APPENDIX H

High Street Rental Auctions

This consultation closes on **27 November 2026**.
Late entries are at risk of not being considered.

In summary, high street rental auctions are a new power brought in by the government. Some councils are taking up this new power and Rother District Council is considering its options. The council is in the early stages of investigating this new power and wants to hear from you before deciding on going any further.

The ideal outcome of this new power is to reduce the number of empty commercial properties over time.

In this scheme, landlords keep ownership of their property. The council could require the landlord to offer the property for rent through an auction. Businesses and community groups could bid to rent the property. The council must select, as a legal requirement, a designated area or key streets where the powers can be used.

However, the process is slow and requires multiple steps to be carried out before going to auction. Buildings must have been empty for at least a year. Not every building is eligible. The government are paying a small contribution of just over £5,000 towards the auction process. Full costs are not covered by the government and the council is facing more budget cuts. Nationally, no council has completed a full auction yet so there is no established track record of overall costs and time or effectiveness.

The council is already working with its partners on different methods to maximise everyone's resources to support the town centre. Such as supporting events, public space protection orders and working with Bexhill Neighbourhood Board and Bexhill Town Council. Using this new legal power, if adopted, would be an additional tool in our toolbox.

What the council would like to know from you is...

How strong is the support (or not) for adopting town centre rental auctions?
Do you agree with the designated area outlined in our map?
Any information that helps us decide whether or not the council should move forward and when might be the right time?

You can read a lot more information about high street rental auctions on our website at www.rother.gov.uk/consultations.

About You

We need the following information for analysis purposes. It will help us find out if different groups have different opinions.

Q1 Who are you providing answers for?
Is it yourself as a resident or are you answering for a town centre organisation or property owner or other organisation? (Please check the closest answer.)

	Bexhill town centre resident
	Bexhill resident (not town centre)
	Rother resident (not Bexhill)
	Bexhill town centre business
	Charity and Community Interest Company with premises in Bexhill town centre
	Health organisation in Bexhill town centre (doctors surgeries, dentist offices, NHS and private)
	Property owner in Bexhill town centre
	Bexhill Chamber of Commerce member who is not a town centre business
	Other (please specify, write in below):

Measures to reduce empty commercial properties

Q2 Please select which THREE measures you think are most likely to reduce empty commercial properties in Bexhill town centre. Select up to 3 only. Do not select more than three answers.

	High street rental auctions
	Events, like Christmas lights, continental markets, summer festivals, etc.
	Marketing and promotions (1066 country, etc.)
	Cooperation between businesses like shop window competitions, trails, social media, etc.
	Reducing the size of the town centre, concentrating retail to key streets, change of use to residential in outer streets
	Changing opening hours, late night shopping, etc.
	Improving access to town centre for pedestrians and cyclists
	Improving access to town centre by public transport
	Improving access to town centre for car drivers
	Other (please specify, write in below):

Support

Q3. Overall, do you support or oppose Rother District Council taking steps to introduce high street rental auctions? (Please check one answer.)

	Strongly support
	Support
	Support a bit
	Oppose a bit
	Oppose
	Strongly oppose

Timing

As we have said, we have very little information currently on the effectiveness, cost and time that completing a high street rental auction will take.

We are interested to know what you think about timing.

Q4. When do you think the council should move forward with high street rental auctions? (Please check one answer.)

	Continue investigations right now and look to adopt at earliest opportunity.
	Wait until some authorities have completed auction process to get more information on costs and effectiveness
	Do not proceed further

Q5. Why did you answer that you support or oppose introducing high street rental auctions? Please write in below.

Mapped area

There is a map on our website.

We are proposing the following high streets will be covered by the new power:

Albany Road, Albert Road, Buckhurst Road, Clifford Road, Cranfield Road, Devonshire Road, Devonshire Square, Endwell Road, Eversley Road, Linden Road, London Road, Marina, Parkhurst Road, Sackville Road, St Leonards Road, Sea Road, Station Road, Town Hall Square, Western Road, Wickham Avenue, Wilton Road.

Q6. Do you agree with the proposed area or should it be adjusted?

	Yes, agree with the mapped area (roads listed above)
	No, it should be adjusted.

If you answered yes, please move to Q8.
If you answered no, please answer Q7.

Q7. Please tell us what adjustments you would like to see to the designated area to apply high street rental auctions. (Please write in below.)

Q8. Please tell us about any other information that you would like the council to take into account before making a decision on whether or not to move forward on high street rental auctions. (Please write in below.)

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.
This consultation ends on **27 November 2026**. Your responses will be considered by the council at a future Cabinet meeting.
Hand in this questionnaire to Bexhill Town Hall or post to Rother District Council, High Street Rental Auctions Consultation, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea, TN39 3JX.