for the District's market operators** providing cross market support and some grant funding to assist in making market trading more attractive for new traders and start-ups. These initiatives helped our markets to be successful for small businesses, high streets and residents.

Adding to this HDC have built **strong content on our website** for businesses looking to trade on our markets and developed a **strong working relationship with NMTF**, who are providing ongoing training support.

Collaborative working

WSCC initiatives and other third-party support

The ED team have continued to support the promotion of WSCC-run initiatives for businesses such as Grow Digital and Let's Go! Net Zero.

Business initiatives from other organisations such as the Federation for Small Businesses, Experience West Sussex, BIPC Sussex, and more, have been featured as part of the team's signposting of relevant business support resources.

Community Partnerships

The ED Team continues to work closely with our Community Partnerships across the District. These groups are a vital part of being able to directly provide support to local businesses when and where it is needed.

The Partnerships meet collectively every quarter and the ED team attend those meetings, providing updates on our programme and keep a close working relationship with volunteers working at the heart of our market towns.



On 30 April, Horsham hosted its first **NMTF Young Traders Market** with winners going on to appear at the regional finals in London



Planning

Economic Development and Strategic Planning have regular catchup meetings to ensure that we support the emerging Local Plan and have a co-ordinated approach to policy development.

Campaigns

High Street Augmented Reality Story Trails

Local community partners were supported by the Council to host interactive digital trails in high streets across Horsham District, working with their local businesses to boost footfall, dwell time and local spending opportunities.

The digital experience company High Street Safari were commissioned by the Council to create an online library of these free family outdoor trails. This included a bespoke Haunted Horsham trail.

The trails could be completed on a smartphone without the need to register or download an app.

Plate Up Local

[External funding source: Part-funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund](#)

The SPF and HDC funded Plate Up Local project got into full swing in 2023 with two well attended workshops at Kinsbrook Vineyard and Hepworth engaging **73** individual businesses.

The Sussex Six campaign launched in September with a roadshow visiting local markets in September and featuring on BBC TV South.

A public-facing competition gave entrants the chance to win exciting prizes of local produce and/or experiences, which attracted an impressive reach of over 1600 entries online and in-person.



Christmas Magic Displays Competition

An array of businesses from across Horsham District got into the festive spirit, creating Christmassy windows, market stalls and internal displays and submitting photos so they could take part in the Christmas Magic Displays competition. 36 businesses took part.

Public voting determined the Public's Choice winner and a team of judges also assessed the displays, scoring them based on their 'wow factor'.

The winning business benefitted from publicity in December, as well as a £100 voucher for Point of Sale material and a framed certificate.

The competition was part of the Council's 'Buy Local Gift Happy' campaign to support local businesses during the festive season.

To date, over **50 businesses** have pledged to use or stock **six new Sussex-sourced local products** as part of the Sussex Six campaign

Therefore over **300 new local products** could be featured in businesses as a result of the Sussex Six



Sustainability

This year, collaborative working between the Economic Development and Sustainability Teams has included the launch of the following to support businesses towards net zero:

- A webpage of resources
- A quarterly Business Climate Action Special edition of the fortnightly business support e-newsletter
- A video series featuring local business case studies
- A Business Climate Action survey

Other projects being delivered by the ED team which support the Council's Climate Action Strategy, include [Plate Up Local](#), [LEAP](#) and [REPF](#) grant schemes (supporting green projects) and the [Christmas Magic Displays Competition](#) (promoting the message to Buy Local Gift Happy).

The team also use their communication channels to signpost to sustainability support from other organisations such as WSCC's Let's Go! Net Zero, Small Business Britain's Sustainability Programme, and more.



Employment and skills support

External funding source: DWP

The Journey to Work team continued to offer vital support for those seeking employment and skills support.

The Y-WISH Youth Employment Support Hub has now closed, due to external funding streams coming to an end, however [a new webpage](#) has been developed to signpost to information and advice.

Horsham District Jobs and Skills Fair

The 2023 Horsham Jobs and Skills Fair brought over 30 local employers and hundreds of local jobseekers together to Horsham's Drill Hall on Saturday 30 September 2023 to make the event a great success.

We had **over 350 visitors on the day**, an even split on the Male / Female attendees, with approximately two thirds being over the age of 25.

Visitors were predominately from Horsham and nearly all of those who attended said that the event was helpful.

The organisation, promotion and date of the Fair on the whole worked well. There were **over 1,022 engagements on the day** and it is believed that **over 125 places would be filled** as a result of the fair.

Over **350** visitors attended the 2023 Horsham District Jobs and Skills Fair

An exhibitor at the Jobs and Skills Fair commented:

"Thank you for the effort put into making this event a worthwhile one. The organisation was brilliant, the welcome warm and everything was thought of!"

A visitor to the Jobs and Skills Fair commented:

"Well organised, good variety, well attended and advertised."



Looking ahead to 2024

Young Entrepreneurs Support

As part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund programme, the team is commissioning a specialist consultant to work with young people from across the district who will be part of the next generation of young entrepreneurs. The first part of the programme (e-learning) hopes to reach at least 50 aspiring young entrepreneurs, aged 18-30. The bespoke 1:1 mentoring hopes to reach 12 to 20 people. The project begins early 2024.

Prominent Business Visits

The team will be relaunching their programme of business visits for the Cabinet Member for the Local Economy, in recognition of businesses within the district who help to create, maintain, and promote a prosperous community and local economy.

Horsham Business Climate Hub

In collaboration with the Sustainability Team, a virtual network for local businesses to connect and share experiences engaging in climate action is scheduled to launch early 2024.

Green LEAP Small Business Grant Scheme

April 2024 will bring an extension to the annual LEAP programme of small business grants to SMEs in the District, who meet a set of grant criteria related to climate-friendly business projects.

Grants up to £5,000 with 25% match funding requirement will be available via a simple online application form. This addition will build on a programme and be a push on business climate action, linked to business support on how to become net zero.

Co-working spaces

Horsham District Council have two UKSPF projects in 2024 to increase the availability of flexible workspaces across the District. One by Chichester CG at Brinsbury campus and another by Steyning Chamber of Commerce.

Business Training Programme

The Team reviewed the programme in partnership with our training providers in August 2023 and have collaboratively developed the programme for 2024. Places are already filling up for this popular programme.

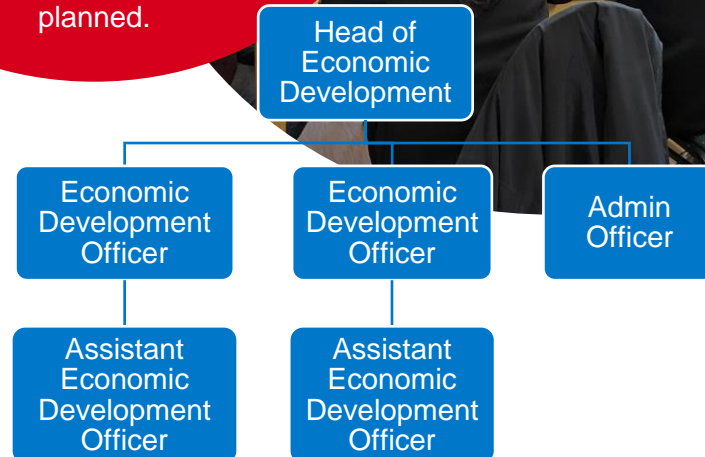
www.horsham.gov.uk/btp

Support for local markets

The team will continue their support for markets across the District as a channel for new and start up business sales and marketing. A second Horsham NMTF Young Traders Market will be held on Sunday 28 April. More training with NMTF is planned.

New Team Structure

From January 2024 there will be a slight change to the team's structure. Due to external funding coming to an end, the Journey to Work Team has finished. However a new Administration Officer joins the team to support Economic Development projects.



Business Training Programme



Horsham District Council

Supporting your business to net zero

Coast to Capital
Brexit Transition: Business Support

LOCASE
LOW CARBON ACROSS THE SOUTH EAST

Food businesses
Allergen labelling 1 Oct 2021

CORONAVIRUS JOB RETENTION SCHEME
Job Retention Scheme extended until 30 April 2021

Grant funding for green projects
If you have a project aimed at reducing the carbon footprint of your small business, the Low Carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) scheme could help. LoCASE provides businesses with a grant (that doesn't have to be paid back) of up to £10,000 and is delivered for Clean Growth UK members through our South East Hub, the University of Brighton's Green Growth Platform.

Sign up to the fortnightly business e-newsletter

West Sussex Business HUB

Your central online source for FREE local independent business skills development and networking

Sign up now