

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date and Time - **Monday 27 January 2020 - 6.30 pm**

Venue - **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea**

Councillors appointed to the Committee:

P.N. Osborne (Chairman), B.J. Drayson (Vice-Chairman), J. Barnes, T.J.C. Byrne (ex-officio), J.J. Carroll, Mrs V. Cook, P.C. Courtel, S.J. Errington, P.J. Gray, A.K. Jeeawon, L.M. Langlands, C.R. Maynard and M. Mooney.

Substitute Members: S.J. Coleman, C.A. Madeley, G.F. Stevens and R. Thomas.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 November 2019 as a correct record of proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES

The Chairman to ask if any Member present is substituting for another Member and, if so, to declare his/her name as substitute Member and the name of the absent Member.

3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

To consider such other items as the Chairman decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Head of Paid Service by 12 Noon on the day of the meeting.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

To receive any disclosure by Members of personal and disclosable pecuniary interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the Member regards the personal interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct. Members are reminded of the need to repeat their declaration immediately prior to the commencement of the item in question.

5. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21 (Pages 1 - 22)

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**Rother District Council's aspiring to deliver
an Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council; Sustainable Economic Prosperity;
Stronger, Safer Communities; and a Quality Physical Environment.**

6. **KEY PERFORMANCE TARGETS 2020/21** (Pages 23 - 30)
7. **ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION** (Pages 31 - 84)
8. **ANTI-POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE**
(Pages 85 - 88)
9. **HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY** (Pages 89 - 98)
10. **DRAFT EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN** (Pages 99 - 120)
11. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 121 - 122)

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Agenda Despatch Date: 17 January 2020

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**Rother District Council's aspiring to deliver
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Rother District Council

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	27 January 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21

The Cabinet, at its meeting held on Monday 13 January 2020, considered a report on the Draft Revenue Budget 2019/20. The Minute in relation to this matter is reproduced below.

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

- 1) the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be considered by Cabinet when setting the 2020/21 Draft Revenue Budget at its meeting on 10 February 2020; and
 - 2) a further report be presented on the options for meeting the future administrative building requirements of the Council with the objective of improving energy, operational and financial efficiency.
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CB19/85. DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director on the preparation of the draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21. The report outlined the likely financial position and key issues that Members needed to consider as part of the budget setting process. Appended to the report were details of the summary draft Revenue Budget, the summary information for each service area, main changes from the 2019/20 budget, the Council's revenue reserves and identified savings and additional income.

All budgets were shown as "Net Operational Expenditure Levels" which excluded capital charges, central costs and support service recharges. In addition, budgets were shown on a departmental basis which provided Members with a clear identifiable cost for each service.

The Council would revert to a 50% Business Rate pooling arrangement from April 2020 with the other East Sussex local authorities with a projected income for next year of nearly £3.5m.

The 2020/21 council tax base was calculated at 38,124.6 and showed an increase of 70 Band D equivalent over the equivalent December 2018 figures. The calculation made little allowance for potential growth during 2020/21 but for future years' average growth of 2% per annum had been assumed.

The confirmed 2020/21 council tax referendum principles for Rother allowed an increase in council tax of £5 or 2% whichever was the highest. The draft Revenue Budget and forecast assumed that the

Council would increase council tax by £5 to £184.45 for a Band D property which would result in an increase of income from council tax by £190,600 to an estimated total of £7,032,000.

The financial risks that may affect the Council's finances were detailed in the report and these included increased costs for the Waste Collection and Street and Beach cleaning contract, which represented a significant proportion of the overall budget; homelessness demands; staffing costs; non-pay inflation for contracts and unsecured projected income.

The section 151 Officer had made the following assumptions when calculating the draft budget:

- a. Inflation – 2% for CPI had been applied to contracts.
- b. Salaries – a 2% staff salary increase from September 2020.
- c. Growth – as detailed at Appendix C to the report.
- d. Transfers – the use of transfers between existing budgets had been encouraged to help enable funding to be re-directed into priority areas.
- e. Income – where the Council had discretion, increases would be in line with the increase in costs.

The net Revenue Budget before Government grants, use of reserves and other funding was expected to be £15.5m; this was an increase of £161,000 over the revised 2019/20 Revenue Budget. Appendix A to the report summarised the Budget and the Council Tax calculations. The Budget utilised £3.3m of reserves in order to meet specific costs. Of this £1.4m would be used to support capital expenditure with the remaining £1.9m being used to support service expenditure. To aid the OSC deliberations it was requested and agreed that two additional columns be added to Appendix A namely, the original budget and the end of year forecast.

For 2020/21, the Council would no longer receive the Revenue Support Grant and would be reliant solely on income from business rates, council tax, charges for services and income generation. As part of the settlement announced by the Government on 20 December 2019 indicative New Homes Bonus grant of £247,100 was expected, although no ongoing reliance of this income could be assumed as this was a one year grant.

The total earmarked reserves by the end of March 2020 was estimated to be £13.8m plus a £1m General Fund balance. Over the five year financial forecast previously reported, earmarked reserves were predicted to fall to £6.8m. The minimum level of cash backed reserves and balances were considered to be £5m.

The previously approved budget consultation was due to close in January 2020 and interim results would be reported to the OSC at their meeting on the 27 January 2020.

The draft Revenue Budget showed an increase of nearly £161,000 in the cost of services over the 2019/20 position. As explained in the

report, the budget included a number of assumptions relating to income generation and savings, which if not delivered would result in an increased call on reserves.

It was advised that expressions of interest in respect of voluntary redundancies were still being considered but this process was likely to result in the required savings. It was noted that the actual cost of potential redundancies was not yet known and would be built into reserves as the costs were identified. In addition to the actions officers were already putting in place to deliver savings, Cabinet was keen for officers to explore possible options for meeting the future administrative building requirements of the Council with the objective of improving energy, operational and financial efficiency.

(Cabinet Agenda Item 9).

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Appendix 1: Cabinet Report 13 January 2020 – Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21

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Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	13 January 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Directors
Subject	-	Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21 be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 27 January 2020.

Assistant Director Resources: Robin Vennard
Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Oliver

Introduction

1. The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year. The Local Government Finance Act 1992 requires the Council to estimate revenue expenditure and income for the forthcoming year from all sources, together with contributions from reserves, in order to determine a net budget requirement to be met by Government Grant, Business Rates and Council Tax.
2. This report updates Members on preparation of the draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21; the report outlines the likely financial position and the key issues Members need to consider. Appendix A details the summary draft Revenue Budget, Appendix B gives summary information for each service area and Appendix C details the main changes from the 2019/20 Budget. Appendix D provides details of the Council's Revenue Reserves.
3. All Budgets, for the purposes of Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee presentation, are shown at "Net Operational Expenditure Levels", that is, to exclude capital charges, central costs and support service recharges. This ensures Members are provided with a clear identifiable core cost for each service.

Government Grant Settlement

4. As Members will be aware that for 2020/21, the Council no longer receives any Revenue Support Grant and will be wholly reliant on revenue from business rates, council tax, charges for services and income generation. The settlement was announced by the Government on the 20 December 2019. As part of the settlement indicative New Homes Bonus grant was confirmed. For Rother the total grant is expected to be £247,100 which is higher than in the previous forecast. This was due to an increase in the Council's actual taxbase at October 2019 compared to October 2018, of 273 net additional Band D equivalent properties. However as this is just a one year grant, no ongoing reliance of this income can be assumed pending the outcome of the review of this grant. The grant has been reflected in the Budget Summary at Appendix A.

Business Rates

5. Members will be aware from previous reports that the Council will revert to a 50% Business Rate pooling arrangement from April 2020 with the other East Sussex local authorities. The current arrangements for the 75% pilot retention have been abandoned by the Government ahead of the reset to the allocation of business rates from 2021/22. The projected income for next year of nearly £3.5m is analysed below:

	2019/20 75% Pilot £000	2020/21 50% Pool £000
Gross Share of business rates	8,020	7,400
Add: Estimated S31 grants	1,297	1,600
Less: Tariff	(5,715)	(5,121)
Less: Levy	0	(380)
Net Business Rates retained	3,602	3,499

6. Further work is in progress to refine the business rate estimate in time for the final approval of the Revenue Budget in February. This will include an updated estimate of the amount of S31 grants although it is not known at this stage if it will reflect the most recent announcements by Government of further reliefs for businesses.

Council Tax Base

7. The 2020/21 council tax base has been calculated at 38,124.6 and shows an increase of 70 Band D equivalents over the equivalent December 2018 figures. The main reason for the change is an increase in the number of properties on the rating list and changes to discounts. The calculation makes little allowance for potential growth during 2020/21 but for future years average growth of 2% per annum has been assumed. The in-year recovery rate has been maintained at 98.5% for 2020/21. The tax base calculation takes account of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) for 2020/21, agreed by Members at their full Council meeting on the 16 December 2019 (Minute C19/59 refers).
8. The draft settlement confirms the 2020/21 council tax referendum principles for Shire districts, like Rother, will allow an increase in council tax of £5 or 2% whichever is the highest. As Council Tax is a major source of income to the Council, the draft Revenue Budget and forecast assumes that the Council will increase Council Tax by the maximum allowed before a referendum is required. For 2020/21 this would result in a £5 increase to £184.45 for a Band D property (check). This increases the income from Council tax by £190,600 to an estimated total of £7,032,000.

Financial Risks

9. Members are aware that there are a number of financial risks that may affect the Council's finances. These are discussed below.

10. **Waste Collection and Street and Beach cleaning** – in June 2019, the Joint Waste contract was retendered and awarded to Biffa and this has resulted in significant cost increases, particularly in relation to garden waste collections. An over spend of £327,000 has been reported in the Quarter Two revenue monitoring forecast. Work has been undertaken to review the costs arising from the new contract and it is expected that costs will rise by £876,000 in 2020/21. This is partially offset by Members decision to increase the annual garden waste collection charge by £5 which will generate approximately £80,000 of additional income.
11. **Homelessness demands** – the Council continues to experience pressure on this budget as a result of an increase in the number of cases and a £200,000 overspend has been reported to Cabinet in the Quarter Two revenue monitoring report. The Council is focusing its efforts to manage this demand led service to try to control spending. Members will recall a budget of £3m has been included in the approved capital programme to purchase high quality temporary accommodation and alleviate budget pressure by reducing the use of more expensive private rented accommodation. The purchase programme will commence in the current financial year and it is expected that cost savings of £36,000 will be generated in 2020/21 and £72,000 in a full year.
12. **Staffing Costs** – the budget assumes an increase of 2% for the annual pay award, estimated to add £188,000 to the overall budget requirement. Staff budgets are calculated at 100% of the total cost per post including on costs, but a decrease of 3% has also been applied to the overall cost of salaries, which allows for staff turnover. This reduces the budget requirement further by £282,000 for 2020/21. The budget assumes that savings of £500,000 in staffing costs will be achieved during 2020/21. Members will be aware of the recent request for voluntary redundancies and this closed on the 12 December. This will be assessed for its implications on services and meeting Council objectives before a final decision is taken.
13. **Non Pay Inflation** – inflation of 2% has been added to relevant budgets, in particular for contracts. However the actual inflation rates may differ from this depending on the anniversary date used for particular contracts. Therefore there may be variations between the estimate and actual inflation.
14. **Income** – the draft budget includes additional income from the Property Investment Strategy. Secured income has been built into the Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration service line in Appendix A and unsecured income is shown as a separate figure. For 2020/21 this is estimated to be £544,000 and therefore represents a significant risk if not secured. Planning income for 2020/21 has been reduced by £96,000 to reflect current performance. This will need to be reviewed again prior to finalisation of the budget.

Budget Assumptions

15. As the Section 151 Officer, the Assistant Director Resources confirms that, in accordance with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, these estimates have been prepared on a robust basis. The following assumptions were made when calculating the draft budget:

- a. **Inflation** – inflation of 2% for CPI has been applied to contracts as appropriate.
- b. **Salaries** – salaries have been assumed to increase by 2% from September 2020.
- c. **Growth** – Appendix C to the report details growth included in the draft Budget.
- d. **Transfers** – the use of transfers between existing budgets has been encouraged to help enable funding to be re-directed into priority areas.
- e. **Income** – where the Council has discretion, increases should be in line with the increase in costs.

Draft Budget

16. The net Revenue Budget before Government grants, use of reserves and other funding is expected to be £15.5m before use of reserves. This is an increase of £161,000 over the revised 2019/20 Revenue Budget. This is analysed in Appendix C. The capital expenditure charged to revenue will be funded from earmarked reserves. Appendix A summarises the Budget and the Council Tax calculations.

Reserves and General Fund Balance

17. The draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21 utilises £3.3m of reserves in order to meet specific costs. Of this £1.4m will be used to support capital expenditure with the remaining £1.9m being used to support service expenditure. The draft Revenue Budget identified savings and increased income in excess of £1.3m. If these are not delivered it may be that to balance the Revenue Budget during the year, further use of reserves may be required.
18. The total earmarked reserves by the end of March 2020, is estimated to be £13.8m plus a £1m General Fund balance. Over the five year financial forecast previously reported, earmarked reserves are predicted to fall to £6.8m. The minimum level of cash backed reserves and balances are considered to be £5m.

Budget Consultation

19. The previously approved budget consultation is due to close in January 2020 and interim results will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on the 27 January 2020.

Conclusion

20. The draft Revenue Budget shows an increase of nearly £161,000 in the cost of services over the 2019/20 position. As explained in the report, the budget includes a number of assumptions relating to income generation and savings, which if not delivered would result in an increased call on reserves. Members are aware of the actions officers are putting in place to deliver these, some of which will be difficult to deliver. The Government's fair funding review and business rate reset coming in from 2021 add to the very uncertain backdrop to Council funding for some time to come.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

The significant falls in Government support will continue and the potential volatility in business rate income present a major challenge for the Council. The Council needs to deliver its' plans to deal with the continued pressures on its budgets but the changing nature and scale of those pressures mean that those plans need to be regularly refreshed in order to assess the impact on service delivery. To ensure a sound financial future for the Council, the financial strategy needs to be robust and current.

Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21 - Summary

	Revised 2019/20 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Budget £ (000)
Executive Directors and Corporate Core	2,084	2,042
Environmental Services	750	698
Strategy and Planning	961	993
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(591)	(188)
Housing and Community Services	7,365	8,291
Resources	3,264	3,402
Total Cost of Services	13,833	15,238
Vacancy provision	0	(282)
Interest from Investments	(512)	(400)
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	1,670	1,359
MRP and Interest – Property Investment Strategy	156	853
MRP and Interest – Other	220	88
Savings and Income generation		
(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy	0	(544)
(ii) Increase income (net) – other	0	(94)
(iii) Lean and Demand	0	(90)
(iv) Service Prioritisation	0	(100)
(v) Devolvement	0	
(vi) Reduced Staffing Structure	0	(500)
(vii) Shared Services	0	TBD
Net Cost of Services	15,367	15,528

	Revised 2019/20 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Budget £ (000)
Special Expenses	(674)	(687)
Business Rates		
Local Share of business rates 44% 2019/20 and 40% thereafter	(8,020)	(7,400)
Section 31 Grants	(1,297)	(1,600)
Tariff	5,715	5,121
Pooling Levy	0	380
Transition grant	0	0
Revenue Support Grant	0	0
Non-Specific Revenue Grants		
New Homes Bonus Grant	(449)	(247)
Rural services delivery grant	0	(50)
Local Council tax Support Grant	(100)	(102)
Benefits Administration Grant	(233)	(238)
New Burdens Grant and other non-specific Grants	0	0
Homelessness Grant – New Burdens	(43)	(43)
Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(275)	(275)
Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(6,830)	(7,032)
Other Financing		
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	336	0
Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure	(1,670)	(1,359)
Total Income	(13,540)	(13,532)
Funding Gap	1,827	1,996

Council Tax calculation

Council Tax Base	38,124.6
Proposed Council Tax at Band D	£184.45
Total Income	£7,032,082

Revenue Budget Summary - Cost of Services	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
Acquisition, Transformation and Regeneration	(590,980)	1,777,900	(1,966,000)	(188,100)
Environmental Services, Licensing and Community				
Safety	749,690	1,064,280	(365,900)	698,380
Executive Directors and Corporate Core	2,083,640	2,163,390	(121,460)	2,041,930
Housing and Community	7,365,040	12,010,860	(3,719,970)	8,290,890
Resources	3,264,150	23,144,990	(19,743,550)	3,401,440
Strategy and Planning	961,110	1,983,110	(990,000)	993,110
Total Cost of Services	13,832,650	42,144,530	(26,906,880)	15,237,650

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration				
	£	£	£	£
Ancient Monuments and Gazebo	5,460	4,810	0	4,810
Business Improvement	291,140	340,950	0	340,950
Committee Property Account	(59,640)	43,880	(114,635)	(70,755)
Community Strategy	8,570	8,470	0	8,470
Cultural Development	23,340	23,340	0	23,340
Economic Development	264,140	273,250	0	273,250
Elva Business Centre, Bexhill	(174,140)	85,970	(249,220)	(163,250)
Environment Sustainability Strategy	0	42,500	0	42,500
Head of Service Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	84,200	89,080	0	89,080
Housing Policy, Strategy and Development	30,310	31,300	0	31,300
Investment properties	(193,720)	27,960	(174,200)	(146,240)
Major Projects unit	0	116,540	(55,000)	61,540
Miscellaneous Land and Buildings	(16,520)	7,410	(19,435)	(12,025)
NLPG - E-Government	(11,000)	0	(18,000)	(18,000)
Peasmarsh Workshops	(4,710)	10,650	(22,175)	(11,525)
Performance Management	13,790	14,110	0	14,110
Programme and Policy Office	248,930	308,120	0	308,120
Property Investment Strategy	(955,640)	74,750	(922,050)	(847,300)
Property Management	12,850	63,150	(250)	62,900
Regeneration	54,440	57,240	(2,800)	54,440
Residual Housing Land	(530)	0	(245)	(245)
Tourism	127,850	127,850	0	127,850

Appendix B Cont'd

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration				
	£	£	£	£
Udimore Workshops	(1,660)	3,310	(6,970)	(3,660)
Watch Oak Estate	(39,500)	500	(40,000)	(39,500)
West Trading Estate	(298,940)	22,760	(341,020)	(318,260)
Total	(590,980)	1,777,900	(1,966,000)	(188,100)

Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
Alcohol Licencing	(22,060)	69,420	(89,000)	(19,580)
Animal Welfare	1,160	1,170	0	1,170
Caravan Licences and Travellers	28,520	18,100	0	18,100
Community Safety	16,070	17,260	0	17,260
Crime and Disorder Initiatives	8,300	31,750	(23,450)	8,300
Dog Control	36,140	35,530	0	35,530
Environmental Services-Admin	25,610	51,740	(31,550)	20,190
Food and Safety Team	54,680	66,150	(54,000)	12,150
Food Hyg/Idc/Water Purity	125,970	128,820	(900)	127,920
Health & Safety and ID's	85,150	91,680	0	91,680
Houses Multiple Occupation	(1,000)	0	(1,000)	(1,000)
Licences and Registration	35,400	71,540	(37,000)	34,540
Licensing Team	(10,980)	7,720	0	7,720
Pest Control	12,150	20,990	(18,000)	2,990
Pollution	376,380	395,300	(28,000)	367,300
Private Sector Housing	1,700	650	0	650
Sub Standard Housing	230	230	0	230
Taxi and Private Hire Licences	(27,690)	55,030	(83,000)	(27,970)
Watercourses, Ditches and Drains	3,960	1,200	0	1,200
Total	749,690	1,064,280	(365,900)	698,380

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Executive Directors and Corporate Core				
	£	£	£	£
Administrative Offices - Print Room	11,520	12,650	0	12,650
Administrative Offices - Rear Depot	2,680	2,330	0	2,330
Administrative Offices - T.H. Annex (NOT CHP)	(31,490)	43,530	(89,400)	(45,870)
Administrative Offices - Town Hall	197,010	195,390	0	195,390
Committee Service General Exp	173,190	161,870	0	161,870
Communications	50,810	50,810	0	50,810
Communications-Postages	80,220	67,510	0	67,510
Corporate Policy Making	2,130	4,330	0	4,330
District Council Elections	7,220	7,220	0	7,220
Electoral Registration	162,330	180,940	(8,500)	172,440
Emergency Planning	30,700	30,980	0	30,980
Executive Directors	331,530	346,870	(60)	346,810
Facilities Management	122,420	126,740	0	126,740
Human Resources	279,910	295,470	(23,500)	271,970
Internal Audit	146,350	148,650	0	148,650
Joint Waste Contract Client Unit including contract procurement	850	(45,440)	0	(45,440)
Legal Services	265,600	265,600	0	265,600
Public Accountability C/Ex	0	700	0	700
Representing Local Interest	273,600	268,900	0	268,900
Service Manager Corporate and Human Resources	1,470	0	0	0
Sussex Training Partnership	(24,410)	(1,660)	0	(1,660)
Total	2,083,640	2,163,390	(121,460)	2,041,930

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Housing and Community				
	£	£	£	£
Abandoned Vehicles	2,730	2,770	0	2,770
Allotments – Bexhill	1,780	3,050	(1,700)	1,350
Amenities Administration Account	2,000	550	0	550
Battle Community Help Point	19,420	5,270	0	5,270
Battle Sports Centre	6,000	6,000	0	6,000
Bexhill Leisure Centre	7,330	12,600	(1,100)	11,500
Bexhill Leisure Pool	8,200	41,150	(28,700)	12,450
Bexhill Parks and Open Spaces	781,710	867,790	(53,000)	814,790
Bexhill Promenade and Foreshore	26,930	106,600	(85,000)	21,600
Camber Beach and Foreshore	105,860	128,250	(25,660)	102,590
Car Parks	(1,156,600)	419,870	(1,600,400)	(1,180,530)
Care in the Community	5,100	5,100	0	5,100
Cemeteries	(38,630)	145,120	(160,000)	(14,880)
Churchyards	9,760	10,060	0	10,060
Coast Protection	39,980	41,860	(3,000)	38,860
Customer Services and Development	454,970	475,070	0	475,070
De La Warr Pavilion – Client	695,750	485,120	0	485,120
Head of Service Housing and Community Services	86,980	90,220	0	90,220
Housing Administration Account	443,220	662,400	(76,270)	586,130
Housing Loans Account	0	86,000	(86,000)	0
Housing Needs – Housing Benefit	723,250	1,218,800	(508,000)	710,800
Maintenance Services	35,350	35,330	0	35,330

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Housing and Community				
	£	£	£	£
Neighbourhood Services	769,450	824,810	0	824,810
Property Maintenance Team	216,260	210,840	0	210,840
Public Conveniences	406,340	422,270	(5,000)	417,270
Recycling	2,420	3,700	(25,000)	(21,300)
Refuse Collection	2,379,810	3,504,590	(870,000)	2,634,590
Residual Highway Services	20,600	23,810	(3,000)	20,810
Rother Museum Services	25,010	31,680	(5,000)	26,680
Rother Tenant Finder (prev Rother Letting Service)	0	135,040	0	135,040
Rough Sleeping Initiative	0	66,090	(66,090)	0
Rural Open Spaces and Amenities	33,090	33,900	(90)	33,810
Rye Area Parks and Gardens	89,800	95,760	(8,000)	87,760
Rye Community Help Point	9,590	10,180	0	10,180
Rye Sports Centre and Pool	4,440	9,250	(3,220)	6,030
Sports Development	830	42,090	(45,490)	(3,400)
Street and Beach Cleansing	1,146,310	1,711,620	(24,000)	1,687,620
Syrian Refugees Support	0	36,250	(36,250)	0
Total	7,365,040	12,010,860	(3,719,970)	8,290,890

Resources	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
	£	£	£	£
Accountancy	347,700	435,410	(9,070)	426,340
Benefit Investigation	(12,290)	0	(12,290)	(12,290)
Communications – Phones	110,000	80,000	0	80,000
Computer Services	831,030	873,660	(2,000)	871,660
Corporate Management	111,000	116,390	0	116,390
Cost of Collection	(139,530)	245,620	(402,280)	(156,660)
Financial Services	4,340	0	0	0
Internal Drainage Boards	122,000	130,000	0	130,000
Printing Services	24,780	146,250	(75,200)	71,050
Procurement	25,000	25,000	0	25,000
Public Accountability – Resources	6,000	6,000	0	6,000
Reliefs and Benefits – Council Tax Benefit	83,220	74,140	0	74,140
Reliefs and Benefits – Housing Benefit	(398,890)	18,840,420	(19,242,710)	(402,290)
Revenue and Benefits	1,175,090	1,170,960	0	1,170,960
Risk Management/Insurance	4,390	0	0	0
Service Manager Finance and Welfare	106,600	112,340	0	112,340
Support to Elected Bodies/Grant	140,300	140,300	0	140,300
Treasury Management	8,500	8,500	0	8,500
Unapportion Central Overheads	714,910	740,000	0	740,000
Total	3,264,150	23,144,990	(19,743,550)	3,401,440

	Revised Budget 2019/20	Gross Expenditure	Budget 2020/21	
			Income	Net Expenditure
Strategy and Planning				
	£	£	£	£
Building Control	70,150	48,290	0	48,290
Complaints, Compliance, Enforcement	110,730	111,200	0	111,200
Conservation and Preservation	11,200	11,200	0	11,200
General Planning Expenses	8,230	8,230	0	8,230
Land Charges	(95,720)	80,990	(180,000)	(99,010)
Local Development Framework	150,000	150,000	0	150,000
Planning Appeals	4,500	4,500	0	4,500
Planning Applications	188,460	916,380	(710,000)	206,380
Planning Business Support	232,010	243,300	(10,000)	233,300
Planning Dept E-Government	4,000	4,000	0	4,000
Planning Enquiries	(52,000)	8,000	(50,000)	(42,000)
Planning Policy	241,600	307,370	(40,000)	267,370
Head of Service Strategy and Planning	87,950	89,650	0	89,650
Total	961,110	1,983,110	(990,000)	993,110

**MAIN CHANGES IN NET COST OF SERVICES BETWEEN 2019/20 AND
2020/21**

	£'000	£'000
Revised Revenue Budget 2019/20		15,367
Draft Revenue Budget 2020/21		15,528
Net Increase in Cost of Services		161
<u>Analysis of Variations</u>		
Expenditure		
Additional posts – Transformation, Major Projects & Environmental Sustainability	143	
Consultancy costs to develop the Environmental Sustainability Strategy	40	
Additional property costs – maintenance, business rates, utilities	42	
Asset valuation procurement	50	
Joint Waste Contract – increase in costs	876	
Local Housing Company	90	
Temporary Accommodation (net of savings from self provision)	172	
Reduce budget for one off payment to the DLWP client for pension contributions	(193)	
Reduced license costs of Modern.Gov software	(15)	
Costs of interim staff to support technical projects	46	
Increase in ERP system support costs	23	
Impact on Revenue Budget of increased Capital Programme Activity	366	
Lean and Demand	(90)	
Service Prioritisation	(100)	
Reduced Staffing Structure	(500)	
Inflation	239	
Vacancy churn	(282)	
Other Minor Changes	(20)	887
Income		
Increase income – Property Investment Strategy	(544)	
Increase income (net) – other	(94)	
Reduction in Planning fee income	96	
Recovery of administration costs from CIL	(40)	
Environmental Services – Increased cost recovery, license income and course fees	(64)	
Increase in Garden Waste charges	(80)	(726)
Total Increase in Cost of Services		161

Earmarked Reserves	Revised 2019/20 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)
Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves	17,362	13,865	10,510	8,661	7,773	7,053
Use of Reserves	(3,497)	(3,355)	(1,849)	(888)	(720)	(287)
Contribution to Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total Reserves	13,865	10,510	8,661	7,773	7,053	6,766
<u>Use of/Contribution to Reserves</u>						
To fund Capital Expenditure	(1,670)	(1,359)	(291)	(291)	(291)	(291)
To balance the Revenue Budget	(1,827)	(1,996)	(1,558)	(597)	(429)	4
Total	(3,497)	(3,355)	(1,849)	(888)	(720)	(287)

Rother District Council

Report to - Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 Date - 27 January 2020
 Report of the - Executive Director
 Subject - Key Performance Targets 2020/21

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to approve the corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2020/21 and their performance targets as set out in Appendix A of the report.

Head of Service: Ben Hook

Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to set out the proposals for measuring the Council’s corporate performance for 2020/21 in the context of corporate priorities and the resources available. Members are requested to select a small set of corporate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and agree their target levels of performance for the next financial year. The purpose of the reported KPI set is to manage the performance of the authority at a focused and prioritised level.

Background

2. Historically, a set of KPIs has been reported quarterly to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) to assess the performance of the organisation and key areas of business. These KPIs provide an overview of selected areas of performance, but OSC Members are able by agreement to review any other area of the Council’s business that may be of concern to them. Each year, the OSC considers and recommends to Cabinet a set of KPIs and the level of performance that Members wish to see delivered to residents.
3. The current KPIs for 2019-20 are set out below:

Housing and Homelessness
Affordable Homes Built (gross) Supply target
Affordable Homes Built (gross) Local Plan target
Prevention of Homelessness Cases per 1,000 Rother Households
Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation (TA)
Net additional homes provided (Supply Target)
Net additional homes provided (Local Plan Target)
Housing Benefit
New Benefit Claims: calendar days to decision
Existing Benefit Claims: calendar days to decision

Waste and Recycling
Waste Re-used, Composted and Recycled
Contractor Re-used, Composted and Recycled
Missed Bins for every 100,000 Collections
Asset Income
Net Income from All Investment Assets
Investment Asset: Return on Investment %

4. The performance of housing benefits processing is no longer a priority because performance has significantly improved and appears stable. It is recommended this is replaced by more detailed income targets, to reflect the Council's priorities for 2020/21.

Proposed KPIs

5. Officers have had regard to Members' past concerns that the KPI set should contain a small number of indicators relevant to areas that fall within the Council's control and that the set should remain compact with around 10 indicators in total. It is also felt that targets should, where possible, be benchmarked against performance in other local authority areas so that Council performance can be ambitious while remaining achievable. It is proposed that the indicators for 2020/21 should be reported within four themed areas and a qualitative report on each of these areas will be provided. The themed areas are:

- Housing and Homelessness (5 indicators)
- Waste & Recycling (2 indicators)
- Asset Income (2 indicators)
- Other Income (3 indicators)

6. The proposed KPI basket includes 12 indicators. In reality a number of other related indicators will be used to inform the qualitative information; this will give OSC Members a clear picture of performance in each of the themed areas as opposed to relying on narrow areas of performance. The provision of this additional information will allow OSC Members the ability to scrutinise more effectively and pass on any recommendations they have as a result of this to Cabinet.

Conclusion

7. In conclusion, by using the recommended indicators, associated targets, and quantitative information, OSC Members will monitor the performance of the Council, and the delivery of key plans. Members are requested to consider the recommendations and propose an appropriate KPI set to Cabinet.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

There are financial, reputational, statutory and corporate health risks to the Council and, more importantly, the wider community if the Council does not monitor and manage its performance across all the services. In addition to the on-going

performance management carried out by service areas, this report mitigates those risks, because it ensures that Members have an opportunity to scrutinise the proposed targets and make recommendations and select their own priorities for improvement.

PROPOSED PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Housing and Homelessness

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT TARGET	PROPOSED TARGET
1. Number of households in TA (Lower is better)	Number of all households in Temporary Accommodation (TA) on the last day of the month, when measured.	60 households (Actual 61 on 30 November 2019)	60 households
2. Average Length of stay in TA (Lower is better)	Measures the average length of time (in weeks) that individuals or families were in TA.	10 weeks (Actual: 18.3 at end of November 2019)	15 weeks
3. Homelessness prevention per 1,000 households (Higher is better)	Measures the outcome or success of homelessness prevention activities. This includes all cases where a household's housing problem has been resolved through advice casework intervention.	5 per 1,000 (Actual: 1.55 total for first half of 2019/20, target 2.5)	5 per 1,000
4. Net additional homes built in the district (Higher is better)	Monitors the delivery of new homes. This indicator measures the net increase in dwelling stock over one year.	285 homes is the supply target 449 is the Local Plan target (Actual: 137 total for first half of 2019/20, target 193)	340 homes is the supply target ¹ 458 (local plan target)
5. Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (higher is better)	Monitors the delivery of affordable housing units (newly built, including gains from conversions such as subdivision, or acquired).	115 homes is the supply target 138 is the Local Plan target (Actual: 67 for first half of 2019/20, target 57)	115 ² 138 (local plan target)

Housing & Homelessness: position statement

Demand for all forms of affordable housing continues to increase, with the supply of social housing and private rented accommodation being a key tenure failing to keep pace with this demand. The lack of affordable housing supply locally alongside the impact of welfare benefit reforms are the principle drivers of increasing levels of homelessness, sofa surfing, poor quality living conditions and rough sleeping. There are early indications that the new Rother Tenancy Finder service (launched in October 2019) is beginning to improve prevention outcomes and help to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation.

A significant portion of affordable housing delivery both for rent and shared ownership is dependent on the delivery of private housing developments. Although housing delivery for all tenures is increasing, it does not meet the expected Local Plan targets or keep pace with rising levels of demand.

The five high level indicators above, together with evidence based qualitative information will help Members to monitor the strategy action plan on an on-going basis, assessing whether this work is having an impact on housing issues, and inform decision making with regards to recommendations to Cabinet.

¹ Estimated target based on developer delivery programmes (as of data Dec 2019). This target will be reviewed during 2020 with an updated target provided in the quarter 2 report.

² Estimated target based on delivery programme. This target will be reviewed during 2020 with an updated target provided in the quarter 2 report.

Waste & Recycling

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT TARGET	PROPOSED TARGET
6. Waste re-used, composted & recycled	The percentage of household waste which has been sent by the authority for reuse, recycling, composting or anaerobic digestion.	51% (47.4% Apr 19 – Mar 19, target is 51%)	51%
7. Missed bins (contract) per 100,000 collections	The pre-calculated number of all missed bins (household, recycling and garden waste), as defined by the terms of the contract, expressed as per 100,000 of these bins that are due to be collected.	120 bins missed per 100,000 collections (160 to end of Sept 2019, target is 120)	120 As per contract specification

Waste & Recycling: Position statement

There is an EU target for the UK to re-use, recycle and compost at least 50% of household waste by 2020. According to the Government Waste Data Flow site statistics, Rother District Council achieved 47.4 % April 2018 to March 2019. The decrease from 50.2% the previous year is due in large part to a reduction in garden waste tonnages and may be due to the hot and dry summer of 2018. The reduction is mirrored by the neighbouring district of Wealden.

Recycling rates have fallen in other parts of the country and this has, in part, initiated a widespread government review across the industry. The future direction of waste management in the UK will be influenced by the UK Environment Bill which is expected to proceed to final legislation in early 2020. In view of the change to a fully co-mingled glass and dry recycling collection from 29 June 2019, Rother suggests the interim target remains at 51% while we wait to understand the full implications of the new bill.

Asset Income

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT TARGET	PROPOSED TARGET
8. Return on investment from investment assets	Monitors whether or not the Council is returning the required minimum level of return on investment.	6%	6%
9. Asset income total	The overall income from investment assets.	£1,939,000	£1,850,000
Asset income: Position statement			
<p>The Council's medium term financial plan assumes a continued increase in the amount of income generated through its property portfolio. With the Property Investment Strategy adding to this portfolio through acquisition and development, the Council has set an overall target return of 6% to ensure that the financial targets are reached. There is a target for the overall income generated by the property portfolio which mirrors the Revenue Budget. These two measures provide Members with a clear picture of the progress being made. The income target for 2020/21 of £1,850,000 does not include any provision for income from any new property purchases achieved in the year.</p> <p>The Asset Income Total does not include 'community' assets which might also generate an income such as car parks, sports facilities, allotments etc.</p> <p>The Return on Investment figure shows the income as a percentage of the value of the portfolio. The value of the portfolio is based on the valuation of the existing assets from 2015 and the purchase/development costs of all new assets.</p>			

Other Income

INDICATOR	DESCRIPTION	CURRENT TARGET	PROPOSED TARGET
10. Planning: Development Management income	Broken down by planning applications, land charges, and preplanning advice	£1,087,500 (Apr-Nov £506,747 against target £721,019)	£710,000 Planning applications £180,000 Land charges £50,000 preplanning advice Total: £940,000
11. Car park Income	Monitors the income from car parks.	£1,600,000	£1,600,000
12. Garden waste bins issued and income	Measured annually on renewal of contracts around July – would monitor the impact of increasing charges by £5 as per MTFS	£735,000 (£700,000 result for 2019/20)	£870,000
Other income: Position statement			
<p>Members should be aware that car park income is very dependent on the weather during the summer and there is always a risk that we will underperform against target. We have mitigated this risk by basing our income target on an average of the income in previous years.</p> <p>The Council increased its garden waste subscription charge by £5 from July 2020 which means we have revised our income target upwards to £870,000. Members should note that there is a risk that the increased charge will lead to fewer subscriptions being purchased; however, officers do not view this as being a significant risk.</p>			

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Rother District Council

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	27 January 2020
Report of	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Environment Strategy Consultation

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to approve that:

- 1) the draft Environment Strategy, Action Plan and Consultation Plan be approved and a 12 week consultation be undertaken; and
 - 2) that East Sussex County Council Pension Advisers be requested to source alternative investments in non-fossil fuel providers for the pension fund.
-

Head of Service: Ben Hook

Introduction

1. At its meeting on 16 September 2019 (Minute C19/38 refers), full Council agreed the following resolution to:
 - i. Declare a 'climate emergency'.*
 - ii. Review and update urgently Rother District Council's current carbon strategy.*
 - iii. Pledge to do what is within our powers, to make Rother District carbon neutral by 2030, taking into account both production and consumption emissions.*
 - iv. Call on the Government to provide any additional powers and resources necessary for Rother District to achieve the target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030, and to implement best practice methods to limit global warming to 1.5°C.*
 - v. Request that Cabinet establishes a Steering Group to report to full Council within six months with an Action Plan, outlining how the Council will address this emergency. The Carbon Neutral 2030 Action Plan will detail the leadership role Rother District will take in promoting community, public, business and other Council partnerships to achieve this commitment throughout the District. The Action Plan will also outline adequate staff time and resources to undertake the actions to achieve the target.*
 - vi. To investigate all possible sources of external funding and match funding to support this commitment.*
 - vii. Identify citizens across Rother who are climate champions for their communities and to use them to inform on ideas to implement locally.*

viii. Investigate what Rother District Council can do to minimise the emission of gases which adversely affect climate change even more than CO₂.

2. The purpose of this report is to approve the draft Rother Environment Strategy and Action Plan; consultation plan; setting a baseline for the measurement of greenhouse gas and carbon emissions; and allocation of funding to enable the delivery of the strategy.

Climate Change Steering Group

3. A Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) was established and tasked with developing a draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan outlining how the Council intends to address the climate emergency. The CCSG comprises of Councillors Field (Chairman), Coleman, Gray, Mrs Hart, Langlands, Osborne and Prochak.
4. The CCSG has met on two occasions. At the first meeting on 15 November 2019, the CCSG heard evidence from a number of experts and received presentations. The CCSG formulated a number of actions to be developed and reported to the next meeting.
5. Prior to developing an Action Plan, it was important to understand what the starting point was and how it can be measured and whether what the Council is planning will have an impact. A data review was undertaken which showed the position across the district and how the Council as an organisation is having an impact on the environment. The data review (Appendix 1) sets out data for:

District wide:

- CO₂ emissions
- Walking and cycling
- Low emission vehicle use
- Waste – recycling, reducing and reusing
- Noise pollution
- Superfast broadband coverage

Rother District Council:

- Electricity usage
- Gas usage
- Water usage
- Car use/mileage
- Flexible working
- Paper use

6. The information within the data review was presented to the CCSG and used, along with evidence from a number of other presenters to assist in informing the draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan.
7. The second meeting took place on 3 January 2020. The CCSG agreed the draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan (Appendix 2) and Consultation Plan (Appendix 3) and resource requirements as presented within this report.

Environment Strategy and Action Plan

8. A draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan has been prepared, developed and agreed through the Council's CCSG for consultation. The document sets out the Council's proposals for the vision and priorities and sets out the actions required to deliver on these and the Council's ambitious target to be carbon neutral by 2030.
9. The document sets out eight action plan priorities for consultation and these are:
 - i. Smart Digital District
 - ii. Green Economy
 - iii. Air Quality
 - iv. Waste
 - v. Energy
 - vi. Biodiversity
 - vii. Construction and Existing Buildings
 - viii. Environmentally Friendly Council

Setting a Baseline

10. In order to meet carbon neutrality as an organisation by 2030, the Council must understand the current position and work with an external advisor to provide the following information:
 - Produce a baseline utilising greenhouse gases (GHG) and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions where possible, for the 12-month period April 2018 – March 2019 for the Council.
 - Develop a carbon management programme designed to support the Council in meeting its (organisational) carbon neutral target by 2030.
 - Set ongoing annual targets, and a trajectory to achieve the carbon neutral target (for the organisation) by 2030.
 - Set individual high-level targets which will feed into and ensure that the Council meet the overall (organisation) carbon neutral target by 2030.
11. Further detailed work will be required across the district and this work will be undertaken collaboratively with East Sussex local authority partners to ensure a consistent approach.
12. The CCSG also discussed the subject of ethical investments and noted that East Sussex County Council (ESCC) currently invested with fossil fuel providers for its pension fund. The pension fund has a fiduciary duty to pensioners and members of the fund. The Pension Fund Committee consists of County Councillors who act as quasi trustees and cannot be mandated. The CCSG requested that Cabinet recommend that East Sussex County Council Pension Advisers be requested to source alternative investments in non-fossil fuel providers for the pension fund.

Resources

13. The resolution passed by Council in December and set out at paragraph one of this report represents a requirement for significant additional resource. The required capacity, skills, experience and expertise are not available currently

within the Council and therefore a dedicated post is required to enable the delivery of the Environment Strategy, and ongoing development, delivery, monitoring and reporting to deliver on the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030. The benefits to having in place this additional resource will include the ability to co-ordinate and access partner resources and apply for funding necessary to take forward the strategy, working with partners.

14. Total anticipated initial resources required are set out at table 1, below:

	2020-21	Ongoing
Environment and Sustainability Officer (including on-costs)	£52,200	£52,200
Consultation event support	£2,500	
Carbon emissions baseline modelling	£5,000	
IT equipment for above post	£1,000	
Revenue budget	£30,000	£30,000
Total:	£90,700	£82,200

Table 1: Environment Strategy and Action plan budget requirements

15. The draft Revenue Budget for 2020/21 contains provision for an additional member of staff and associated costs. As a consequence this has increased the funding gap for next financial year which, in the short term, will require the amount of reserves used to balance the Revenue Budget to increase. It is possible that costs will be reduced through the actions of the Council to reduce its carbon footprint, in particular power and fuel, but at this stage these have not been quantified.

Work Completed to Date

16. While the Council once had an Agenda 21 Strategy and Environment Policy (2010-2015) no formal environment policy is currently in place, however, the Council has taken forward some significant projects based on environmental gain. These include:
- Solar panels installed on the rooftops of Amherst Road building and Bexhill Museum.
 - Introduction of flexible working to reduce car use.
 - A cycle to work scheme.
 - A programme on Council owned sites for whip planting, tree planting and environmental grass.
 - A review of business processes which has led to a reduction in paper use, printing and postage.
 - Town Hall – a programme of refurbishment including new roof, roof insulation and windows.

The Consultation

17. The Consultation Plan is attached at Appendix 3 and sets out the groups to be consulted and the methodology. Consultation will take place via an online questionnaire, however, telephone and written consultation responses will be accepted. It is intended that the main communication methods for this consultation will include a minimum of three interactive events to take place in Bexhill, Battle and Rye. Additionally, information points will be placed around the district to ensure the opportunity to engage is maximized.

18. The consultation questionnaire sets out a number of questions related to the draft Environment Strategy. In addition, questions will be included which will help us to understand the profile of the respondees in order to ensure we have been successful in targeting a diverse range of groups.
19. The CCSG is keen to have some 'quick wins' and proposes to launch the consultation with a 'tree cover' initiative. This will include the setting up of an interactive web-page which allows residents, community groups, and businesses to pledge a commitment to planting a tree and to add their tree planting action to a thematic map. The objective is to increase tree cover across the district and encourage residents and businesses to get involved.

Conclusion

20. The draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan has been developed through the Council's CCSG, using data and information from various organisations and sources to enable the Council to understand its current position and what is required to meet its commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
21. Should Cabinet approve the draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan, a 12 week consultation which has been designed to encourage engagement from residents, community groups, public and private sector organisations will take place from 25 February 2020. The feedback from this consultation will enable the development of a final document which will be presented to Cabinet and then full Council in September 2020. Once adopted the strategy will need to be kept under constant review as more knowledge and understanding on climate change emerges.
22. Members are advised that a provision of £100,000 per annum of funding has been made available in the draft revenue budget 2020/21 subject to approval, to enable the progress of this Environment Strategy and delivery of its Action Plan.
23. Finally, the CCSG is requesting that Members recommend to Cabinet that ESCC Pension Advisors be requested to source alternative investments in non-fossil fuel providers for the pension fund.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Lack of a strategy and action plan will mean the Council's commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 is unlikely to be met. Lack of consultation on plans to meet the carbon neutral commitment could lead to the Council being challenged regarding introducing a change in priority and resources without care for due process.

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Environment Strategy for Rother: Data review 2019





Environment Strategy for Rother: Data review 2019

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Current District Position

This section of the document sets out data which shows the current environmental position within the district. Data includes the overall Co2 emissions baseline, set at 2017, and data for the following areas, all related to reducing carbon emissions and the environment:

- Walking and cycling
- Low emission vehicles
- Recycling rates
- Noise pollution
- Broadband coverage

Co2 Emissions

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is the main greenhouse gas, accounting for about 81% of the UK’s greenhouse gas emissions during 2017¹. Rother’s CO2 emission result for 2017 (tonnes per capita) is the highest in East Sussex. In 2011 it was 4.4 tonnes p/c, so it has reduced over 5 years by 1.1 tonnes p/c.

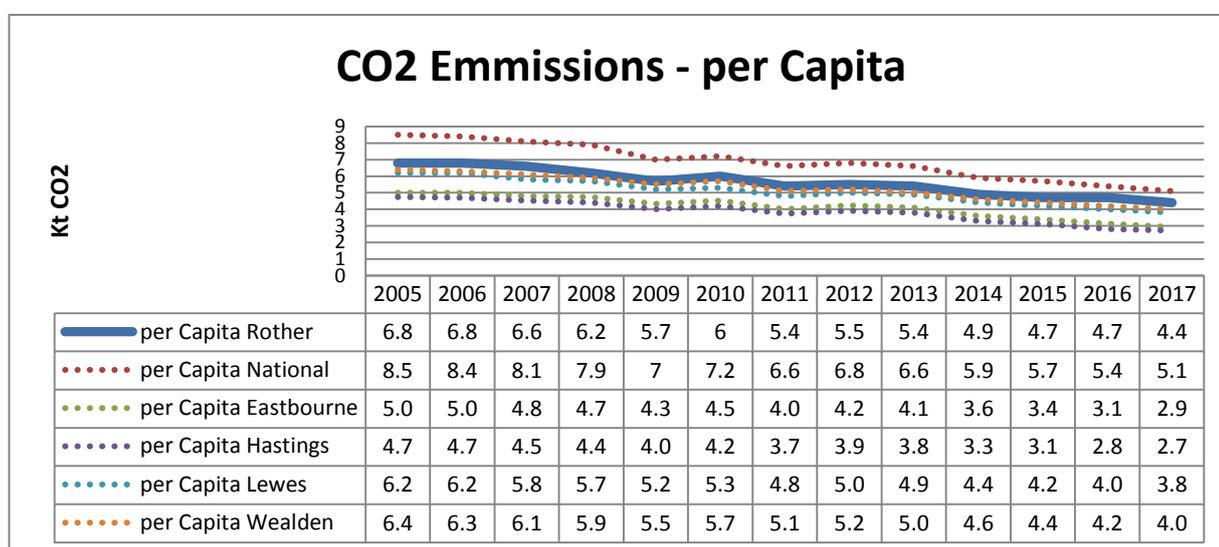
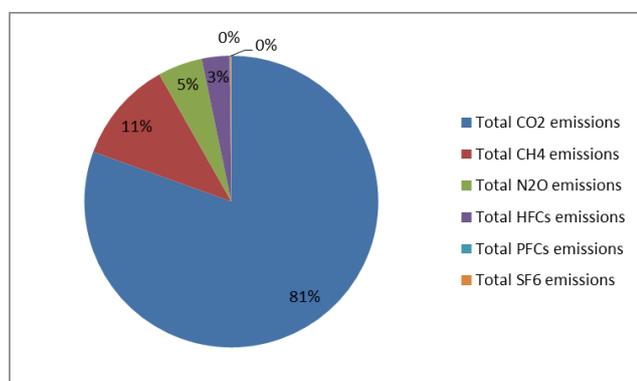


Table 1: CO2 emissions 2005 – 2017 (source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>)

The chart below (Table 2) shows the other emissions which make up greenhouse gases.



Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0oC of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8oC to 1.2oC. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5oC between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>

Appendix 1: Data Review

Table 2: Total greenhouse gas emissions UK 2018 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/updated-energy-and-emissions-projections-2018>)

Walking and Cycling

Rother has the lowest level of adults who walk or cycle, in East Sussex; and falls below the levels for the South East region and England.

Mode of travel	Cycle				Walk (at least 10 minutes)			
	1 x per month	1 x per week	3 x per week	5 x per week	1 x per month	1 x per week	3 x per week	5 x per week
Geography								
England	16.9	11.9	5.7	3.4	78.4	69.4	43.1	32.0
South East	19.4	13.4	6.1	3.6	81.2	71.5	44.4	32.4
East Sussex	15.2	10.4	4.3	2.6	78.7	69.3	43.7	32.3
Eastbourne	17.0	12.7	4.3	2.3	79.0	71.3	48.0	35.3
Hastings	10.8	7.9	3.7	2.3	78.3	69.4	42.2	31.5
Lewes	18.3	13.3	5.6	2.8	78.8	70.8	48.0	36.1
Rother	16.9	10.9	5.0	2.5	78.0	68.4	38.7	28.1
Wealden	13.4	8.2	3.3	2.9	79.1	67.6	42.0	30.7

Table 3: Walking & cycling: 2010-2017: percentage of adults aged 16 and over (source: ESIF dataset: Walking and cycling, 2010-2017 – districts)

Low Emission vehicles

The Department for Transport uses the term 'ultra-low emission vehicles' to refer to vehicles with significantly lower levels of tailpipe emissions than conventional vehicles. In practice, the term currently refers to electric, plug-in hybrid and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicles. For the purposes of this data, all vehicles with fully electric power, and cars and vans with tail-pipe emissions below 75 g/km of CO2 have been included.

'Plug in' includes fully electric or plug in hybrid vehicles.

In 2018, there were a total of 65,423 licenced vehicles in Rother; ultra-low emission vehicles equated to less than 0.3% (177 vehicles) of total vehicles (see table 4 below).

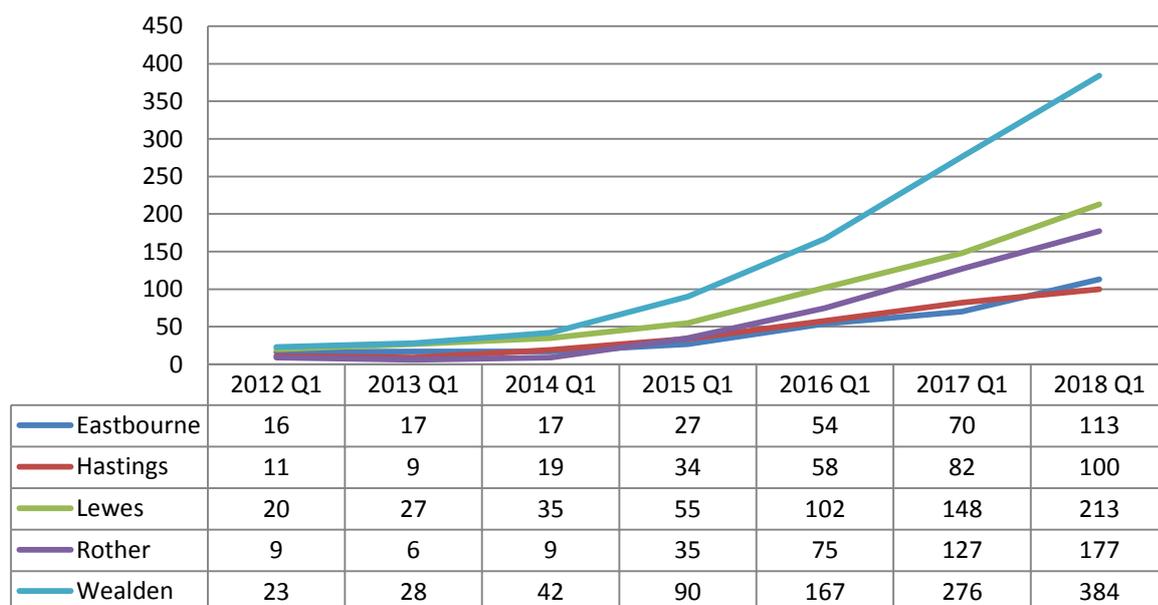


Table 4: Number of Ultra-low emission vehicles, 2011-2018 – districts (Source: East Sussex in Figures)

Waste: Recycling, Reducing and Reusing

Rother sits at rank 79 out of 345 areas for levels of recycling. During 2017-18 over 50% of household waste was recycled; total waste collected equated to 376 kilos per household. East Riding of Yorkshire Council is ranked highest with 64.5% of household waste being recycled. Newham LB was ranked lowest with only 14% of household waste being recycled.

Rank	Local Authority 2017/18	Percentage of household waste	Collected household waste per person (kg)
1	East Riding of Yorkshire Council	64.50%	499.8
2	Rochford District Council	63.00%	384.8
3	South Oxfordshire District Council	63.00%	354.1
4	Three Rivers District Council	62.40%	363.2
5	Surrey Heath Borough Council	61.40%	334
6	Stroud District Council	61.20%	288.7
7	South Northamptonshire District Council	60.50%	434.2
8	Vale of White Horse District Council	60.40%	321
9	Derbyshire Dales District Council	60.30%	369.7
10	Stratford-on-Avon District Council	60.30%	444.6
71	Wealden District Council	51.30%	382.5
79	Rother District Council	50.20%	376
226	Eastbourne Borough Council	38.9%	358
310	Hastings Borough Council	29.6%	328
324	Lewes District Council	26.7%	299.5
336	Slough Borough Council	23.90%	359.8
337	Hammersmith and Fulham LB	23.70%	262.5
338	Gosport Borough Council	23.00%	280.7
339	Wandsworth LB	22.10%	293.5
340	Lewisham LB	21.80%	328.7
341	Council of the Isles of Scilly	21.20%	677.8
342	Birmingham City Council	20.70%	353.6
343	Barrow-in-Furness Borough Council	19.60%	365.1
344	Westminster City Council	18.80%	356.2
345	Newham LB	14.10%	338.7

Table 5: Local Authority recycling rates 2017-18 (source: <https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2017-18-overall-performance/>)

Table 6 below sets out total waste for quarter 1 (2019-20) for the District in Tonnes. Table 7 below shows total households waste sent for reuse during quarter 1 (2019-20). Reuse includes textiles and books. Data over a longer time period and further analysis is required to understand potential target setting for reducing total waste and increasing reuse.

April 2019	1450.450
May 2019	1414.970
June 2019	1298.440

Table 6: total waste, Rother District, tonnes

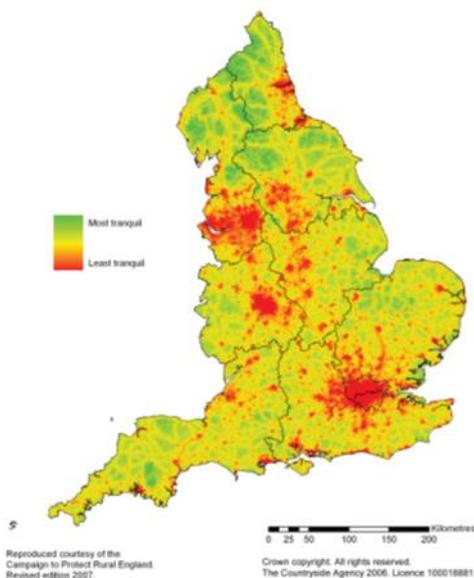
April 2019	21.623
May 2019	23.473
June 2019	23.487

Table 7: total reuse, Rother District, tonnes

Noise Pollution



National map with 2001 regional boundaries



We are fortunate that the district is a tranquil area, there being no motorways or aircraft flight paths to increase the background noise levels. The tranquillity map produced by the CRE demonstrates this (left).

The map illustrates that the noise sources in Rother are the major roads. Away from the major roads the background noise levels in rural areas are particularly low at night.

As a Council we seek to maintain these low background noise levels by implementing the Sussex Noise Guidance <https://www.adur-worthing.gov.uk/media/media,121802,en.pdf>

Superfast Broadband coverage

Superfast Broadband is available in 87% of the district. Ultrafast broadband is only available in 1% of the district, with less than 2% coverage across East Sussex. This compares starkly with areas such as Cornwall (31% coverage) and Brighton & Hove, Adur and Worthing – all over 70% coverage. Areas in London have around 80% coverage.

	Superfast coverage %	Ultrafast coverage %
Eastbourne	97	1
Hastings	95	0
Lewes	91	2
Rother	87	1
Wealden	85	4

Table 8: East Sussex Local Authority Broadband coverage (source: <http://www.eastsussexinfigures.org.uk/ofcom/fixe/atlas.html>)

Current Business Position

This section of the document sets out data relating to the carbon footprint of the Council. A carbon emission baseline has yet to be determined; the data below relates to carbon emissions and environmental impact:

- Electricity usage
- Gas usage
- Water usage
- Car use/mileage
- Flexible working
- Paper use

Electricity usage

The table below sets out the Council owned buildings which consumed the highest levels of electricity during 2017.

MPAN	Site Name & Address	Post Code	Available Capacity (KVA)	Total Consumption (kWh)	Rate 1 Consumption (kWh)	Rate 2 Consumption (kWh)	Rate 1 Price (p/kWh)	Rate 2 Price (p/kWh)	Total Contract Cost (£/period)
1900047385146	Town Hall Office, Bexhill	TN39 3JX	71	291,557	225,340	66,217	12.861	8.553	£37,253.68
1900048000845	Town Hall Treasurers, Bexhill	TN39 3JX	50	87,317	73,414	13,904	13.214	8.581	£12,103.86
1900090777521	SP B, Restaurant, Marina Bexhill On Sea	TN40 1DA	50	55,000	44,000	11,000	12.524	8.560	£7,783.56
1900090544834	Napier House, Bexhill	TN39 5BF	50	47,485	38,236	9,249	12.735	8.551	£6,918.93
1900090142752	Compressor Station Fairlight, Fairlight	TN35 4DJ	50	45,363	32,287	13,076	12.557	8.570	£6,451.55

Table 9: Electricity consumption 2017: Half hourly meters – highest use

The electricity alone for the Town Hall costs in the region of £38,000 per year. This excludes gas, water and wastewater. The Treasurer's building will see a reduction following the installation of solar panels in March 2019.

Gas Usage

The table below sets of the Council owned buildings which consumed the highest levels of gas during 2017.

Site name and address	Total Consumption (kWh)	Total Contract cost (£/period)
Town Hall Office, Bexhill	145,492	£4,609.41
Town Hall Treasurers, Bexhill	123,624	£3,978.71
Print Room 2 Amherst Road	30,219	£795.47

Table 10: Gas consumption 2017: Council buildings - highest use

Water Usage

The table below sets of the Council owned assets which consumed the highest levels of water during financial year 2017/18

Site name and address	water in		water out
	Total Consumption CuM	Total Contract cost (£/period)	Total contract cost
Town Hall Office, Bexhill	1,038	£1,871.60	£1,513.66
Town Hall Treasurers, Bexhill	391	£707.69	£866.05
Napier House	588	£1,023.28	£1,299.05
The Polegrove	1,718	£3,008.74	£1,571.07
Egerton Park	430	£772.76	
Little Common Rec	533	£930.51	£1,228.87

Table 11: Water consumption 2017/18 – Council buildings – highest usage

Car use/mileage

The table below sets out the mileage claims for Rother employees by month and totals from 2014/15 to 2016/17

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Total miles	280,804	288,248	257,937
Total cost	£37,679	£31,678	£27,187

This is an average of 275,000 miles claims each year by RDC staff, at an average cost of £32,000.

Table 12: Rother employees total mileage and costs 2014/15 – 2016/17

To put that into perspective, that is:

4,033 times around the Rother district

(it's about 60 miles of road to travel around the parameter of Rother)

or:

9.7 times around the earth

(the circumference of planet Earth is 24,901 miles)

or:

A trip to the moon

(which is around 238,855 miles away from Earth)

and that is also:

96.6 TONNES of CO2

(a typical car produces 4.6 tonnes per 11,500 miles)

Flexible working

There are several environmental benefits to flexible working, not least of all less reliance on car use and less accommodation requirement.

The table below shows the percentage of our workforce currently using flexible working against targets agreed.

	Employees using flexible working (%)	Target (%)
2016/17	14.10	14
2017/18	15	15
2018/19	24.60	20
2019/20		26

Table 13: total percentage of employees using flexible working models 2016/17 – 2019/20

Paper use

During the last three years, Rother used an average of over 9million sheets of paper (3,788 boxes) per year, costing the Council over £56,000. The Council have undertaken a project to reduce the amount of paper used as part of its 'Lean' project. This will result in savings of 83,000 sheets of paper per year.

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Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030



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Environment Strategy for Rother 2020 - 2030

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Foreword

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Background

Climate Change is undoubtedly the greatest challenge facing our society. The scientific evidence of climate change is overwhelming; the impact will be severe. Human activities are estimated to have caused approximately 1.0°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, with a likely range of 0.8°C to 1.2°C. Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate¹. Potential impacts of global warming include increased temperatures, extreme weather conditions, flood risks and rising sea levels. The UK Climate Change Risk Assessment² identifies six priority risk areas: flooding, high temperatures, water supply shortages, natural capital, food production; and pests and diseases. The UK Climate Change Act 2008 set a statutory target to reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions by 80% from 1990 by 2050. In May 2019, the UK Committee on Climate Change recommended that the UK Government increase the statutory target to Net-Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The Government has now adopted this target.

Solutions are available to build resilience and transform our energy supplies, creating new opportunities for a low-carbon economy. Technology is improving and the cost is reducing. Many solutions provide additional benefits from enhancing biodiversity, improving health and wellbeing to providing a driver for economic renewal which has the potential to localise our economies.

Rother District Council's Environment Strategy sets out the Council's vision for reducing our impact on the environment, including detailed action plans which set out how we will deliver on our commitment to make Rother District carbon neutral by 2030. We have set ambitious targets to be carbon neutral as an organisation by 2030; but it is clear we cannot reach more ambitious district wide targets without support from the Government, and without taking a co-ordinated approach working closely with district leaders and stakeholder partners.

We have the following priorities areas:

1. Becoming a smart digital district
2. Green Economy
3. Improving air quality
4. Dealing with waste in a more sustainable way
5. Sustainable energy production
6. Protecting biodiversity
7. Construction and Existing Buildings
8. Environmentally Friendly Council

A data review which covers the district and the organisation has been completed in order to inform this strategy and its delivery plan. The data review includes the following:

- Co2 emissions (for the district)
- Walking and cycling (for the district)
- Low emission vehicles (for the district)
- Recycling rates (for the district)
- Noise pollution (for the district)
- Superfast broadband coverage (for the district)
- Electricity, gas and water usage (for the organisation)
- Car use/mileage (for the organisation)
- Flexible working (for the organisation)
- Paper use (for the organisation)

¹ Global Warming of 1.5c: An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming – Summary for Policy Makers. (https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf)

²Source:https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/584281/uk-climate-change-risk-assess-2017.pdf

Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan
We have three policy themes which provide a framework for the delivery plan:

1. CLEAN GROWTH – ensuring the impact of development is not detrimental to the environment, that we consider the environment through our planning policies and own development and economic regeneration initiatives.
2. HEALTHY PLACES – putting in place policies and encouraging initiatives which have a positive impact on the environment and the district.
3. SUSTAINABLE SERVICES – leading by example: ensuring that minimum impact on the environment is core to the Council’s operations and services provision.

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Strategic Context

The Paris Agreement

The Paris Agreement is the first truly global effort to reduce emissions. To date, 160 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) parties have made voluntary pledges to reduce emissions up to 2030, including China, the US and the European Union (on behalf of the UK and other EU nations).

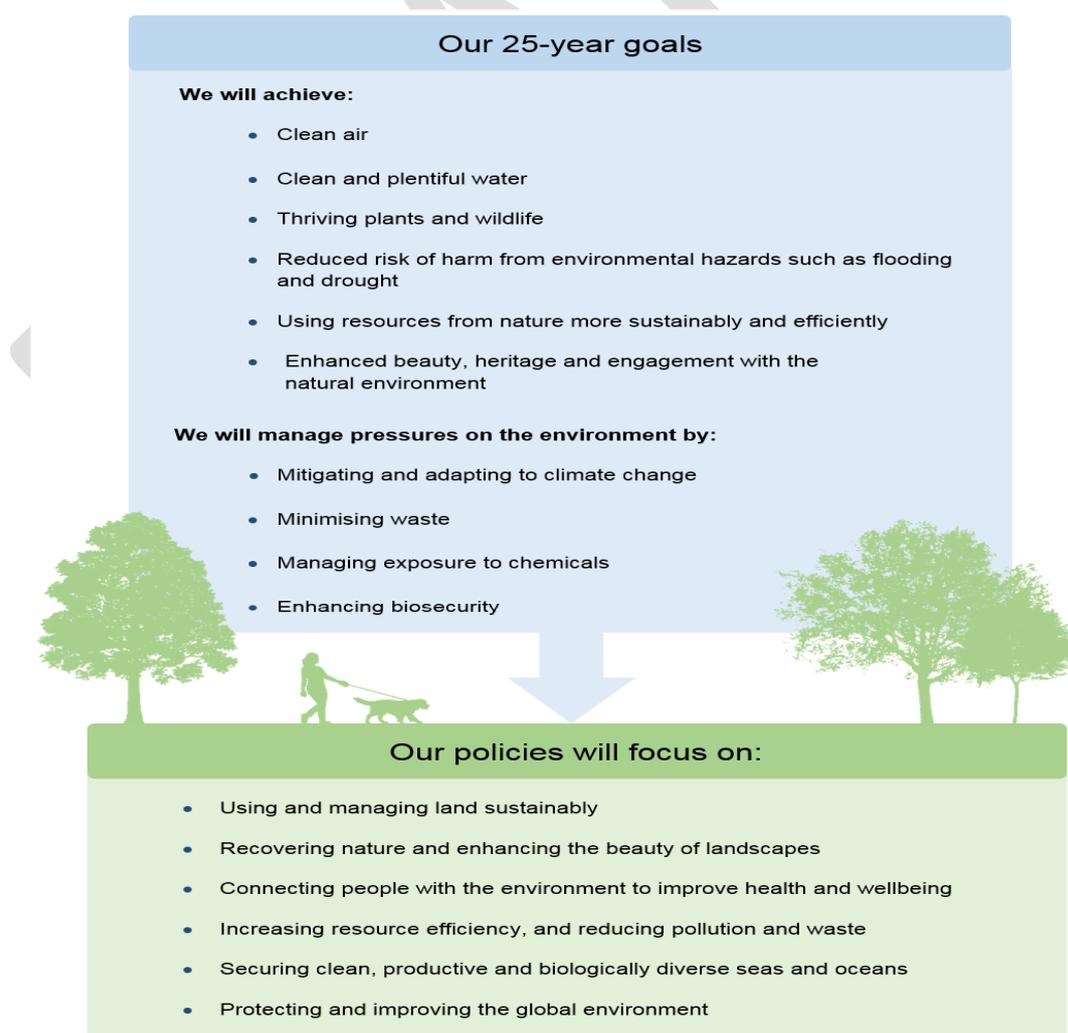
The main aim of the Paris Agreement is to hold the increase in global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit warming to 1.5°C.

Overall, the current pledges would lead to lower global emissions compared to previous expectations. But further action will be required to keep warming to below 2°C or 1.5°C.

National Context

The UK Climate Change Act commits the UK Government by law to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050.

The Government's 25 year Environment Plan sets out the action they will take to deliver cleaner air and water, and to protect threatened species and provide richer wildlife habitats. A summary of its goals and policies is set out below.



Source: UK 25 year Environment Plan (A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment)

Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan

The Environment Bill puts into legislation a series of environmental principles and establishes an Office for Environmental Protection, which will have scrutiny, advice and enforcement functions. It also makes provision for the setting of long-term, legally binding environmental targets in four “priority areas” of air quality, water, biodiversity, and resource efficiency and waste reduction, along with the production of statutory Environmental Improvement Plans (the first being the January 2018 25 Year Environment Plan).

Future Homes Standard

Homes are a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions responsible for 15% of the UK's total emissions in 2018. What's more – unlike other sectors such as business, transport and energy supply – residential homes saw emission levels rise between 2017 and 2018.

The Government is planning to introduce a new Future Homes Standard, helping us towards that net zero goal. Homes being built now will still be there in 2050 so getting them built right and to high environmental standards is a crucial part of meeting the targets. The Government aims to introduce the Future Homes Standard by 2025.

Initially, the Future Homes Standard will change Parts L (conservation of fuel and power), F (ventilation) and Part 6 (energy efficiency) of the Building Regulations.

Regional Context

A local Energy Strategy has been completed by three Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) – Coast To Capital, Enterprise M3 (EM3) and South East LEP (SELEP) – referred to as the ‘tri-LEP’. These cover a large geographical area including Hampshire, Surrey, West and East Sussex, Kent, and Essex. Rother District Council is represented on the SELEP.

The shared vision for energy in the TRI-LEP region is:

“To become a leader for sustainable energy production within the UK, powering innovative, decarbonised and clean economic growth”.

The strategy sets out five priority themes with project models:

Priority theme	Project models
Low carbon heating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• District Heat Networks – support the construction of DHN projects across the south east of England• Off gas grid homes – connect off-grid homes to the gas grid• Hydrogen injection into the natural gas grid – create the pathway for hydrogen to be injected into the natural gas grid
Renewable generation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offshore wind development – encourage further inward investment and economic development of the south east of England in offshore wind• Solar and microgrid on landfill sites – Build solar arrays on council owned landfill sites to generate an income and reduce emissions• Biomass fuel supply chain development – support the development of a biomass supply chain to utilise natural resources of the south east of England• Solar energy for Network Rail – support the development of renewables to power a significant regional energy consumer• Car parks – solar potential – invest in solar car ports to increase

	utilisations of car park land
Energy saving and efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy efficiency insulation improvements in homes – increase energy efficiency of domestic properties to EPC C or above • SME support programme – expand LOCASE programme to whole of south east to develop the supply chain ready for clean growth and low carbon opportunities, by targeting grant funding into small businesses
Smart energy system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing and community micro grids – locally built and owned microgrids on new housing and community developments to increase retention of energy value locally
Transport revolution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EV charging and hydrogen fuelling infrastructure scale up – support ultra-low emissions vehicle charging infrastructure scale up across the region • Compressed natural gas (CNG) fleet fuelling – support roll out of CNG for HGV and refuse vehicles, supporting a shift away from diesel • Ports – move to on-site renewable power – generate more renewable power at ports

East Sussex County Council is in the process of developing a new Environment Strategy. The first Environment Strategy for East Sussex was adopted in 2011. It brought together the high level aims, objectives and actions of a wide range of organisations in East Sussex, including Rother District Council into one shared, long-term strategic environmental plan for the county. Since 2011 there have been significant changes to national, regional and local policy and strategies and a renewed strategy is planned which seeks to align with national, regional and local strategies.

Local Context: Planning Policy

Existing National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (the Framework), published in February 2019, explains the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. At a very high level, the objective of sustainable development can be summarised as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Framework sets out three overarching objectives for achieving sustainable development, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways. Paragraph 8 of the Framework lists those three objectives as follows:

- a) an economic objective – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;

- b) a social objective – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering a well-designed and safe built environment, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities’ health, social and cultural well-being; and

Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan

c) an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

Existing Local Planning Policy

The Development Plan for Rother includes saved policies from the Rother District Council Local Plan (2006), the Rother Local Plan Core Strategy, five separate neighbourhood plans including Crowhurst, Rye, Salehurst and Robertsbridge, Sedlescombe and Ticehurst, together with the Waste and Minerals Plan (2013) and Waste and Minerals Site Plan (2017). In addition, the Development and Site Allocations Plan was formally adopted at full Council on 16th December 2019.

The Core Strategy sets out the Council's vision and objectives and provides broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development, guiding development to the most sustainable locations, and the provision of supporting infrastructure both for the district as a whole and for its towns and rural areas. It also contains 'core policies' addressing key issues facing the district in relation to sustainable resource management, community development, housing, the economy, the environment and transport.

In terms of protecting the environment, there are specific policies (see Appendix 2 for details) that protect the landscape (including the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty), design quality, biodiversity and green space, flood risk management and flood risk and development. There are also two policies relating to sustainable resource management: SRM1 (towards a low carbon future) and SRM2 (water supply and wastewater management).

Local Evidence/Background Papers

The Council has produced a range of relevant environmental background papers which support the Local Plan. These are available to view on the Planning Policy part of the Rother website in the 'Environment' section of background evidence. The background papers include:

- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment – Levels 1 & 2 (2008). This will be updated as part of the Core Strategy review.
- Low Carbon and Renewable Potential Study (January 2010).
- An Ancient Woodland Inventory (October 2010).
- A Green Infrastructure Study (August 2011), together with an Addendum (November 2016) – identifies spaces that contribute to green infrastructure in the district and to identify potential opportunities for future green infrastructure provision.
- Water, People, Places (September 2013) – this guidance outlines the process for integrating sustainable drainage systems (SUDS) into the master planning of large and small developments.
- Water Efficiency Background Paper (June 2016).
- Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Background Paper (November 2016).

Limitations of the Planning System

The national and local policies and guidance referred to above relate primarily to new development, including new build dwellings and commercial properties. There is obviously a large amount of existing housing stock and commercial buildings within the district, some of which is dated and inefficient, which the planning regime has little influence over improving.

In addition, there are many forms of development that can be carried out without having to apply for planning permission, known as permitted development rights. Over recent years, the Government has significantly increased the range of permitted development rights meaning that even more development can be carried out without any control from local planning authorities. For example, there are permitted development rights available that, subject to a prior notification procedure, allow certain existing office blocks to be converted to residential units. In doing so planning policies relating to energy efficiency cannot be applied.

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Our Vision

The vision for this strategy is set out below:

The air will be cleaner as the need to travel will be reduced and those of us that do travel will travel by bike, public transport, electric vehicle, or on foot. The natural and built environment will be enhanced and protected for current and future communities. The Council will be a carbon neutral organization; the district will be tackling and adapting to climate change. More energy will come from renewable or low-carbon sources, such as solar. Fewer people will live in fuel poverty. Waste will be reduced. The district will be resilient to the impacts of climate change including heatwaves, droughts and flooding. We will each use less water. Everyone will play their role in reducing their impact on the environment.

Partnerships

As an organisation, Rother District Council will ensure our services and operations are delivered in an environmentally friendly way; much has been done already and the action plan included with this document sets out further action we will take to ensure we become a carbon neutral Council by 2030. But we also recognise a commitment to our contribution to have a carbon neutral district, and that this cannot be done in isolation. We will commit to working with partners, businesses and residents to do everything we can to meet carbon neutral goals before the Government's 2050 target and by 2030 if we can. The action plan in this document sets out some of the actions required, and where we need to work in partnership with others to ensure delivery.

Some of these partnerships are in place already; for example, we are working closely with our District and Borough partners and East Sussex County Council to develop plans for an electric vehicle charging network across the county. Other partnerships are emerging and have yet to be established.

What Rother District Council have already done

Solar panels were installed on the rooftops of the Amherst Road building and the Bexhill Museum in March 2019. Since installation, this has saved over 69 tonnes of CO2 emissions across both sites. For Amherst Road, based on the first seven months of solar, it is estimated emissions will be reduced from 77 tonnes in 2018 to around 40 tonnes for the current year. This could achieve an EPC rating of B.

Rother District Council has introduced flexible or 'agile' working. This allows officers to work away from the Town Hall, reducing traveling especially for those people who live outside of Bexhill. At October 2019, 56 officers (or 24.6% of the workforce) are formally registered for agile working. If each of those officers worked one day per week at home, and saved an average 10 miles round trip for commuting, approximately 26,800 miles should be saved annually, reducing CO2 emissions by over 10 tonnes per year.

Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan

The Cycle to Work scheme was introduced at the Council in 2009. This scheme allows employees to purchase a quality bike at a reduced cost, and for the repayments to come out of salaries. This encourages people to ditch the car and cycle to work instead. Since inception, around 80 employees have benefitted from the scheme. Not only does this help the environment, but there are added health benefits.

Rother has introduced a programme of sites for whip planting, tree planting and environmental grass.

As part of the Rother 2020 income and efficiency programme we have been reviewing the business processes carried out in service areas. Whilst the main focus is to reduce overheads, the added benefit is the identified reduction in paper, printing and postage. If all of the recommended solutions are implemented in areas that have been reviewed, over 83,000 sheets of paper would be saved, which could save 348 kg of CO₂. This would require investment in technological solutions to avoid the paper and printing.

In 2012/13 a programme of refurbishment, including new roof and windows was undertaken on the town hall.

An Environmentally Friendly Council – Our Commitment

The Council employs over 260 people and has assets throughout the district. We are responsible for numerous services which are used by residents, businesses and visitors. As an organisation we are aware that we contribute to carbon generation in the district and it is our aim to inspire others through our own commitment to reduce our carbon footprint. We will commit to standards in the following areas:

- **Our decisions** – environmental implications are considered in the decision making process, particularly with regard to planning policy and where development occurs.
- **Our estate** – an audit of all Council owned assets to understand where retrofitting will produce reduced carbon benefits and to undertake actions to ensure all assets meet the carbon neutral standard.
- **Our Contractors** – work with our contractors to have in place sound environmental policies which align with our commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.
- **Our travel and transport** – a move from diesel and petrol vehicles to electric and other zero emission fuels for officers and Members using fleet cars or cars for business. A reduction in overall vehicle use, with increases in shared and active transport, by encouraging the use of sustainable travel solutions for staff and members, such as car sharing, cycling, walking, public transport, and teleconferencing to minimise the requirement for travelling to meetings.
- **Our procurement** – a responsible procurement policy.
- **Our construction** – all Council led developments are assessed for environmental impact and these assessments form part of the business case and decision making process.
- **Our workforce** – environmental awareness is raised and good environmental behaviour encouraged.
- **Our leadership role in the community** –our action plans and guidance for delivery of these commitments are clearly set out.

Action Plan Priorities

Rother District Council is committed to doing everything within our power to support environmental change. Many of the changes required are outside of our control. Where this is the case, we will work with partners to develop a district wide action plan, or lobby where necessary. This section sets out some of the changes that may contribute to meeting the Carbon Neutral target – and what we can do to bring forward the required changes.

1. Smart Digital District

The use of smart technologies can help address environmental challenges. For example, smart energy meters can help people reduce their energy use; smart heat networks can increase the efficiency of heat production and use. Smart lampposts can charge electric vehicles and supply Wi-Fi and local information. Digital connectivity, including the rollout of 5G can support changing working patterns that enable environmental improvements.

ACTIONS:

- We will work with partners to take forward initiatives enabling Rother to become a ‘smart digital district’ contributing to carbon neutrality with the added health and wellbeing benefits that this will bring.

2. Green Economy

A green economy is defined as low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in employment and income are driven by public and private investment into such economic activities, infrastructure and assets that allow reduced carbon emissions and pollution, enhanced energy and resource efficiency, and prevention of the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services.

There are some challenges to developing a green economy around development, particularly in terms of local knowledge and skills which are based on traditional building methods. There is little the Council can do in isolation to remedy this and therefore developing partnerships is vital.

ACTIONS:

- We will work with partners to encourage the retraining and reskilling of people in retrofit, insulation and environmentally friendly industries to encourage a local ‘green economy’.
- We will boost the local economy by working with partners to create demand for low-carbon goods and services.
- We will support SME businesses to access funds and expertise for reducing carbon pollution.
- We will take forward plans for ethical banking that does not invest in fossil fuels.

3. Air Quality

Acting to reduce air pollution can also help to limit climate change, through reducing the number of dirty vehicles and encouraging more people to cycle and walk. This is because sources of air

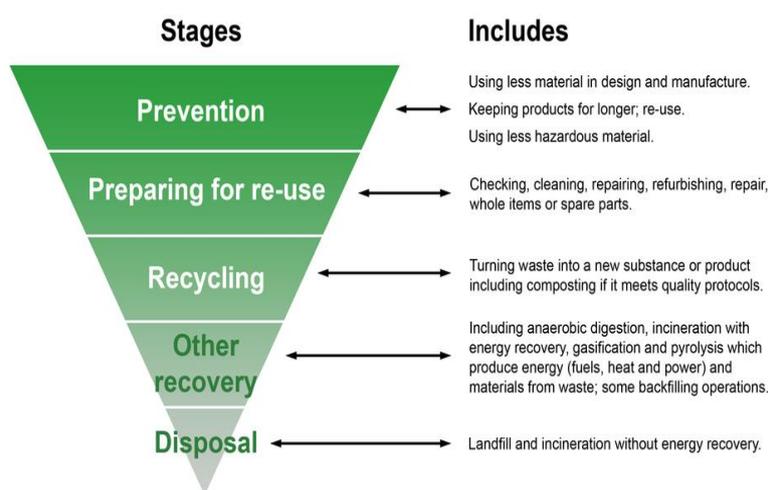
Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan
 pollution are also sources of greenhouse gas emissions. For example, transport is now the largest-emitting sector of the UK economy, accounting for 28% of UK greenhouse gas emissions in 2017³.

ACTIONS:

- We will explore options to make urban areas, such as Bexhill town centre, car free or restricted vehicular access.
- We will explore the use of future planning policy to require electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking to all new homes and businesses
- We will work with East Sussex County Council and our District and Borough partners to deliver an Electric Vehicle Plan for the County which will bring forward EV charging points across the district.
- We will reduce the need to own or use a car through managing developments in the Local Plan.
- We will bring forward initiatives which encourage walking and cycling; this includes ensuring walking and cycling friendly development is encouraged through Planning Policy.
- We will explore ways to incentivise taxi drivers to take up electric vehicle use.
- We will explore options with partners and contractors to move away from diesel vehicles to electric fleet (e.g. waste contract).

4. Waste

It should be acknowledged that the majority of waste can be avoided and can become a valuable resource. We want our strategy to be aspirational, but there are certainly challenges to be faced, not least in terms of the ongoing financial pressures faced by many individuals and businesses as well as the public sector. Despite this, we must re-think our whole approach to waste and resource management and explore new approaches and opportunities, including moving towards a more ‘circular economy’ through a ‘Waste Hierarchy’, where goods and materials are constantly re-used and recycled rather than discarded as waste – this can help contribute to protecting both the economy and the environment.



The ‘waste hierarchy’ ranks waste management options according to what is best for the environment. It gives top priority to preventing waste in the first place. When waste is created, it gives priority to preparing it for re-use, then recycling, then recovery, and last of all disposal (e.g. landfill).

Table 1: The Waste Hierarchy (Source: www.DEFRA.gov.uk)

ACTIONS:

³ Committee on Climate Change: reducing UK Emissions 2018 update <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>

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- We will encourage a focus on ‘prevent’ and ‘re-use’ through delivery of ‘top tips’ for residents through MyAlerts.
- We will promote waste reduction in Council offices, including implementing a plan to reduce/eliminate single-use plastics.
- We will share expertise with other councils, public bodies and local businesses.

5. Energy

It is important to consider sustainable energy production as part of a strategy to take forward carbon improvements. Spatial planning has a fundamental role in the implementation of successful and long term sustainable energy solutions – creating and supporting spatially appropriate energy solutions. However, this cannot be delivered by Rother in isolation; it will require working with other agencies and stakeholders. There are many options including district heating networks, biomass fuel supply, onshore and offshore wind farms, and solar PV and microgrids. The Local Energy Strategy completed by the TRI-LEP (see page 8) sets out their vision:

‘To become a leader for sustainable energy production within the UK, powering innovative, decarbonised and clean economic growth’

ACTIONS:

- We will support the TRI-LEP in delivery of sustainable energy solutions for the district of Rother.
- We will consider the scope for sustainable energy solutions as part of the Local Plan Review.
- We will support communities to develop localised energy solutions.

6. Biodiversity

Over 82% of Rother District falls within the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (ANOB) - a landscape of national importance which was designated as an AONB in 1983. The figure for total woodland in the district is 9,751ha⁴ (only including woodland parcels greater than 2ha) and Rother has the highest Ancient Woodland cover (as a percentage of its area) of all districts in the South East region⁵. If we were to add ancient woodland less than 2ha in size, total woodland in the district is around 10,211ha.

The value of trees in the landscape of Rother District cannot be overstated. They provide shelter, shade, screening and make an important contribution to the visual quality of both rural and urban areas. In villages and towns they can soften the built environment. They also play an important role in the ecological cycle, providing habitats for many species of birds, mammals and insects. Trees can only help reduce the negative impacts of a changing climate - trees remove carbon dioxide from the air. Trees can also help to manage the risk of flooding, and provide shade and cooling benefits. They are a renewable source of energy today, and a sustainable raw material for the future bio-economy.

ACTIONS:

⁴ Source: National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (Forestry Commission 2000)

⁵ Source: Revision of Ancient Woodland for Rother District, October 2010

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- We will encourage residents and community groups to take part in the ‘Big Climate Fightback’ by planting a tree.

<https://campaigns.woodlandtrust.org.uk/page/46713/data/1?locale=en-GB>

- We will set up a ‘meet the target’ page on the Rother District Council website which includes all reported tree planting and shows progress to ‘doubling tree cover’ in Rother.
- Where possible, we will increase tree coverage throughout the district on council owned land.
- We will reduce verge cutting and mowing; encourage wildflowers.
- We will support homes facing medium/high risk of flooding and encouraging flood resilience/defence measures. We will review our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- We will develop a pollinator and pesticide policy which will detail how the Council will maintain, protect and enhance key habitats over the long-term for the many species of insects that pollinate crops and wildflowers and commits the Council to avoiding pesticides whenever possible on its sites including parks, recreation grounds, children’s play areas, sports fields, downland, cemeteries and nature reserves.

7. Construction and Existing Buildings

The Rother District is expected to accommodate significant housing growth over the coming years; if the district is to become carbon neutral, the way development takes place must change. Rother’s Local Plan is undergoing a review – this provides an opportunity to consider implementing policies which encourage greener development. But the Council must also lead through its own developments and procurement.

ACTIONS:

- We will require homes built on council owned land to be Passivhaus or similar, wherever possible
- We will encourage suitable low carbon and renewable energy development schemes, through the Local Plan Review
- We will seek to mitigate the environmental impact of new development in the District through introduction of specific planning policy
- We will review all Council office accommodation and take action where it does not meet environmental standards
- We will consider the introduction of a levy to support offsetting carbon impact of new developments
- We will consider the use of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) for schemes to offset carbon impact or towards cycling and walking infrastructure; and traffic calming, restriction, or removal
- We will ensure a focus on green spaces and tree planting for all new build schemes, where appropriate.

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- We will ensure all Council led developments are assessed for environmental impact and these assessments form part of the business case and decision making process.
- We will actively seek funding opportunities to support retrofitting existing housing throughout the district.
- Procurement: We will request environmental policies from tenderers for all contracts worth over £5,000.
- Procurement: We will ensure environmental issues are considered within the social value requirement within contracts worth over £50,000.
- We will use local businesses where possible to reduce travelling requirements.

8. Environmentally Friendly Council

The Council has committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2030; meeting this target requires a step change in the way the Council delivers its services, from ensuring environmental considerations are core to decision making to considering how officers and Councillors travel to and from work and throughout the district.

ACTIONS:

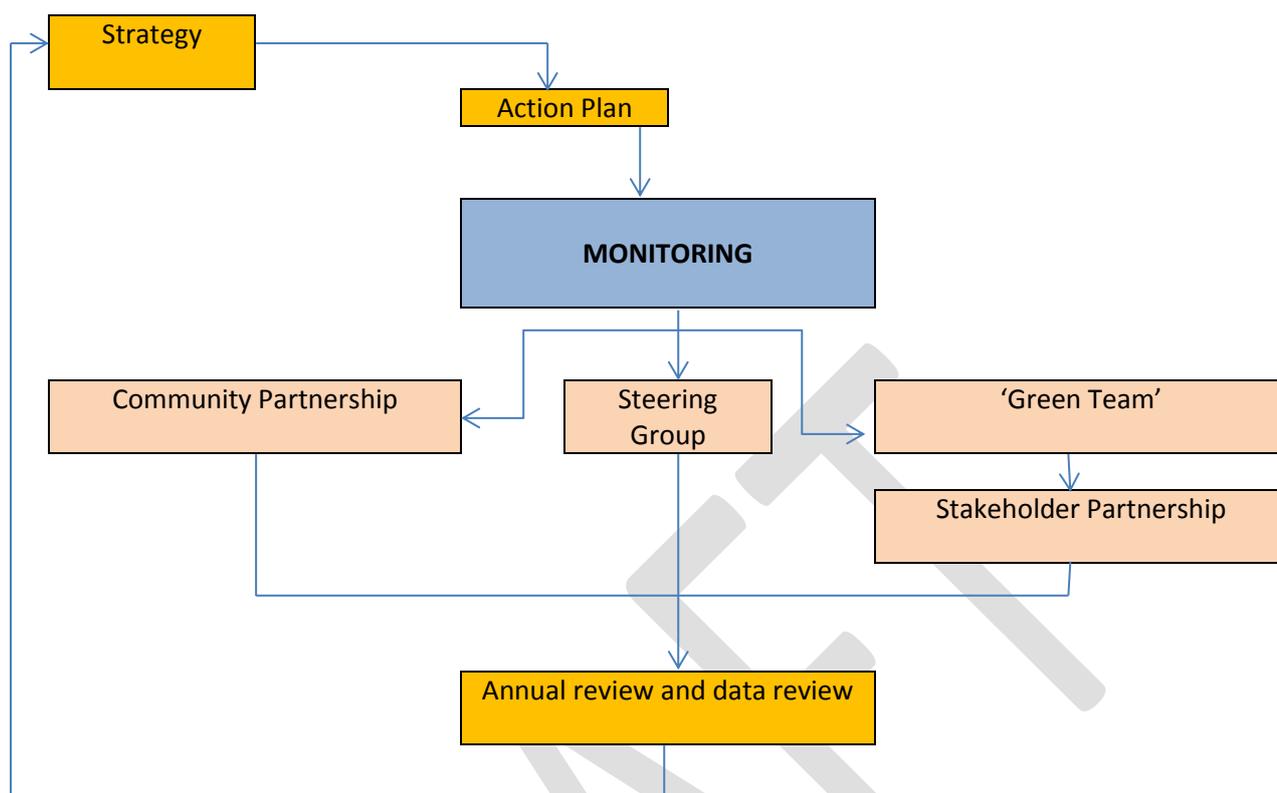
- We will ensure environmental implications are considered in RDC reports, policies and strategies and decision making processes, by ensuring all managers are aware of the policy and able to demonstrate how they comply with it through the inclusion of an environment impact assessment summary on all committee reports.
- We will increase options for flexible working for our staff.
- We will develop an officer working group or ‘Green Team’ of ‘climate champions’ within the organisation to take forward a ‘culture shift’ within the organisation; and encourage other organisations and local businesses to do the same.
- We will share expertise through the ‘Green Teams’ with other councils, public bodies and local businesses.
- We will undertake a review of existing office accommodation to ensure the Council is meeting its carbon neutral commitment.

Monitoring and Review

The Environment Strategy represents the high level priorities for Rother in terms of environment and meeting our carbon neutral target, and the Action Plan sets out how we will meet those priorities and the target.

The Environment Strategy impacts on the Council, its residents, partners and businesses and it is important that everyone’s views are considered and all have an opportunity to ensure the action plan is delivered and targets are met. The following diagram sets out how we intend to ensure this happens – through a community partnership, steering group and a council ‘green team’ who will work with partners and businesses in the district. Monitoring of the action plan through these

Appendix 2: Consultation document – draft Environment Strategy and Action Plan groups and associated indicators will take place annually and feed into a review of the strategy and its action plan to ensure we are on the right track to becoming carbon neutral by 2030.



Resources

Delivery of this strategy will not be possible without specific resources. Initially this will be specialist officer time, and existing officer support and a small revenue budget. The benefits to having in place this additional resource will include the ability to co-ordinate and access partner resources and apply for funding – necessary to take forward our more ambitious plans such as the provision of a ‘smart digital district’ or to investigate the option of energy generation.

As with all public sector organisations, we need to be considerate of resource availability. The Council recognise the impact of climate change and have prioritised meeting a carbon neutral target by 2030, including providing the resource required to do this. The delivery plan at this stage is ‘high level’; much work needs to be done to cost its delivery and therefore the Council’s Steering Group will need to prioritise areas of its delivery according to the value provided.

Conclusion

This strategy and its delivery plan are ambitious; meeting a target to be a carbon neutral organisation and district by 2030, 20 years ahead of the national target, represents a huge challenge to the Council, but one that it is committed to overcoming. The delivery plan sets out the actions required over this next 10 years to become carbon neutral, but we must accept that it requires not just our commitment but that of many other partners, including residents. Tackling the issues outlined in this strategy and delivery on the plan will be ongoing and may require adjusting over the

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next 10 years, therefore the strategy must be kept under review and the Council will consider new initiatives and opportunities as they arise rather than be wedded to the ideas set out in this document. Some of the actions in the delivery plan may not be deliverable, we may need to reconsider and make adjustments; this will be done through the monitoring and review structure set out on page 18.

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Delivery Plan

1. CLEAN GROWTH – ensuring the impact of development is not detrimental to the environment, that we consider the environment through our planning policies and own development and economic regeneration initiatives.
2. HEALTHY PLACES – putting in place policies and encouraging initiatives which have a positive impact on the environment and the district.
3. SUSTAINABLE SERVICES – leading by example: ensuring that minimum impact on the environment is core to the Council’s operations and services provision.

Smart Digital District: Work with partners to take forward initiatives that bring Rother into the smart digital age					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a ‘Smart Digital District’ action plan with partners • Access funding opportunities • Deliver action plan 	2021 2021 - 2030 2025 - 2030	TBA	ESO	ESCC
Green Economy:					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • work with partners to encourage the retraining and reskilling of people in retrofit, insulation and environmentally friendly industries to encourage a local ‘green economy’ with particular emphasis on lower economy areas across the district • Boost the local economy by creating demand for low-carbon goods and services 	2021 - 2028 2022 - 2025	TBA	ESO	ESCC Education Private sector business
HEALTHY PLACE	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support SME businesses to access funds and expertise for reducing carbon pollution 	Ongoing	TBA	ESO	Private sector business
SUSTAINABLE	Action	Timescale	Delivery	Lead	Partners required

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SERVICES			Target	Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take forward plans for ethical banking that does not invest in fossil fuels 	2025		ADR	
Air Quality: Acting to reduce air pollution that can also help to limit climate change					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore options to make urban areas, such as Bexhill town centre, car free or restricted vehicular access Explore the use of future planning policy to require electric vehicle charging points and cycle parking to all new homes and businesses Work with ESCC and our District and Borough partners to deliver an Electric Vehicle Plan for the County which will bring forward EV charging points across the district Reduce the need to own or use a car through managing developments in the Local Plan 	2025 - 2030	TBA	ESO	ESCC, Highways
		2021		HoSS&P	
		2021		ESO	ESCC, D&B partners
		2021 - 2030		HoSS&P	
HEALTHY PLACE	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bring forward initiatives which encourage walking and cycling; this includes ensuring walking and cycling friendly development is encouraged through Planning Policy Explore options to promote and accelerate the take-up of electric vehicles in the District 	2021	TBA	HoSS&P	
		2021		ESO	
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to incentivise taxi drivers to take up electric vehicle use Explore options with partners and contractors to move away from diesel vehicles to electric fleet (e.g. waste contract) Undertake a grey fleet review to ensure car use is reduced to only where absolutely necessary and initiatives are in place to discourage car use where possible, including electric pool cars for visiting officers 	2021	TBA	HoSEHL&CS	Taxi drivers
		2021 - 2028			Business partners, contractors
		2020 - 2021			

PRIORITY: Waste: Goods and materials are re-used and recycled rather than discarded as waste					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider options for storage of bins on communal schemes eg underground, easier recycling 	2022 - 2025		HoSH&C	
HEALTHY PLACES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage a focus on 'prevent' and 're-use' through delivery of 'top tips' for residents through MyAlerts 	On going		ESO	Residents
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote waste reduction in Council offices, including implementing a plan to reduce/eliminate single-use plastics Share expertise with other councils, public bodies and local businesses through the 'Green Team' and Stakeholder partnership 	2020 2020 - ongoing		ESO ESO	Business sector partners, public sector partners
PRIORITY: Energy					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt planning strategy and criteria to encourage development of community owned renewable energy generation (such as solar power or wind farms) 	2021		HoSP&S	
HEALTHY PLACES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore investing in local green energy, including public-private partnerships and community owned schemes, or forming a non-profit, municipally owned green energy company such as district heating 	2022 - 2030 Ongoing		ESO ESO	SELEP, ESCC, Local communities

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackle fuel poverty, through energy efficiency measures appropriate for listed and character buildings Explore opportunities for funding of private sector housing retrofit schemes to improve the environmental impact and fuel efficiency of the District's housing stock Enforce minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rental sector 	2020 - 2030		HoSESL&CS HoSESL&CS	Health (CCG NHS) SELEP, Public & private sector partners, residents Landlords
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify council owned sites suitable for renewable energy eg car parks for solar pv Undertake an audit of all council-owned properties with the objective of retrofitting to the highest possible environmental standards where appropriate and cost effective to do so, including the use of renewable energy such as thermal, solar, PV or heat pumps on all buildings 	2021 2020		HoSAT&R ESO	
PRIORITY: Biodiversity					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	N/A				
HEALTHY PLACES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage residents and community groups to take part in the 'Big Climate Fightback' by planting a tree https://campaigns.woodlandtrust.org.uk/page/46713/data/1?locale=en-GB Set up a 'meet the target' page on the RDC website which includes all reported tree planting and shows progress to 'doubling tree cover' in Rother Increase tree coverage throughout the district on council owned land 	Ongoing 2020 Ongoing Ongoing		ESO ESO ESO HoSH&C	Residents Residents, private sector businesses, all stakeholders ESCC

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce verge cutting and mowing; encourage wildflowers 				
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support homes facing medium/high risk of flooding and encouraging flood resilience/ defence measures. We will review our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Develop a pollinator and pesticide policy which will detail how the Council will maintain, protect and enhance key habitats over the long-term for the many species of insects that pollinate crops and wildflowers and commits the Council to avoiding pesticides whenever possible on its sites including parks, recreation grounds, children’s play areas, sports fields, downland, cemeteries and nature reserves 	Ongoing 2020		TBA HoSH&C	ESCC
PRIORITY: Construction and Existing Stock: Ensure the impact of development is not detrimental to the environment					
CLEAN GROWTH	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Require homes build on council owned land to be Passivhaus or similar 	2020 – 2030		HoSAT&R	Private sector developers, registered providers
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage low carbon and renewable energy development schemes, through the Local Plan review 	2021		HoSP&S	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate the effects of new development in the District through introduction of specific planning policy 	2021		HoSP&S	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the introduction of a levy to support offsetting carbon impact of new developments 	2021		HoSP&S		
HEALTHY PLACES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively seek funding opportunities to support retrofitting existing stock throughout the district 	2020		ESO	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the of Community Infrastructure Levy 	2021		HoSP&S	

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	(CIL) for schemes to offset carbon impact or towards cycling and walking infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a focus on green spaces and tree planting for all new build schemes 	2021		HoSP&S	
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure all Council led developments are assessed for environmental impact and these assessments form part of the business case and decision making process 	2020		HoSAT&R	East Sussex procurement hub partners East Sussex procurement hub partners
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement: Request environmental policies from tenderers for all contracts above £5,000 	2021		TBA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Procurement: Ensure environmental issues are considered within the social value requirement within contracts worth above £15,000 	2021		TBA	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use local businesses where possible to reduce travelling requirements 	Ongoing		TBA		
PRIORITY: Environmentally Friendly Council					
SUSTAINABLE SERVICES	Action	Timescale	Delivery Target	Lead Officer	Partners required
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure environmental implications are considered in RDC reports, policies & strategies and decision making processes, by ensuring all managers are aware of the policy and able to demonstrate how they comply with it through the inclusion of an environment impact assessment summary on all committee reports. Increase options for flexible working 	2020 – ongoing		EXECDIR	Private and public sector organisations Private and public sector organisations
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an officer working group or ‘Green Team’ of ‘climate champions’ within the organisation to take forward a ‘culture shift’ within the organisation; and encourage other organisations and local businesses to do the same 	2020		ESO	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share expertise through the ‘Green Teams’ with other councils, public bodies and local businesses 	Ongoing		ESO		

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake a review of existing office accommodation to ensure the Council is meeting its carbon neutral commitment 	2020		ESO	
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ESO	Environment and Sustainability Officer
HoSS&P	Head of Service, Strategy and Planning
HoSEHL&CS	Head of Service, Environmental Health, Licensing and Community Safety
HoSH&C	Head of Service, Housing and Community
HoSAT&R	Head of Service, Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration
EXECDIR	Executive Directors

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APPENDIX 1: SOURCE DOCUMENTS

The following source documents have been used to help inform this strategy.

The Environment Bill 2019

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvaud/1951/195104.htm>

A Green Future: Our 25 year Plan to Improve the Environment

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Global Warming of 1.5c: An IPCC Special Report on the Impacts of Global Warming – Summary for Policy Makers https://report.ipcc.ch/sr15/pdf/sr15_spm_final.pdf

The National Pollinator Strategy

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/794706/national-pollinator-strategy.pdf

Rother Green Party: 68 Proposals for Climate Action in Rother

https://rother.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/localparties/Rother_Green_Party/ROTHER%20GREEN%20PARTY%20-%2068%20PROPOSALS%20FOR%20CLIMATE%20ACTION%20IN%20ROTHER%20-%2018%20SEPTEMBER%202019.pdf

Rising to the Climate Crisis: A Guide for Local Authorities on Planning for Climate Change

<https://www.tcpa.org.uk/planning-for-climate-change>

South2East Local Energy Strategy <https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/south2east-energy-strategy>

33 Actions local authorities can take on climate change (Friends of the Earth)

<https://policy.friendsoftheearth.uk/insight/33-actions-local-authorities-can-take-climate-change>

A Green Future: Our 25 Year Plan to Improve the Environment

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/693158/25-year-environment-plan.pdf

Moving Beyond the Air Quality Crisis [http://www.ukhealthalliance.org/wp-](http://www.ukhealthalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Moving-beyond-the-air-quality-crisis-WEB.pdf)

[content/uploads/2018/10/Moving-beyond-the-air-quality-crisis-WEB.pdf](http://www.ukhealthalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Moving-beyond-the-air-quality-crisis-WEB.pdf)

Reducing UK emissions: 2018 Progress Report to Parliament [https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf)

[content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf](https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/CCC-2018-Progress-Report-to-Parliament.pdf)

IPBES Global Assessment Report <https://ip.panda.org/ipbes>

Energy South2East Local Energy Strategy

https://www.coast2capital.org.uk/storage/downloads/energy_south2east_-_energy_strategy-1554122644.pdf

Enabling Local Green Growth – OECD 2012 <http://www.oecd.org/cfe/leed/49387595.pdf>

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Appendix 2: Existing Local Planning Policies relating to environment

Policy SRM1: Towards a low carbon future states the following:

The strategy to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change is to:

- i. Require proposed developments of more than 10 dwellings or 1,000m² of non-residential floorspace to provide a comprehensive energy strategy and, for proposed developments of more than 100 dwellings or 50 apartments to require such a strategy to include an assessment of the potential for combined heat and power and district heating, subject to further assessment of the thresholds via a subsequent DPD and/or SPD.
- ii. Ensure that all developments meet prevailing energy efficiency standards, and encourage them to meet higher standards and pursue low carbon or renewable energy generation, where practicable, by fully recognising related costs in assessing viability and developer contributions.
- iii. Support stand-alone renewable and low carbon energy generation schemes, particularly those utilising solar, biomass and wind energy technologies, that: (a) do not have a significant adverse impact on local amenities, ecological and heritage assets or landscape character, and (b) in respect of locations in or adjacent to the High Weald AONB and other sensitive landscapes, are generally small in scale.
- iv. Achieve high levels of energy performance on the strategic mixed use developments to the north east of Bexhill, including by Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and/or wind energy generation.
- v. Reduce the carbon emissions from existing buildings by encouraging application of prevailing standards to whole buildings when extending them, supporting adaptations to be energy efficient, promoting take-up of Government energy efficiency schemes and supporting community-based energy infrastructure initiatives.
- vi. Adaptation through building in resilience to anticipated climatic changes, including through green infrastructure;
- vii. Promoting more sustainable travel patterns in accordance with transport policy TR2, and through widespread fast broadband coverage.
- viii. Expect new developments to provide and support recycling facilities.

Policy SRM2: Water Supply and Wastewater Management states:

Effective management of water resources will be supported by:

- i. Ensuring that the relevant water companies are aware of and have capacity to meet demands for water, wastewater and sewerage arising from new development.
- ii. Ensuring that new development does not have an adverse effect on the water quality and potential yield of water resources, in line with the objectives of the South East River Basin Management Plan, including reference to groundwater 'source protection zones'.
- iii. The promotion of sustainable drainage systems to control the quantity and rate of run-off as well as to improve water quality wherever practicable, and specifically for all development that creates impermeable surfaces within the hydrological catchment of the Pevensy Levels.
- iv. Safeguarding land for the possible raising of Bewl Water reservoir, and contributing to the development of plans that also secure Bewl Water as a recreational, economic and social amenity for the local community. (NB The safeguarded area will be defined through the Site Allocations process in conjunction with Wealden and Tunbridge Wells Councils).

- v. Ensuring that all development incorporates water efficiency measures appropriate to the scale and nature of the use proposed.

The Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) is effectively “part two” of the Council’s Local Plan and will, apart from those areas where Neighbourhood Plans are in preparation, replace the Local Plan (2006). It contains development policies and site allocation policies. The DaSA contains further environmental policies relating to landscape character and the AONB, strategic gaps, biodiversity and green space, sustainable drainage, land stability and environmental pollution. There are also three policies relating to resource management that are of particular relevance: DRM1 (water efficiency); DRM2 (renewable energy developments); and DRM3 (energy requirements).

Policy DRM1: Water Efficiency states:

New development should plan positively to minimise its impact on water resources. All new dwellings are required to be designed to achieve water consumption of no more than 110 litres per person per day.

Policy DRM2: Renewable Energy Developments states:

Proposals for low carbon and renewable energy schemes, including community-led initiatives, will be supported where they accord with Core Strategy policy SRM1, where applicable, and with other policies in this Plan, including DEN1, DEN2, DEN3, DEN4 and DEN7. Proposals for large-scale stand-alone wind turbine schemes would be incompatible with the objectives of environmental designations across the district, although smaller schemes will be considered in accordance with the paragraph above.

Policy DRM3: Energy Requirements states:

The extent to which a proposal incorporates renewable and low carbon energy technologies will be a factor weighing in the favour of a proposed development. Proposed developments of more than 100 dwellings or 10,000sqm of non-residential floorspace should demonstrate that due regard has been had to energy efficiency, including through the use of renewable and low carbon energy technologies, as part of their Design and Access Statement.

Please note that Policy DRM3 of the DaSA WILL replace SRM1(i) once adopted.

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Consultation Plan for Environment Strategy 2020

Consultation Plan period: 25th February 2020 to 18th May 2020

1. Consultation Mission

Rother District Council seeks to identify any gaps for inclusion and gather evidence of the potential impact of the proposed strategy and action plan, including the strength of feeling, and to identify potential future partners for action plan delivery from residents, local businesses, voluntary groups and charities, particularly environmental groups regarding the draft strategy and its action plan. This consultation will give the Members of Rother District Council (the councillors) further evidence to take into account when making a final decision on the content of the strategy and action plan.

2. Target Groups for Consultation

There are 11 main target groups for the consultation:

- Residents
- Businesses operating in Rother and representative business groups, including
 - Transport companies and vehicle suppliers
 - Utility companies – electricity, gas, water
 - Supermarkets
 - Restaurants
- Public sector organisations: Police, Fire & Rescue, County Council, parish councils, NHS CCG and health sector, East Sussex Local Authorities
- Voluntary groups and charities operating in Rother
- Environmental groups and active transport groups, walking and cycling groups
- Schools, colleges and young people
- Housing associations and other housing providers
- National Farmers Union (NFU)
- Contractors and service level agreement partners with Rother District Council
 - Waste and recycling
 - grounds maintenance
- All Rother parish and town councils
- Internal teams: Environmental Health, Strategy and Planning, Regeneration, housing development, Finance

3. Key Dates and Deadlines

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting for draft proposals and consultation plan – Monday, 27th January 2020

- Cabinet meeting to consider draft proposals and approve consultation plan – Monday, 10th February 2020
- Present draft proposals to Full Council – 24th February 2020
- Communication Plan period – 12 weeks (**25th February 2020 to 18th May 2020**)
- Completion of analysis of findings and draft report – June 2020
- Climate Steering Group meeting – June 2020
- Cabinet meeting on final proposals – July 2020
- Full Council – September 2020

4. **Communication and Consultation Methods**

4.1 Key messages:

- Why we want to have an environment strategy and action plan
- We want resident engagement and involvement in further developing the action plan
- We want those potentially affected to have their say and hear the impact on them and what they want the Council to take into account when making a final decision.
- We want to hear alternative suggestions and/or other evidence for inclusion.
- We are looking for partners to commit to helping deliver the action plan.

4.2 We plan to communicate the opportunity to consult, at a minimum as follows (subject to review during fieldwork period):

- At least two My Alerts notifications: in the first week of the consultation and again two weeks before closing reminding of closing date.
- Media releases on launch and one week prior to closing date
- Social media accounts on Facebook and Twitter, including:
 - Consultation coming up and start date
 - Launch of consultation on start date
 - Progress updates during the consultation period in order to encourage participation.
 - Key messages (above)
 - Feedback on key points being made by others or organisations (to improve quality of debate)
 - Count down to closing date in order to encourage participation.
 - Closing date notification
 - Progress post-consultation to provide feedback, such as when it goes to committee and Cabinet.
- Dedicated web page/s for the consultation on the Council's website (under Current Consultations). The web page will be updated

during the fieldwork period at least every fortnight with progress reports and updated on key milestones after consultation.

- Emailed invitations to consult with identified stakeholders with one reminder before the closing date for those who have not responded
- Posters displayed in public locations and distributed to invited stakeholders for display.
- Engagement events for stakeholder groups including:
 - Environmental strategy workshop/s
 - Exhibition

5. We plan to use these consultation methods and response gathering for target groups:

<p>Residents Including Rother Citizens Panel</p>	<p>Interactive exhibitions Web pages with draft strategy and action plan Further information and ways to respond Social media engagement Online response form/questionnaire In addition, we will accept emailed and posted responses and submissions of evidence</p>
<p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, Black, Asian and migrant ethnic communities recognising these are difficult to reach groups and may require additional targeting</p>	<p>As above and Invitations to participate sent to specific groups who represent these communities.</p>
<p>Businesses operating in Rother and representative business groups</p>	<p>As above (for residents) and Emailed invitation to participate with copy of draft strategy and action plan Invitation to attend appropriate events with recorded feedback during events</p>
<p>Public sector organisations: Police, Fire & Rescue, County Council, parish councils, NHS CCG and health sector</p>	<p>As above And distributed consultation posters for display</p>
<p>Voluntary groups and charities operating in Rother, e.g. premises and/or transport</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Environmental groups</p>	<p>As above</p>
<p>Schools, Bexhill College and young people</p>	<p>As above</p>

Housing associations and other housing providers	As above
National Farmers Union (NFU)	As Above
Contractors and service level agreement partners with Rother District Council	As above
Parish and town councils	As above

6. To help hard to reach groups of residents to reply to our consultation we will provide versions of the briefing document and questionnaire in large print because this is the main requested format. In addition, we will offer versions in another language or braille and easy read but these versions will be available on request.

7. Questions

These questions will be aimed at businesses, contractors, public sector partners, housing associations and schools

- a. What are you doing now that reduces your impact on the environment? Do you have an environment policy in place?
- b. What are you planning to do over the next five to seven years?
- c. What should the Council be doing to reduce its impact on the environment? Is there anything missing from the draft action plan that we should consider including?
- d. How interested are you in working in partnership with the Council and others on reducing your organisations impact on the environment?
- e. What other or further evidence do you have that you would like the Council to take into account before creating a final version of this strategy?

These questions will be aimed at residents and exhibition/workshop attendees:

- a. What should the Council be doing to reduce its impact on the environment? Is there anything missing from the draft action plan that we should consider including?
 - b. What could I do to reduce the impact my household and I have on the environment?
 - c. What support could the Council provide to help me reduce my impact on the environment?
8. We propose to ask the following questions in order to analyse responses by key groups:
- Who they are representing if from a group, organisation or business – to monitor for a cross section of local organisations
 - Residents only: Age group – to monitor for engagement because younger age groups are hard to access
 - Residents only: Ethnicity – to monitor for engagement because non White groups are hard to access
 - Residents only: Disabled, long term limiting illness or condition or not disabled.
 - Residents only: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transsexual, Queer, and migrant ethnic communities – to monitor for engagement as these groups are hard to reach
 - Residents only: Where they live in Rother? Bexhill, Battle, Rye, rural village or parish. – to monitor if we have responses from different parts of Rother.
 - Organisations only: Where they are located or operating from in Rother (address). Where they provide services across Rother outside their own premises e.g. transport of goods or services across the district.
9. **Risk and Contingency Plans**
- a. Low participation prevents good quality information and evidence.
 - Sending out more direct invitations
 - Reminders to those already invited to participate
 - Offer a prize draw as a reward for participation for residents
 - b. Challenge on the content, methods and quality of our consultation delays completion or undermines the quality of responses.
 - Follow this consultation plan
 - Inform all invited participants when (if) there is significant new information received and make it available on our website in case it might change their responses so that they can give due consideration of everything the council will use to make a decision.

- c. Hijacking the consultation by interest and campaign groups that, either by misinformation, omission or over-emphasis/focus on one or more issues, affects the quality of or range of responses and supplied evidence.
 - Good quality consultation documents
 - Good quality and frequent communications
 - Prepare to take back the initiative by increasing communication and updating key sources of information (documents, website)
 - Ensure we are targeting hard to reach groups
- d. Bleed of issues from other recent consultations – Council budget, Bexhill Governance Review
 - As above
- e. Called to account for the impact on the environment of undertaking a consultation: printing, power use, travel fuel.
 - Can we use alternatives?

Programme Office & Policy Team
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration Department
Rother District Council
08 January 2020

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	27 January 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference

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

- 1) the draft terms of reference for the proposed Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group at Appendix A be approved;
 - 2) the draft timetable for the activity of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group be added to the Work Programme; and
 - 3) the six Members to be appointed to the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group be agreed.
-

Head of Service: Joe Powell

Introduction

1. At the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 14 October 2019 it was resolved that an Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group be formed of six Members in order to investigate poverty locally and identify new ways of working to reduce poverty within the District.
2. The report highlighted that there are pockets of significant deprivation in Rother concentrated in parts of Bexhill and Rye. The causes of poverty and child poverty are multiple and complex and effective solutions that address the causes of poverty are likely to be similarly complex to achieve. The Council will be required to continue to coordinate with the full range of services tasked with alleviating the symptoms of poverty.
3. The report also noted that there are significant constraints in the influence the Council and local partner agencies can have on the factors that cause poverty and future activity is likely to continue to focus on alleviating its symptoms.

Terms of Reference

4. The purpose of this report is to present for approval a draft Terms of Reference for the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group that can be found at Appendix A. The Terms of Reference proposes a set of aims and objectives for the group as well as a timetable in order for the group to:
 - Gather evidence and information
 - Consolidate the evidence and agree recommendations

- Present a final report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee
5. The draft terms of reference identifies a number of resource implications in terms of supporting the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group to achieve its aims and objectives. These include the need for nominations to be made to the Group as well as external organisations to be identified and invited to present evidence to the Group.
 6. There will also be implications on Council resources when the Group is formed in order to support the delivery of the Group's recommendations to Cabinet to inform future Council policy.

Conclusion

7. The Draft Terms of Reference provide both a scope for the aims and objectives of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group; a mechanism by which any recommendations can be produced and a timeframe.

Recommendation

8. In order to form the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group to achieve its aims and objectives the draft Terms of Reference should be approved. In addition, the mechanism by which the six members of the Group will be decided should be agreed in line with the proposed timetable at Appendix A.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to have agreed Terms of Reference that set realistic parameters for the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group could result in ineffective recommendations that the Council is unable to implement.

DRAFT Terms of Reference Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group

1. Aims and origin

1.1 The Council has a longstanding role in tackling poverty and raising aspirations with its partners, something that is at the centre of the aims of its Corporate Plan 2014-2021:

- An Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council
- Sustainable Economic Prosperity
- Stronger, Safer Communities
- A Quality Physical Environment

1.2 The aims of the Group are to:

- contribute to the development of an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Rother; and
- identify new ways of working to reduce poverty and hardship within the district.

2. Objectives

- 2.1 To undertake a review of the accessibility of appropriate financial products, including an analysis of the forms of less appropriate forms of credit and the extent of their use.
- 2.2 To assess how residents are educated about finances and consider what improvements can be made to financial literacy in the district.
- 2.3 To consider the impact of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme policy and the accessibility to the scheme by those experiencing financial hardship.
- 2.4 To consider the impact of Council administered discretionary housing benefit payments (DHP), its accessibility and the processes used to allocate DHP to those at risk of homelessness.
- 2.5 To investigate the availability of financial advice, homelessness advice, employment and training advice and the role of the Council in supporting these.
- 2.6 To investigate the availability of affordable fuel, food and other provisions and to consider if the Council has a role in supporting these.

3. Background

- 3.1 At its meeting on 14 September 2019 the Overview and Scrutiny resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group to consider how to deal with issues of poverty and hardship within the district.
- 3.2 Due to substantial changes in the benefits system, the services that the Council operates, the increase in the cost of living and the current

economic climate, the Council needs to identify measures it can take with its partners to help alleviate hardship.

- 3.3 At the Cabinet meeting held on 4 November 2019, it was resolved as part of the fees and charges report that this Task and Finish Group be tasked with looking at how the Council could support residents on low incomes across the district by reducing certain charges for residents who were in receipt of certain benefits.

4. Resources

- 4.1 Six Members to be appointed to the Task and Finish Group.
- 4.2 The group will be supported by officers from the Corporate Core, Policy and Housing and Community services and such others as the Group deems appropriate.
- 4.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be invited to input into the review and will be kept informed of the Group's progress.
- 4.4 The Task and Finish Group will determine which external organisations will be invited to give evidence to the Group.
- 4.5 It may be necessary for the Group to appoint expert witnesses to assist with its work.

5. Timetable

- 5.1 It is proposed that the work of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group is scheduled as follows (a further detailed timetable will be determined following agreement of these Terms of Reference):

	Purpose
1	Evidence/Information Gathering Collate evidence against all objectives <i>Indicative time frame: June 2020</i>
2	Consolidation Meeting To consider the evidence and any additional information, and agree recommendations <i>Indicative time frame: July 2020</i>
3	Final Report To agree the final Draft Report before referring it to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration and approval. <i>Indicative time frame: Dec 2020</i>

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	27 January 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Housing Allocations Policy

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the new Housing Allocations Policy be recommended to Cabinet and full Council for adoption.

Head of Service: Joe Powell

Introduction

1. On the 1 July 2019 Cabinet approved the draft Allocations Policy for consultation (Minute CB19/15 refers). Following a twelve week consultation, officers have considered the responses received and made some minor amendments to the Policy. The purpose of this report is to present the results of the consultation of the Housing Allocations Policy and recommend that the new Allocations Policy be adopted. The draft Housing Allocations policy is available in the Members' Room.
2. The overall aim of the Housing Allocations Policy is to provide a framework for the equitable, effective and accountable allocation of social housing. Social housing is in very limited supply and accounts for only 10% of the total housing stock in Rother; this percentage is below the national average of 17%. Therefore, only those in the highest housing need, with a local connection to the area are likely to obtain social housing.
3. The principle purpose of a Housing Allocations Policy is to meet the Council's statutory obligations under [Section 166A\(1\)](#) of the Housing Act 1996, these include:
 - who is eligible for the Council's Housing Register;
 - how the Council will assess applications to the Council's Housing Register and determine eligibility and priority;
 - how the Council will allocate social housing; and
 - how the Council will process requests for reviews of decisions made.
4. A constraint to the Council's ability to make changes to the Housing Allocations Policy is that it has a duty to provide 'reasonable preference' to certain categories of household when considering both their eligibility for the register and their priority for housing as these are ensured under statute. Examples include the requirement to afford local connection to households fleeing domestic violence from another area; another example is the need to provide a level of priority to households that are homeless.
5. There is a growing demand for social housing locally. The main factor contributing to this rise in demand is the inability of many households on low

incomes to be able to afford other forms of housing. There are presently 1,600 households on the Housing Register with only 192 allocations having been awarded in 2018/19.

6. The purpose of the policy review and consultation was to ensure that the draft Housing Allocations Policy continues to effectively support the Council to promote socially, economically and demographically balanced communities. A revised Allocations Policy also allows the Council to ensure it is compliant with new legislation and guidance that has been introduced since the inception of the present policy. Further, through the process of reassessment of existing households (against the proposed policy criteria) the Council will be able to ensure that its Housing Register is smaller and less resource intensive to administer over the longer-term.

The Consultation

7. The consultation started on 15 July 2019 and closed on 7 October 2019. A more detailed summary of the way in which the consultation was conducted as well as the number and type of responses can be found at Appendix 1.
8. To remind Members, the proposed Allocations Policy includes a number of revisions from the present policy, all of which are detailed at Appendix 1. The consultation focussed on the main two changes to the existing policy, these are:
 - Reducing the assessment criteria from four bands (A, B, C and D) to two bands (called 'Urgent Need' and 'Waiting List' – the latter of which is formed of a points system). This is a more granular system, is more transparent and allows applicants to see how their level of priority has been arrived at.
 - The order in which households are nominated for and allocated social housing has changed. The Council will firstly prioritise households on the Housing Register with the highest level of housing need; from the remaining list of households an assessment of local connection will be made; finally, the length of time the household has been waiting on the register will be considered and then a nomination made.
9. In addition to a general promotion of the consultation via the website, the following groups were identified as being most affected by the proposed changes and were directly invited to respond to the consultation process:
 - Housing register applicants,
 - Organisations that support or work with potential housing applicants,
 - Providers of social and affordable housing.
10. We received 145 responses between 15 July and 7 October 2019, made up of 11 responses from local organisations and 134 responses from housing applicants and other residents. All the proposed changes were agreed by the majority of respondents. As a result, no substantial policy changes were made to the draft policy.
11. Independent legal advice was also sought in order to ensure the policy is compliant with the Part VI of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and to

mitigate the risk of legal challenges being made against future allocation decisions, if the policy is adopted.

Implementation

12. In order to implement the new policy criteria outlined in the draft Allocations Policy, it will be necessary to reassess all existing households on the register before the new policy can be adopted for new applicants. In the meantime, the present policy will continue to operate as normal.
13. There are resource implications to this reassessment process. It is proposed that the Council write to all applicants currently on the Housing Register and give them a three month window to renew their application. A reminder will be sent at six weeks; however, if a household does not respond within the three month period it will be assumed they no longer wish to be on the register and they will be removed. Within this period, all new applications will be assessed against both the present and proposed policy criteria, prioritised accordingly and allowed to bid as normal.
14. It is estimated that the reassessment process could take up to twelve months, depending on the proportion of existing applicants that request reassessment and the number of new applications submitted during the period. It should also be noted that there may be an increase in appeals which will need to be considered by managers within the Housing Needs Team.
15. In addition, the software used to manage the register will need to be updated to accommodate the new points system. The cost of this is estimated to be £2,700 and will be met from within existing budgets.

Conclusion

16. It is recommended that the new policy be recommended to Cabinet and full Council for adoption. The proposed changes to the existing Housing Allocations Policy have been supported by the majority of respondents. The move to a new points-based system appears popular and will allow greater precision in our assessments.
17. The proposed policy will allow the Council to continue to meet its obligations under [Section 166A\(1\)](#) of the Housing Act 1996 as well as support it to achieve its key aim: to ensure the equitable, effective and accountable allocation of social housing for the district.
18. There are additional benefits to the new Housing Allocations Policy:
 - The new criteria are more sensitive and responsive to individual needs and demonstrate a greater recognition of the full range of circumstances that different households experience;
 - A refreshed Housing Register will be smaller and less resource intensive for the Council to administer and will ensure that the details we hold on households are up to date;
 - The new policy accommodates changes to legislation which have been brought into force since the last policy was adopted; and

- The new policy incentivises clients to work with the Council to secure accommodation in the private rented sector as well as pursue social housing options.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

If adopted the new policy will have a number of risks for implementation including a higher than expected number of requests for reassessment which may require an extension of the implementation period.

There is a risk that after the new policy has been adopted it needs to be significantly amended sooner than expected due to changes in legislation or significant changes to the housing market.

There is also a risk that if the proposed policy is not adopted the existing policy will be subject to piecemeal changes overtime that reduce its effectiveness in supporting the Council in its objective to promote socially, economically and demographically balanced communities.

Report of the Consultation on the draft Rother District Council Housing Allocations Policy Held July to October 2019

Executive Summary

Why We Consulted

1. The current housing allocations policy was last reviewed and adopted in 2014. It is a legal requirement for a local housing authority to have a housing allocations scheme.
2. The policy needed to be brought up to date because:
 - a. Changes in housing legislation
 - b. Rising demand for housing and homelessness services
 - c. A comparatively small private rented sector in the affordable end of the market, with rising rents.
 - d. A lack of social and affordable housing supply and very few vacant properties available for nomination by the housing team. That will continue for the next 5 years even if known developments are delivered.
3. The decision was taken by the Council to consult on changes to the policy; Cabinet Minute CB19/15 refers. The purpose of the consultation was to find out any other information that Members should take into account before making a decision about the content of a new policy. This would include any unintended impact on applicants, housing providers and other organisations.

When We Consulted

4. The consultation started on 15 July 2019 and closed on 7 October 2019 and was open for 12 weeks. The original closing date was 9 September. However, the policy was amended in light of feedback received during the consultation fieldwork period and a new version was uploaded on the website for consultation. Therefore, we notified invited participants of the revised draft policy and extended the consultation period a further month.

Main Focus of the Consultation

5. We consulted on all the proposed changes to the policy. The main two changes and the focus of the consultation questions were:
 - a. Reducing from four bands A, B, C and D to two bands proposed to be called Urgent Needs and Waiting List within which there is a points system. We thought giving points in the Waiting List category makes it clearer to applicants about their priority and how it compares to other households and where they are on the list.
 - b. Allocating properties, more precisely shortlisting those bidding for the property down to three households who will be offered an opportunity to take the property, in the order of priority need (based on the band

and then awarded number of points), then by local connection and lastly by length of time on the waiting list.

Who We Invited to Consult and How They Were Invited

6. We identified the following groups might be affected, positively or negatively by proposed changes to the order or who might wish to propose other changes. They are:
 - a. Housing register applicants,
 - b. Organisations that support or work with potential housing applicants
 - c. Providers of social and affordable housing.
 - d. The public, businesses and other local charities, groups and organisations were welcome to respond if they have an interest.

7. We gave personal invitations to consult by emailing the following local organisations, businesses and individuals on 17 July. We notified them again of the revised policy document and consultation closing date.
 - Rother Citizens Panel membership
 - All parish and town councils in Rother
 - Local organisations that support people with disabilities and long term limiting illnesses or conditions
 - Local bodies that support people on low incomes and in debt or who are otherwise vulnerable due to barriers to services and housing
 - Local organisations that work with or support the homeless or those at risk of homelessness
 - East Sussex County Council, multiple departments
 - Local housing providers, especially housing associations
 - Local statutory and public organisations

8. We emailed or wrote to all current applicants on the housing register with an invitation to consult. This included telling applicants that some of the proposed changes may affect them.

Responders to the Consultation

9. We received 145 responses between 15 July and 7 October 2019 made up of 11 responses from local organisations and 134 responses from housing applicants and other residents. Most respondents used the online questionnaire but we received seven emailed responses. We would like to thank all respondents for their time and attention.

Summary results

10. Any categories marked 'agreed' means that the greater majority, or 70% and over, of respondents agreed with the proposed content. Results are reported in order of where the proposed change was located in the draft policy.
 - a. **Aims and objectives** – Agreed.

 - b. **Taking more action on those who supply false information** – Agreed.

- c. **Qualification criteria for making an application** – Agreed. There were many comments on the importance of a local connection as a higher priority to other qualification criteria.
- d. **Disqualified from making an application** – Agreed all disqualifications. Except the majority was significantly lower who agreed with a disqualification if an applicant had a council or housing debt over £1,000 and not being paid. The responding organisations that work with debt cases and the homeless did not support this disqualification.
- e. **Household members to include on the application** – Agreed.
- f. **Who is excluded from the household on the application** – Agreed.

11. **FIRST MAIN CHANGE: Four bands ABCD changed to Urgent Need band and Waiting List Band with points** – the majority agreed.

Although the majority of housing applicants agreed it was a lower majority compared to all respondents. Suggestions for change include that two bands would not be clearer to applicants nor offer enough groupings. Applicants do not think changing the banding would improve their personal case or likelihood of getting a property. There is some confusion on whether the Urgent Needs band households would get points or not and, if not, why not. It was suggested that all criteria and categories should have points awarded, regardless of the band. Another suggestion was to make it clearer whether and how a case could move from Urgent Needs into Waiting List and vice versa. The parish councils had clear concerns that only Urgent Needs and no local connection households would move into their parishes and their residents who have spent a long time on the housing register would not be rehomed.

12. **Urgent Need Band categories** – Agreed.

See also above suggestion to put points on the categories.

13. **Waiting List Band categories** –

- a. **Homelessness**, and not in Urgent Need band, categories and points-
 - i. **Homeless at home** with no particular diff access private sector 10 points – category has a low majority agreement. The majority disagreed with the number of points. The term homeless at home was not well understood by some respondents. The term ‘no particular difficulty’ made many respondents question why these households were accepted on the housing register at all.
 - ii. **Homeless in temporary accommodation** with no particular difficulty accessing private sector 10 points – the majority agreed with this category but disagreed with the number of points awarded.
 - iii. **Homeless in temporary accommodation** but in suitable accommodation for their needs 5 points – Agreed.
 - iv. **Owed legal duty or under-occupying** 5 points – the majority agreed with both category and points. A very small sample responded because this was a later amendment, meaning we

have a low confidence level that this is accurate for the wider population.

- v. **Need to move to district or it causes hardship** to their household or family in Rother 10 points – majority agree with category but a 50/50 split on the number of points. A very small sample that may be inaccurate for wider population.

b. **Overcrowding**

- vi. **Lack one bedroom** 5 points – Agreed
- vii. **Lack 2+ bedrooms** 10 points – Agreed.

c. **Current Housing Conditions**

- viii. **Unsatisfactory housing condition** and enforcement action hasn't resolved it. 5 points – high majority agreement for the category but a low majority agreed with the points. Comments asked for more points and more active enforcement by the Council.

d. **Current Medical Condition**

- ix. **Medium medical priority** 15 points – Agreed.
- x. **Current property suitable for needs but difficult accessing** property 5 points – a high majority agree with the category, but a low majority agree with the number of points.
- xi. **Low medical priority** 5 points – a high majority agreed with the category and the points but very small sample of 25 responses means we have low confidence on its accuracy for the wider population.

e. **Welfare**

- xii. **Military personnel** in last five years 3 points – Agreed.
- xiii. **Rural isolation** 3 points – Agreed.
- xiv. **Need to give family support** 3 points – Agreed.
- xv. **ASB problems** 5 points – Agreed.
- xvi. **Permission to adopt/foster** 3 points – a high majority support the category but the majority disagree with the points.
- xvii. **Move on after rehabilitation** 5 points – Agreed.
- xviii. **Sheltered accommodation needed** 3 points – Agreed.
- xix. **Move on from care** 5 points – Agreed.
- xx. **Young learning disabled adult** for independent living 3 points – Agreed.
- xxi. **5 or more years on housing register** 3 points – a high majority agreed with the category but the majority disagreed with the number of points. Most think should be more points or changed to points for each year on the register or more points for groups of years on the housing register.
- xxii. **Rough sleepers** (where not covered by Urgent Needs) 10 points – majority agree with the category and the points but sample very small and probably not representative (later addition)
- xxiii. **Found intentionally homeless** by the Council 5 points – the majority disagreed with the category and disagreed with the points but very small sample so not confident it is representative.

- f. **Insecurity of tenure**
 - xxiv. Applicants in insecure accommodation with children and lacking/sharing facilities 6 points – Agreed.
 - xxv. Applicants living apart because accommodation not suitable for them 5 points – Agreed.

- g. **Other Categories**
 - xxvi. Transfer applicants 5 points – Agreed.

- h. **SECOND MAIN CHANGE: Shortlisting Order** – adopting the order of selecting three households for shortlisting to be offered the property from all those that applied for the property on Homemove. The suggested order is to select by housing need by band and points awarded. If there is not shortlist to then select by a local connection to the parish cluster (if property not in Bexhill). If there is still no shortlist to select by the length of time the household has been on the housing register. Agreed.
 - xxvii. However, parish councils who responded supported local connection as a higher priority or weighting. This is due to their concerns about moving in households not used to living in a rural area, or who should be nearer suitable services, or are without transport, or not knowing anyone local for support, as well as the resentment it creates in local families on the housing register.

- i. **Direct Lets**
 - xxviii. Comply with court order – Agreed
 - xxix. Statutory duty – Agreed
 - xxx. Child or public protection - Agreed
 - xxxi. Specially adapted – Agreed
 - xxxii. Local lettings plan – Agreed
 - xxxiii. Delay is costly to Council – Agreed
 - xxxiv. In TA and haven't bid – no overall agreement with a 50/50 split

- j. **Local lettings plans**
 - xxxv. Age restrictions – Agreed
 - xxxvi. Positive tenancy history – Agreed
 - xxxvii. Working households – Agreed.

14. In conclusion, the majority of respondents agreed with the new policy. Again, we would like to thank all participants for their contributions. A more detailed report is available. The full report and the responses to all text questions are placed in the Members' Room from the date of the agenda despatch of the first Council meeting where the final draft policy was discussed.

Programme Office and Policy Team,
November 2019

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Rother District Council

Report to	-	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date	-	27 January 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Draft Empty Homes Action Plan

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to agree the draft Empty Homes Action Plan 2020-24 attached at Appendix A, subject to consultation.

Head of Service: Richard Parker-Harding

Introduction

1. Empty homes represent a wasted resource when there are unmet housing needs in the district. Reusing empty homes increases the housing supply and improves neighbourhoods.
2. In addition, if properties are allowed to remain unused and neglected they can begin to cause issues within the community including:
 - Attracting anti-social behaviour, vandalism and arson
 - Fly tipping, accumulation of waste and attracts pests
 - Squatters (adverse possession)
 - Causing damage to neighbouring properties
 - Being an eyesore

Background

3. The Council is already taking action against the owners of empty properties. Action may be taken by planning enforcement if the visual appearance of the building has a detrimental effect on the amenities of neighbourhood or by environmental health if there are accumulations of waste or severely overgrown gardens, attracting rats or impacting on other residents' quality of life. In the past the Council has served notice, prosecuted, carried out works in default, enforced sales and compulsory purchased empty properties.
4. Using the Rating (Property in Common Occupation) and Council Tax (Empty Dwellings) Act 2018, the Council will from 1 April 2020 apply higher empty property premiums for Council Tax (Minute CB18/68 refers). This should encourage owners to let or sell their properties.
5. The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 (Minute CB18/68 refers) highlights the need to increase the housing supply within the district.
6. Empty homes have also been identified under the above strategy as a wasted resource and action should be taken to try and bring empty homes back into use. Within the strategy (Part 2 Improvement Delivery Plan 1.4) it stipulates

that an action plan must be put into place setting out a number of methods for bringing into use empty homes.

7. The Action Plan (attached as Appendix A) is to be implemented in 2020 and details how action will be taken against at least five empty properties a year. In reality this number is likely to be higher through a combination of the impact of the increase in Council Tax and publicity given to this action plan.
8. Currently, there are 173 properties that have been empty long term (two years or more) within the Rother district. The information has been taken from the Council Tax records for those classified as class C unoccupied and substantial unfurnished. The figure of 173 properties does not include the numbers of E Exemptions or Deleted Properties. The largest numbers of empty homes within the district are found in Bexhill-on-Sea, followed by Rye Foreign, Camber and Rye.
9. In order to meet the demand for housing, we must make the best possible use of our existing stock. Returning long term empty homes to use or redeveloping sites with empty properties on them will not solve the need for additional housing, but it certainly can have an impact.
10. In addition, empty properties can be detrimental to the lives of local residents as they may be a magnet for crime and antisocial behaviour, drive down property values locally and contribute to urban decline and blight. They also represent a risk for emergency services and put added pressure on various Council departments, such as Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement.

Aims of the Action Plan

11. The overall aim of the Empty Homes Action Plan is to bring long term empty homes back into use, including:
 - Identify long term empty homes
 - Support for empty home owners
 - Take action against empty property owners
 - Raise awareness

Objectives of the Action Plan

12. The objectives of the action plan are:
 - Overall reduction in empty homes in the district
 - A continuous reduction in current empty homes
 - The provision of good quality affordable housing in Rother
 - The minimisation of adverse environmental, social and local impact
 - A possible reduction in the need to build on greenfield sites by use of existing brownfield sites
 - To improve the existing built environment
 - To provide training and empowerment for the community to create a housing hub
 - To support other corporate priorities, objectives and strategies
 - To enable payment of new homes bonus for bringing empty homes back into use
 - Make best use of existing stock in sustainable areas

Priorities of the Action Plan

13. With reference to the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024, a significant outlined priority is to address the supply of housing within the district. Specific reference has been made to looking at bringing into use long term empty homes. For the purpose of focusing the resources available within the Council and to incorporate the identified needs regards housing supply, the action plan will concentrate on properties within areas of the district that have the greatest housing demand and properties with one to three bedrooms.
14. The Rother adopted Local Plan identified a need for a range of affordable property types and sizes. Having reference to Section 5 of this action plan, properties that provide one, two and three bedrooms are in highest demand for the identified needs of the population. Prioritisation for any intervention and action will be directed to this size of property but larger properties will not be excluded if there is development potential and this is beneficial for the local area.
15. With regard to this identified need, the action plan will prioritise identified long term empty homes that are Council Tax A, B or C. The purpose of this is that banded properties will be smaller (one to three bedroom) and more likely to be affordable and meet the greatest housing need (as demonstrated by the housing register data).
16. This is a particular issue in rural areas where demand is greatest for smaller homes, further supported by our adopted planning policies included in the Local Plan (2014) which requires 30% of all new build housing in rural areas to be provided as one and two bedroom properties (being mostly two bed).
17. Using Council Tax data for long term empty homes and data on housing need, the following areas were initially identified: Bexhill, Rye, Rye Foreign and Camber. In addition, to this there is a need for temporary accommodation within Bexhill and Rye - families displaced often want to remain in areas they have already established links with for the purpose of accessing employment, schools, family and relative support.
18. Action will therefore be focused on Bexhill and Rye where there are a larger number of empty properties, housing need is greater and there is a demand for temporary accommodation.

Options available to bring empty homes back into use

19. There is no single solution that will solve problems associated with empty properties. There is a wide range of interventions and statutory powers available to the Local Authority. A case-by-case approach will need to be taken, as the same solution will not work for every property. The approach will be in accordance with the Council's enforcement policies.
20. In June 2019, the Council created a new innovative role, the Private Sector Procurement Officer, within the Housing Needs Team. The role involves working with landlords to provide properties for residents that have a housing need. The scheme called 'Rother Tenant Finder' started in November 2019.

This scheme can be used to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use.

21. The Council's actions for bringing empty properties back into use are:
- Advice and assistance
 - Enforcement

Informal action

22. The Council can offer advice and signposting to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. This can include identifying the options available to the property owner, giving comprehensive advice on how to let a property, details on how to sell and renovate a property. This can be done by using social media and the Council website. Planning and Building Control can also provide advice to owners.

Enforcement options

23. There are only three enforcement actions that can force a change of ownership in order to have the property reoccupied. These are:
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders
 - Compulsory Purchase Orders
 - Enforced Sale
24. Empty Dwelling Management Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders require capital investment from the Council or other parties, but are useful tools to allow the Council to deal with specific properties.
25. The Council also has the power to take action under legislation, including the Housing Act 2004, the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 and Building Act 1984. Action that can be taken ranges from the service of an Improvement Notice, service of a Demolition Order or an enforced sale.

Conclusion

26. The Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 required the publication of an Empty Homes Action Plan. It is recommended that the draft Empty Homes Action Plan 2020-24, attached at Appendix A, be agreed subject to liaison with interested parties, such as Letting Agents and Landlords, including Social Landlords.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to produce an Empty Homes Action Plan will mean the Council is unable to meet some of the provisions of its own adopted Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024.

DRAFT EMPTY HOMES ACTION PLAN 2020-2024

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Part 1

Empty Homes Action Plan 2019 – 2024

1. Why has an Action Plan for empty homes been produced?

Empty homes represent a wasted resource where housing needs are critical and properties are built to be lived in and used as a home for individuals or families. Reusing empty homes increases the housing supply and improves neighbourhoods.

If properties are allowed to remain unused and neglected they can begin to cause issues within the community including:

- Attracting anti-social behaviour, vandalism and arson
- Fly tipping, accumulation of waste and attracts pests
- Squatters (adverse possession)
- Causing damage to neighbouring properties
- Being an eyesore

2. Corporate context and links with other Council strategies

The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 highlighted the need to increase the housing supply within the district. Empty homes have also been identified under the above strategy as a wasted resource and action should be taken to try and bring empty homes back into use. Within the strategy (Part 2 Improvement Delivery Plan 1.4) it stipulates that an action plan must be put into place setting out a number of methods for bringing into use empty homes.

The action plan is to be implemented from April 2020 and details how action will be taken against at least five empty properties a year. The action plan will be reviewed in 2022.

3. Definition of an empty home for the purpose of the action plan

When assessing the number of empty homes, the Local Authority uses Council Tax data as a starting point.

Once a property becomes empty, the owner has a responsibility to inform the Council that there has been a change in occupation status.

There are a number of reasons why Council Tax data may not show the true number of empty homes. Reasons for this inaccuracy include the owner recording the property as occupied or as a second home to avoid paying the empty homes premium. Properties that are empty may have an exemption from paying Council Tax. Exemption E applies when an owner of a property permanently moves into residential care. The Exemption is applied to the property and stays on the account until the property is sold or someone moves into the property. Unbanded properties (or more accurately Deleted properties) are when the Valuation Office has assessed the property and made a decision that the damage or state of the property is so severe that it should not be in the rating list. Unbanded (deleted) properties will be

considered 'empty homes' for the purpose of this document requiring further action to bring the property back into use.

For the purpose of this action plan, an empty property refers to privately owned residential properties that have been un-occupied and unfurnished for two years or more. This excludes second homes, holiday homes but will include Exemptions E and Deleted Properties.

4. Distribution of long term empty homes within the district

In January 2020 there were 173 properties that have been empty long term (two years or more) within the Rother district. The information has been taken from the Council Tax records for those classified as class C unoccupied and substantial unfurnished. The figure of 173 properties does not include the numbers of Exemption E or Deleted Properties.

The largest numbers of empty homes within the district are found in Bexhill-on-Sea, followed by Rye Foreign, Camber and Rye.

Local Authorities have an obligation under the Housing Act 2004 to keep housing conditions in their area under review. The Council undertook a combined housing need and housing stock condition survey across the district in 2017 and a residents' survey to establish housing need across the district. The results were published in the Rother Strategic Housing Report 2018.

This survey estimates there to be 720 long term private sector vacant dwellings included in the study area within Rother – this includes dwellings that had been vacant for over six months and probate properties. For the purpose of this action plan only long term (for more than two years) empty properties are included, as these are more unlikely to be brought back naturally into use and have the potential to cause a detrimental effect on the surrounding area. This reduces the number of empty homes to 173.

The Strategic Housing Research Report identified a number of options for bringing empty properties back into use;

- In extreme cases where owners will not bring a dwelling back into use or cannot be identified and the property has been empty for two years or more, there is the option to consider use of an Empty Dwelling Management Order (detailed in Appendix 2) and for such dwellings to be sold or managed by a Registered Provider as affordable housing.
- Improving the links between Council Tax and Housing teams to correctly identify empty homes and to ensure consistent actions are taken.
- Purchasing empty homes from their owners and working in partnership with Registered Providers to bring the properties back into use to boost the scale of affordable housing.
- A scheme developed in Kent known as 'No Use Empty'. This involved investing a large sum to incentivise property owners to bring their property back into use.

5. Evidence Base of Affordable Housing Need in Rother

Rother has an adopted local plan which identified a net need for up to 1,647 homes over the period 2011 – 2028 for a range of affordable property types and sizes. A summary of overall need based on property sizes required across the district is included below;

Table 1

Property Size	As percentage of Affordable Housing Need in Rother
One bedroom	27%
Two bedroom	44%
Three bedroom	21%
Four bedroom	7%

(Rother Household Survey 2017)

This table confirms the type of housing need for both market and affordable housing based on current patterns of occupation, as well as need identified in the local plan.

Table 2

		Market Housing	Affordable Housing	TOTAL
Flats	1 bedroom	220	361	582
	2+ bedrooms	467	241	708
Houses	2 bedrooms	258	354	612
	3 bedrooms	1,914	293	2,208
	4 bedrooms	503	61	564
	5+ bedrooms	134	38	172
TOTAL		3,496	1,349	4,845

(Housing Research Project 2017, Figure 118 page 115)

Under current definitions of affordable housing need and current guidance, there is a need for a range of affordable housing tenures across Rother, with the predominant need for Target Social Rented tenure. This is based on the 1,061 households identified as being unable to meet their own housing costs in Target Social Rent, without the assistance of housing benefit support.

There are some households able to afford to cover their own rents in affordable properties and they would be suitable for intermediate housing scheme such as shared ownership. A wider range of intermediate housing procurements could help a number of these identified households in need to enter into homeownership.

The household survey identified a total of 4.1% of households who are overcrowded in Rother (approximately 4% of houses and 5% of flats).

Temporary Accommodation

As of 31 November 2019, there were 61 households in temporary accommodation requiring urgent rehousing. Of this need, 46% require a one bedroom property and 54% require more than one bedroom or family size accommodation and of those families in temporary accommodation, households include on average 2.2 children. On average, 80% of all need in temporary accommodation is for housing in the Bexhill area and 20% for Battle, Rye and rural Rother.

Table 3

Current Housing Register Data (for affordable/social rented tenure only)Property Type	Housing Register Need (as of December 2019)	As % of total Need
One Bedroom	823	49%
Two Bedroom	494	29%
Three Bedroom	284	17%
Four Bedroom	64	4%
Five Bedroom	9	0.5%
Six Bedroom	1	0.06%
Total Need	1,675	

GRAPH 1: shows the number of empty homes within each parish. Note that only parishes with empty homes have been placed on the graph. As of July 2019 there were no recorded empty homes in the following parishes; Ashburnham & Penshurst, Bodiam, Dallington, Playden, Udimore and Whatlington.

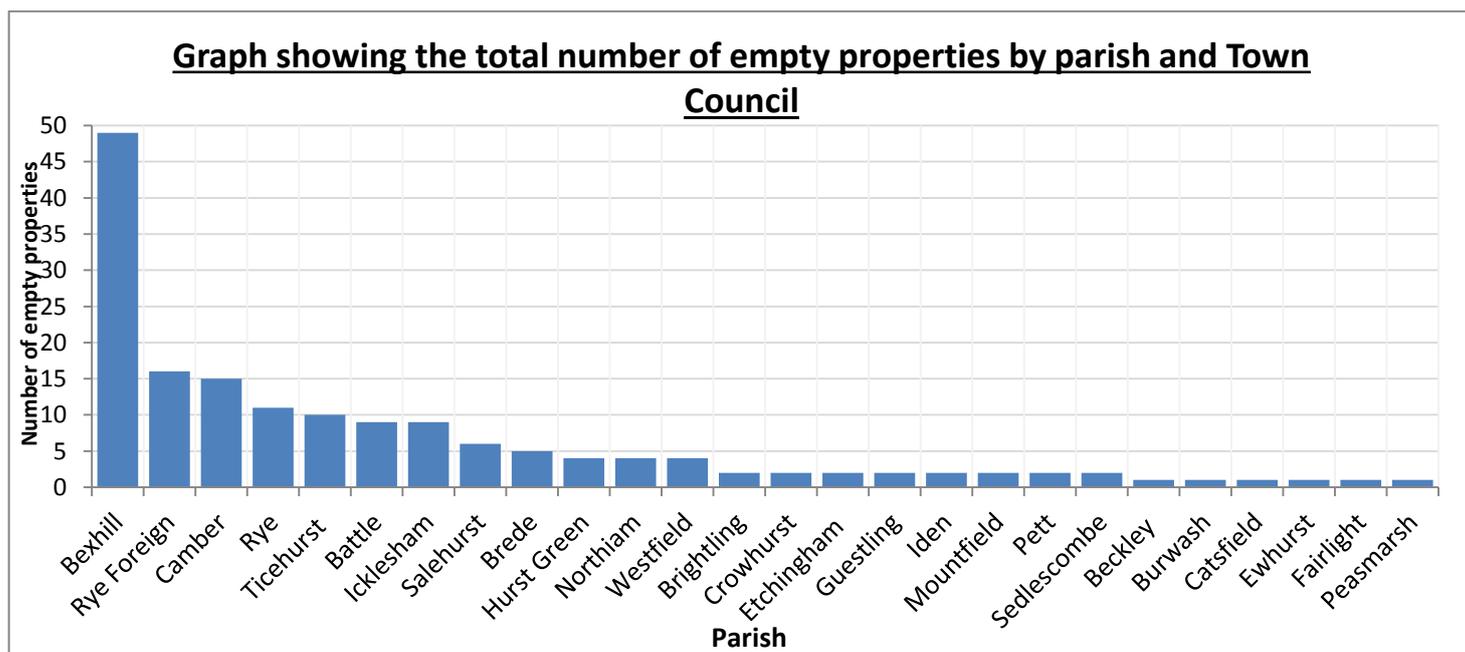
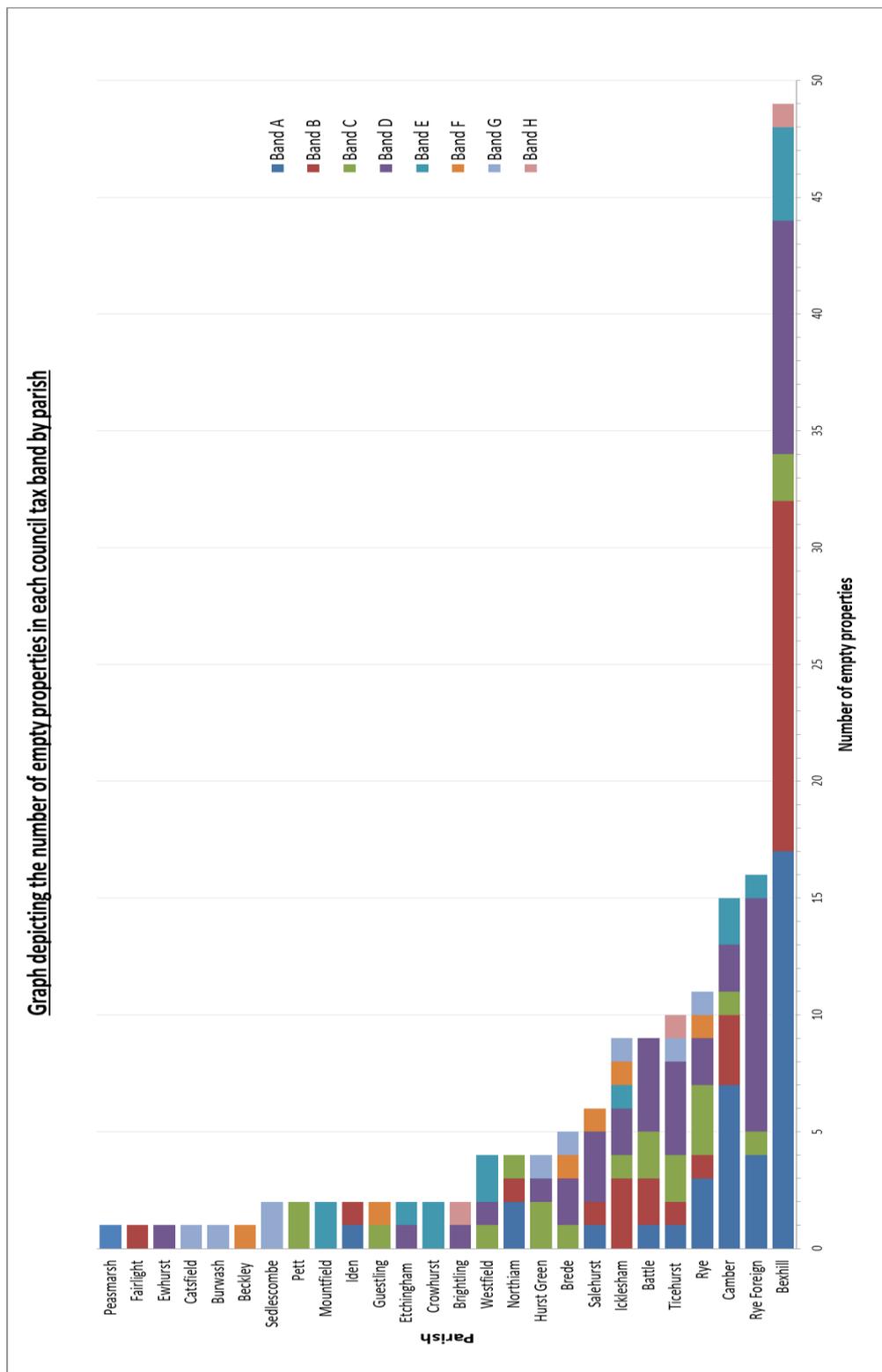


Table 4 showing the number of empty homes as a percentage of total stock in July 2019

Parish	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total number of empty properties	All Dwellings by Parish	Number of Empty homes as a % of total stock (All Dwellings - 2011 Census)
Bexhill	17	15	2	10	4	0	0	1	49	21696	0.23%
Camber	7	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	15	800	1.88%
Rye Foreign	4	0	1	10	1	0	0	0	16	190	8.42%
Rye	3	1	3	2	0	1	1	0	11	2361	0.47%
Northiam	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	4	1020	0.39%
Ticehurst	1	1	2	4	0	0	1	1	10	1608	0.62%
Battle	1	2	2	4	0	0	0	0	9	2995	0.30%
Salehurst	1	1	0	3	0	1	0	0	6	1099	0.55%
Iden	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	254	0.79%
Icklesham	0	3	1	2	1	1	1	0	9	1559	0.58%
Brede	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	5	820	0.61%
Hurst Green	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	4	628	0.64%
Westfield	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	4	1155	0.35%
Brightling	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	172	1.16%
Crowhurst	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	337	0.59%
Etchingham	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	338	0.59%
Guestling	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	634	0.32%
Mountfield	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	221	0.90%
Pett	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	459	0.44%
Sedlescombe	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	677	0.30%
Beckley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	515	0.19%
Burwash	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1178	0.08%
Catsfield	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	357	0.30%
Ewhurst	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	522	0.19%
Fairlight	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	893	0.11%
Peasmarsh	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	557	0.18%
									Total 164	43045	

GRAPH 2: shows the number of empty homes as of July 2019 within each parish and the number of empty homes has been broken down to show the council tax band.



If we look at the four areas that have the largest number of empty homes, Graph 2 shows for Bexhill-on-Sea 69% of all the long term empty homes are within Council Tax Band A, B and C. Rye Foreign, 31% of the long term empty homes are within Council Tax Band A, B and C. 73% of all the long term empty homes within Camber are within Council Tax Band A, B and C

and 64% for Rye. In these areas this shows that the greater majority are smaller properties.

Number of properties in each Council Tax band									
	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Band E	Band F	Band G	Band H	Total %of properties in A-C Council Tax band
Bexhill-on-Sea	17	15	2	10	4	1	0	0	69%
Rye Foreign	4	0	1	10	1	0	0	0	31%
Camber	7	3	1	2	2	0	0	0	73%
Rye	3	1	3	2	0	1	1	0	64%

6. Why do homes become empty

There are many reasons why a property can become empty; here are some of the reasons or causes;

- Unable to sell the property.
- The owners are not aware or do not understand the options available to bring properties back into use.
- The owner has died.
- Extensive maintenance problems combined with low value of the property.
- There is a covenant restricting use of the property.
- Owner disinterested.
- Owner may not be in a position to finance refurbishment or repair costs.
- Property has been inherited and the owner lacks knowledge or inclination to deal with the property.
- Abandonment of the property.
- Property in probate.
- Property has been repossessed.
- Empty residential property above shops can have issues due to unsuitable means of access, security and mixed uses.
- Property brought for the purpose of a development and left empty pending redevelopment or refurbishment.
- Property has been purchased for the owner to live in when they retire.
- The owner has purchased the property as an investment and is waiting for property prices to rise.

7. The benefits of bringing empty properties back into use

In order to meet the demand for housing, we must make the best possible use of our existing stock. Returning long term empty homes to use does not solve the need for additional housing, but it certainly can have a considerable impact.

The Council needs to try to meet the housing supply within the district. Development of empty homes will assist in meeting this aim.

In addition, empty properties can be detrimental to the lives of local residents as they may be a magnet for crime and antisocial behaviour, drive down property values locally and contribute to urban decline and blight. They also represent a risk for emergency services and put added pressure on various Council departments such as Environmental Health and Planning Enforcement.

What does Rother District Council want to try and achieve by tackling and bringing empty homes back into use:

- Overall reduction in empty homes in the district.
- A continuous reduction in current empty homes.
- The provision of good quality affordable housing in Rother.
- The minimisation of adverse environmental, social and local impact.
- A possible reduction in the need to build on Greenfield sites by use of existing brownfield sites.
- To improve the existing built environment.
- To provide training and empowerment for the community to create a housing hub.
- To support other corporate priorities, objectives and strategies.
- Payment of new homes bonus for bringing empty homes back into use
- Best use of existing stock in sustainable areas.

8. Priorities

With reference to the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024, a significant outlined priority is to address the supply of housing within the district. Specific reference has been made to looking at bringing into use long term empty homes. For the purpose of focusing the resources available within the Council and to incorporate the identified needs regards housing supply, the action plan will concentrate on properties within areas of the district that have the greatest housing demand and properties with one to three bedrooms.

The Rother adopted Local Plan identified a need for a range of affordable property types and sizes. Having reference to Section 5 of this action plan, properties that provide one, two and three bedrooms are in highest demand for the identified needs of the population. Prioritisation for any intervention and action will be directed to this size of property, but larger properties will not be excluded if there is development potential and this is beneficial for the local area.

With regard to this identified need, the action plan will prioritise identified long term empty properties that are Council Tax A, B or C. The purpose of this is that banded properties will be smaller (one to three bedroom) and more likely to be affordable and meet the greatest housing need (as demonstrated by the above housing register data).

This is a particular issue in rural areas where demand is greatest for smaller homes, further supported by our adopted planning policies included in the Local Plan (2014) which requires 30% of all new build housing in rural areas to be provided as one and two bedroom properties (being mostly two bed).

In terms of what areas within the district action will be prioritised, with reference to the Council Tax data and the identified housing need, Bexhill, Rye, Rye Foreign and Camber will be the geographical areas where resources will be focused for all initial action. When looking at the number of empty homes as a percentage of the total housing stock, Rye Foreign has the highest percentage in the whole district 8.42%, followed by Camber with 1.88%. Bexhill has a low total percentage; this is because Bexhill is the biggest urban area and has a very high number of dwellings (see table 4).

There is a need for affordable housing, especially within rural areas. In addition to this there is an identified need for temporary accommodation within Bexhill and Rye. Families displaced often want to remain in areas they have already established links with for the purpose of accessing employment, schools, family and relative support.

The need for affordable homes is also a priority due to recent changes to welfare benefits that has an effect of reducing incomes of many low income households, making access to housing difficult. In particular the introduction of Universal Credit to the Rother area in 2016 has compounded a range of earlier reforms to benefits in 2012 and 2016. These include:

- A freeze on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates.
- A freeze on benefit rates.
- Under 35's now only receive the room rate for housing benefit.
- A reduction in the Benefit Cap from £26,000 a year to £20,000 a year.
- Reduced Working Tax Credits.
- Reduced Employment and Support Allowance.

(Information taken from the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024).

9. Aims of the action plan

The overall aim of the empty homes action plan is to bring long term empty homes back into use including:

- Identify long term empty homes.
- Support for empty home owners.
- Take action against empty property owners.
- Raise awareness.

Action will be focused on Bexhill and Rye where there are a larger number of empty properties, housing need is greater and there is demand for temporary accommodation.

10. Options available to bring empty homes back into use:

There is no single solution that will solve problems associated with empty properties. There is a wide range of interventions and statutory powers available to the Local Authority. A case by case approach will need to be taken as the same solution will not work for every property. The approach will be in accordance with the Council's enforcement policies.

In June 2019 the Council created a new innovative role, Private Sector Procurement Officer, within the Housing Needs Team. The role involves working with landlords to provide properties for residents that have a housing need. The scheme called the 'Rother Tenant Finder' commenced in November 2019. This scheme can be used to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use.

Currently, the Council's only tools to bring empty properties back into use are:

- Advice and assistance.
- Enforcement.

10.1 Informal action

The Council can offer advice and signposting to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. This can include identifying the options available to the property owner, giving comprehensive advice on how to let a property, details on how to sell and renovate a property. This can be done by using social media and the Council website. Planning and Building Control can also provide advice to owners.

10.2 Enforcement options

There are only three enforcement actions that can force a change of ownership in order to have the property reoccupied these are:

- Empty Dwelling Management Orders.
- Compulsory Purchase Orders.
- Enforced Sale.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders and Compulsory Purchase Orders require capital investment from the Council or other parties.

The Council also has the power to take action under legislation, including the Housing Act 2004, The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014, Building Act 1984. Action that can be taken ranges from the service of an Improvement Notice, service of a Demolition Order or an enforced sale.

Further details on the type of enforcement powers available to the Council can be found in Appendix 1.

11. Resources

There is no additional funding to provide more resources, offer any Council grant funding or financial assistance to incentivise empty home owners to bring identified properties back onto use.

Rother District Council does not have a designated empty homes officer. All work relating to this action plan will have to be carried out by existing staff within the Council.

There is scope for the possible use of Section 106 of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) funding generated from contributions from developers of new build schemes. The funding is provided in lieu of affordable housing. There is the potential opportunity that this income could partly fund empty homes initiatives. This would be on the provision that the funding will result in bringing properties back into use.

In November 2018 Rother Housing Needs Team launched the Rother Tenant Finder Scheme. This scheme allows for small financial incentives can be offered to landlords to encourage them to provide a tenancy agreement for clients on the Housing Register.

12. Monitoring of the Action Plan

The main focus will be on recording the number of empty homes where action has been taken and the number that have subsequently been brought back into use. In addition, by monitoring the type of intervention taken and the outcome the most successful intervention can be identified which can be used to help allocate resources more effectively in the future.

The following will be recorded:

- List of identified empty homes, Council Tax banding, property location (whether it is within the four prioritised areas), ownership details, reason for being empty.
- Record all empty homes where enforcement action has been taken and the outcome (detailing the type of enforcement notice issued).
- Council Tax data – figures will be monitored to identify if there is a reduction in the number of long term Class C unoccupied and substantial unfurnished properties, Deleted Properties and E Exemption.
- Monitor the number of empty home notifications received via the website to identify if there an increase in public awareness around empty homes.
- Record all informal action taken against each identified empty property.
- Monitor the use of social media accounts relating to empty home postings
- Record awareness campaigns (including the use of the website, Twitter, Facebook, MyAlerts).

Records will need to be kept by all relevant Council Departments. Data will be collated and reported on.

Part 2

ACTION PLAN

The Council's Empty Homes Action Plan is based on four principles:

- **Identification** – understanding where our problematic long term empty properties are located and who owns them.
- **Support** – developing a package of support for empty home owners to encourage them to bring homes back into use.
- **Taking action** – where providing support has failed, taking appropriate action against the empty property owner to ensure the home is brought back into use.
- **Raising awareness** – ensuring residents, businesses, stakeholders and empty property owners know what they can do and who to contact if they are aware of, or own an empty property.

1 IDENTIFY EMPTY HOMES

- 1.1 Create a database of empty homes with owners details and what action the Council has taken.
- 1.2 Provide information for visiting council staff on how to identify a potential empty home and the means of notifying the private sector housing team.
- 1.3 Use Council Tax information to assist in identifying long term empty homes.

2 SUPPORT FOR EMPTY HOME OWNERS

- 2.1 Contact owners of all long term empty homes on an annual basis, detailing what support is available to them to bring the home back into use.
- 2.2 Promote the new empty home premium council tax rate to encourage owners to take steps to bring empty homes back into use.
- 2.3 Maintain a list of interested parties who wish to buy empty homes in the area.
- 2.4 Provide grants/loans to empty property owners to bring homes back to a satisfactory standard for habitation.
- 2.5 Provide advice identifying the options available to the property owner on how to let a property; how to sell and information on how to renovate a property, including the VAT exemptions.
- 2.6 Identifying external agencies and companies that could assist an owner with the letting, sell or renovating of an empty home.
- 2.7 Signpost owners to other Council services like planning and building control.

- 2.8 Develop a communications plan to ensure appropriate information is made available throughout the action plan period.
- 2.9 Promote the work of the Sussex Community Housing Hub (see Appendix 2).
- 2.10 To identify potential properties for use under a link scheme to provide accommodation for people on the housing register.

3 Take Action Against Empty Property Owners

- 3.1 Take appropriate and proportionate enforcement action regarding the most problematic empty homes.
- 3.2 Set up an officer working group to identify which empty homes require action, and what action should be taken.
- 3.3 The Council to utilise appropriate powers to deal with anti-social behaviour issues caused by long term empty homes.

4 Raise Awareness

- 4.1 Review and improve the on-line empty homes notification form with clear precise information so it is easier to report a suspected empty property.
- 4.2 Develop a communications plan with support from the Council's Communications team.

Enforcement Action

Housing Act 2004 – Part 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System

Service of an Improvement Notice – Using the Housing Health and Safety Rating contained within the Housing Act section 11 and 12. This option can be used to remedy defects to the internal and external elements of a property where there are defects of a serious nature.

Service of a Demolition Order – If a property is dilapidated and it is not financially economical to bring it back into use, a demolition order can be served under the Housing Act 1985 section 265.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 – The Anti-social behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014 allows for a Community Protection Notice (CPN) to be served where the owner's behaviour is having a detrimental effect on those living nearby. This behaviour must be persistent. Following non-compliance with a CPN, the Council can issue a fixed penalty notice (FPN) and carry out external remedial works. Following failure to pay the FPN and or the remedial works, the Council can start the process of trying to enforce the sale of the property.

Enforced Sale Procedure – Law of Property Act 1925 Section 103 allows a Local Authority to force the sale of a property where there is a local land charge on it. This can be used as the next step after the Council has carried out works in default. Local Authority can pay for works to be carried out in lieu of the owner taking action and if the costs exceed £1000 then can look to enforce the sale of the property.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders (provision under the Housing Act 2004). The Council can take over the management of the property and bring it into use.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 Section 215 – 'detrimental to the amenities of the neighbourhood. The Council can serve notice on the owner.

Building Act 1984 section 76-79 – 'dangerous and ruinous structures. The Council can serve notice.

Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982 Section 29 – secure an empty property against access where there is a danger to the public. The Council can carry out work to secure a property.

Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 79-80 – prejudicial to health/statutory nuisance. The Council can serve notice on the owner to carry out works.

Housing Act 1985 and Local Government and Housing Act 1989 – compulsory purchase order

- Town and Country Planning Act 1990 section 215 – where a property has a detrimental impact on the amenity of an area, a notice can be served under Section 215 of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 requiring the owner to address the unsightly external appearance. If the owner fails to comply with

the notice the Council may undertake the works in default and make a charge against the property. A Section 215 notice can improve the amenity of an area and be used as the basis for an enforced sale.

- Local Government Act 2003 – Council Tax increases to help bring empty properties back into use.
- Direct sale by owners – the Council can pass on the details of interested parties who may wish to buy properties in a certain area/ increase their portfolio. Rother can maintain a list of interested landlords/developers – we could have a form on the website that people can complete if they are interested in purchasing property in the area
- Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMO) – provision is contained within the Housing Act 2004 and gives Local Authorities the power to take over the management of a property, either directly or with an intermediary such as a registered social landlord or Letting Agent. This is resource heavy.
- Compulsory purchase order (CPO) – this is a lengthy legal process that could be considered if all other methods to bring an empty home back into use fail.
- Council departments (planning, planning enforcement and building control) to work in partnership to encourage empty properties being brought back into use.
- Planning – share information when an application is received with regards to an empty property.
- Environmental Health – can use Anti-Social behaviour legislation and Housing legislation. Share information received on potential empty homes.
- Police – share information on a problem empty property (squatters, anti-social behaviour).
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service – share information on identified/potential empty home or problematic empty homes (arson etc.).
- Local Estate Agents/letting agent – develop links with local estate agents to offer information and support to owners is required to selling an empty property/letting an empty property.

What is the Sussex Community Housing Hub?

The Hub has been established to provide essential support for urban and rural communities across Sussex wishing to pursue successful community led housing projects.

Its aim is to empower local communities to increase the supply of community led housing, primarily affordable homes, to meet local needs.

They provide advice, support and guidance – increasing knowledge, developing skills and building capacity to realise development opportunities.

The hub offers:

- Solutions to meet local housing need – maximising community benefit.
- Expertise, skills and experience – everything to help delivery.
- A long track record of successfully delivering community led projects.
- Independent technical advice, support and information extensive networks locally and nationally – informing best practice.

The hub can help by...

- Explaining the different routes to achieving community-led housing.
- Supporting – independent advice throughout a project.
- Enabling informed choices by providing a full suite of processes, tools, options.
- Training on governance, management, development, community organising.
- Acting as an intermediary between professionals, local authorities and community groups.
- Facilitating understanding, constructive discussion and decision making.
- Providing access to a range of technical support and professionals.
- Sharing good practice – what works / how to address things that go wrong.

Their website address <https://www.sussexcommunityhousinghub.org/>

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2019 – 2020		
DATE OF MEETING	SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM IN BOLD	Cabinet Portfolio Holder
27.01.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2020/21 • Key Performance Targets 2020/21 • Environmental Policy proposals • Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group Terms of Reference • Housing Allocations Policy 	Oliver Field Clark
16.03.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crime and Disorder Committee: to receive a report from the Community Safety Partnership • Performance Progress Report: Third Quarter 2019/20 • Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring to January 2020 • Corporate Plan Consultation Plan 	Brewerton Oliver
27.04.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste Contract Review • Recommendations of the Community Governance Review Steering Group • Call-in and Urgency Procedures • Draft Annual Report to Council • Review of Task and Finish Groups / Outcomes 	Oliver Prochak
ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION		
Tourism Review [Minute OSC18/52 – 29 April] Regeneration CPE Task and Finish Group – December 2020		

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