

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	14 January 2019
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Draft Rother District Public Realm Strategic Framework

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 November 2018, considered a report on the draft Rother District Public Realm Strategic Framework. The recommendation and minute arising is reproduced below.

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the draft Rother District Public Realm Strategic Framework be consulted on with key stakeholders and the public;
 - 2) the outcome of the consultation be reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in spring 2019, along with a final draft of the Rother District Public Realm Strategic Framework; and
 - 3) the Public Realm Working Group be disbanded.
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OSC18/30. THE PROGRESSION OF THE ROTHER DISTRICT PUBLIC REALM STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

Members received the report of the Executive Director detailing progression of the Rother District Public Realm Strategic Framework (PRSF). A draft PRSF had been produced by officers and was presented as an appendix to the report for Members' consideration and recommendation to Cabinet for public consultation (including relevant stakeholders).

The PRSF aimed to address the need for better and more co-ordinated plans, standards and procedures and was informed by all the evidence gathered to date. It was a strategic document that aligned with the Council's Planning Core Strategy requirements to manage and improve the district's public realm in cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The framework set out the vision, objectives and key principles.

The PRSF was structured in three sections;

- section 1 introduced the subject and scope of the document, the local policy context, a vision for the district's public realm, a set of strategic objectives, an overview of national best practice guidance and a summary of the challenges and opportunities facing the district's public realm, including case studies of recent public realm improvement schemes in the district;
- section 2 analysed the different spatial areas of the district; the towns (Battle, Bexhill and Rye), the villages and the rural areas; and

- section 3 set out the delivery mechanisms and translation into policy, along with the funding mechanism and explored the roles and responsibilities of the various local authorities, statutory undertakers/utility companies and other key stakeholders (including the local community, businesses and developers) and set out a number of future actions to be developed through a collaborative, multi-agency approach.

The development of each of the actions would be a collaborative task between different departments within Rother District Council (RDC) as relevant and liaison with appropriate external agencies.

After some discussion, the following points were noted:

- a budget had not been set aside for the cost of the consultation and this would be carried out within the Corporate Policy Team;
- the National Planning Policy Framework placed more emphasis on design so plans should take into account their setting;
- the consultation would indicate whether key stakeholders would engage and take ownership of the delivery actions set out within the PRSF;
- Members suggested that the potential future savings made in business rates on public toilets could be set aside for upgrades to the public realm;
- Members requested that one officer be responsible for driving forward the PRSF and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a regular basis;
- it was highlighted to Members the importance of adopting clear guidance and protocols for volunteer groups to carry out works on RDC public realm assets;
- Members requested feedback on the usage of the previous guidance for volunteer groups and were advised that the paperwork was currently under review; and
- Councillor Mrs Hart, previous Chairman of the PRWG, drew Members' attention to the Foreword of the draft PRSF and that the document was one to feel extremely proud of, containing high aspirations and expectations.

Councillor Saint, Chairman of the Public Realm Working Group (PRWG), thanked Members and officers of the Group and advised that as the work had now been completed, the PRWG could be disbanded.

(Councillors J. Barnes, C.A. Clark and S.D. Elford declared a personal interest in so far as they were Members of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 5.1).

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director