

Cabinet

Date and Time - **Monday 9 March 2020 – 6.30 pm**
Venue - **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea**

Councillors appointed to the Committee:

Councillors D.B. Oliver (Leader), Mrs C.A. Bayliss, J.H.F. Brewerton, C.A. Clark, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, K.M. Field, S.M. Prochak (Deputy Leader) and J. Vine-Hall.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2020 as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

To consider such other items as the Leader decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Head of Paid Service by 9:00am on the day of the meeting.

Agenda item 13 – Council Transformation: stage 1

4. URGENT DECISIONS

The Leader to give details of those reports that have been referred to the Chairman of the Council to consider designating as urgent, in accordance with Rule 17 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained within Part 4 of the Council Constitution, and to which the call-in procedure will not therefore apply.

5. 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.

At the discretion of the Leader, the order of the items set out in the agenda may be varied

This agenda can be made available in large print, Braille, audiotape/CD or in another language upon request. For all enquiries please contact lisa.cooper@rother.gov.uk

Tel: 01424 787813

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

6. **CALL-IN - DESTINATION LEISURE: BEXHILL REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING LEISURE FACILITIES** (Pages 1 - 4)
7. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - QUARTER 3 2019/20** (Pages 5 - 12)
8. **COMMUNITY GRANT SCHEME - ROUND 2** (Pages 13 - 26)
9. **FUNDING GRANT TO LIGHT UP BEXHILL COMMUNITY INTEREST COMPANY TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF VE DAY CELEBRATION EVENT** (Pages 27 - 30)
10. **HIGH WEALD AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) HOUSING DESIGN GUIDE** (Pages 31 - 34)
11. **PROBITY IN PLANNING - REVISED GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS** (Pages 35 - 38)
12. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (EXEMPT INFORMATION)**

The following item includes material which is exempt from publication by virtue of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and it is recommended that the press and public be excluded. The relevant paragraphs of Schedule 12A indicating the nature of the exempt information is stated after the item and is reproduced in full at the end of the agenda. In all the circumstances of each case, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.
13. **COUNCIL TRANSFORMATION: STAGE 1 (PARAGRAPHS 1, 2 AND 4)**
(Pages 39 - 46)

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Agenda Despatch Date: 28 February 2020

REVISED AGENDA PUBLISHED 3 MARCH 2020

Extract from Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.

Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Publication of this Agenda constitutes notice that in accordance with Regulation 5(7) of the above, the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee has agreed that Agenda Item 13) above is urgent and compliance with the above regulations in respect of private meetings is impractical with regard to this Item.

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Call-in – Destination Leisure: Bexhill Redevelopment of Existing Leisure Facilities

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 26 February considered the decision made by Cabinet in respect of Destination Leisure: Bexhill Redevelopment of Existing Leisure Facilities, which had been subject to the call-in procedure. The recommendation and minute arising from this matter is reproduced below. A copy of the original report to Cabinet is available at the following link:

<https://rother.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=153&MId=183&Ver=4>.

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the decision taken by Cabinet on 10 February 2020 be reviewed, taking into account the concerns of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

OSC20/?. **CALL-IN – DESTINATION LEISURE – BEXHILL REDEVELOPMENT OF EXISTING LEISURE FACILITIES**

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director which detailed what action could be taken following the initiation of the call-in procedure in respect of the Cabinet decision on the redevelopment of the existing Leisure Centre in Bexhill agreed on Monday 10 February 2020 (Minute CB19/98 refers). The Executive Director had initiated the call-in procedure at the request of Councillor P.N. Osborne, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) in accordance with the procedure.

The Chairman had submitted the following reasons for calling in this item:

- i. a new Leisure Centre is a corporate plan priority project;
- ii. concerns that the contract extension will not have enough time to be sorted out by legal and the current contract has been extended twice before, due to the expectation that a new contract will come with a new facility;
- iii. delays to the purchase and any compulsory purchase plans will cause further delay and cause additional costs;
- iv. failure to replace the existing leisure facilities (some over 30 years old) will hamper the Council's commitment to reduce its carbon output due to the existing facilities inefficient buildings and plant; and
- v. the Council may miss out on possible grant streams to fund the new leisure facilities due to the removal of the Community Information Levy funding.

The following additional comments and rationale for the call-in request were made by Members opposed to the Cabinet decision:

- concern was raised that land ownership issues were still prevalent and that access rights were still to be settled;
- the whole project and, in particular, the housing element had, as a consequence of the decision been delayed by Cabinet's decision to defer the recommendations detailed at Appendix C in the original report. The Council's lack of a current 5-year supply of land for housing was significant and cause for concern;
- further delays opened the project up to increased costs and risks;
- the Committee was advised that the site had been split into two separate projects namely Housing and Leisure Facility. An Employer's Agent would be appointed to oversee the whole development however this had been delayed due to the decision of Cabinet. Separate architects and contractors would be appointed for the two specialist elements if and when the project was approved; and
- accuracy of the Cabinet Minutes was challenged and, in particular, the resolutions approved. The Committee was reminded that all meetings were recorded and available on the Council's website. Members were encouraged to listen to the recording.

Councillors Brewerton and Vine-Hall reassured the Committee that Cabinet had carefully considered this matter and in their view it was the correct decision to defer until the Bexhill Leisure Centre Project Steering Group (BLCPSG) had met to consider the project in more detail.

After discussion, the Committee recommended that Cabinet be requested to reconsider their decision and approve the recommendations in the original Cabinet report, as follows:

Recommendation to COUNCIL: That £5m from either the Strategic Community Infrastructure Levy fund or borrowing (subject to affordability) or other funding sources be allocated to this project, noting the overall funding approach set out at Appendix 3; and that the Capital Programme be updated for the estimated costs and funding as detailed in the report.

AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That project progress be noted and the Executive Director, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Safer Communities and Communications, Young People, Sport and Leisure, be granted delegated authority to:

- 1) agree an extension of the Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool contracts to secure continued operation of the existing facilities from 1 April 2021 up to the planned closure of each centre; and
- 2) begin the Compulsory Purchase Order process for land at the former high school site and access, subject to a full report to follow; and

- 3) appoint an Employer's Agent and an Architect to carry out detailed design work and preparation of a reserved matters application to be funded from capital project budget previously committed.

Members also recommended that Cabinet reconsider the composition of the BLCPSG to include Councillor Carroll.

(Councillors J. Barnes, Clark, Mrs Earl-Williams and Maynard each declared a personal interest in this matter in so far as they were elected Members of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 3).

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

This page is intentionally left blank

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Directors
Subject	-	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 3 2019/20

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

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

Changes to the Revenue Budget

1. This report updates Members on the Council's finances as at the end of December and projects a provisional outturn for 2019/20. The financial position for the Council is shown in the table below and further analysis is shown in subsequent paragraphs:

Line	Rother District Council General Fund Summary	Revised 2019/20 Budget £ (000)	2019/20 Estimated Outturn £ (000)	2019/20 Variance £ (000)	2019/20 Variance %
1	Executive Directors & Corporate Core	2,084	2,308	224	10.7%
2	Environmental Services	750	672	(78)	-10.4%
3	Strategy and Planning	961	865	(96)	-10.0%
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(591)	(332)	259	43.8%
5	Housing and Community Services	7,365	7,746	381	5.2%
6	Resources	3,264	3,217	(47)	-1.4%
7	Total Cost of Services	13,833	14,476	643	4.6%
8	Interest from Investments	(512)	(512)	0	0.0%
9	Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	658	658	0	0.0%
10	Rother 2020 Savings				
11	(i) Increase income - investment in property	0	0	0	0.0%
12	(ii) MRP	91	91	0	0.0%
13	(iii) Interest payments	227	227	0	0.0%
14	Net Cost of Services	14,297	14,940	643	4.5%

Line		Revised 2019/20 Budget £ (000)	2019/20 Estimated Outturn £ (000)	2019/20 Variance £ (000)	2019/20 Variance %
15	Special Expenses	(674)	(674)	0	0.0%
	Business Rates				
16	Local Share of business rates	(8,020)	(7,609)	411	5.1%
17	s31 Grants	(1,297)	(1,654)	(357)	-27.5%
18	Tariff	5,715	5,715	0	0.0%
19	Levy	0	0	0	0.0%
	Revenue Support Grant	0	0	0	0.0%
	Non-Specific Revenue Grants				
20	New Homes Bonus Grant	(449)	(449)	0	0.0%
21	Rural Services Delivery Grant	0	0	0	0.0%
22	Local Council tax Support Grant	(100)	(96)	4	4.0%
23	Benefits Administration Grant	(233)	(235)	(2)	-0.9%
24	New Burdens Grant & Other Non-Specific Grants	0	0	0	0.0%
25	Homelessness Grant - New Burdens	(43)	(43)	0	0.0%
26	Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(275)	(276)	(1)	-0.4%
27	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(6,830)	(6,830)	0	0.0%
	Other Financing				
28	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	336	336	0	0.0%
29	Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure	(658)	(658)	0	0.0%
30	Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(1,769)	(1,769)	0	0.0%
31	Total Income	(14,297)	(14,242)	55	-0.4%
32	Net Deficit/(Surplus)	0	698	698	-

2. Since the last monitoring report to Cabinet there has been one reportable virement which has been reflected in the table above and follows a review of the capital expenditure financing requirement, which is explained further in paragraphs 19 and 20.

Review of Significant Variations to the Cost of Services

3. The table above shows the Council is predicted to be in deficit by the year end by £698,000. The majority of this relates to the cost of services at line 7 in the table at paragraph 1 which shows a deficit of £643,000, which is 4.6% greater than the Revised Budget and represents a decrease of around £390,000 from the Quarter 2 forecast reported to Cabinet on 4 November 2019.
4. Many of the risks highlighted in previous forecasts have materialised during the financial year but the Assistant Director Resources has worked closely with Heads of Services to reduce the overspend and its impact on reserves.
5. As part of the 2020/21 Revenue Budget considerations, Members will be aware that seeking voluntary redundancies was one of the measures taken to balance the budget. The likely cost of redundancies is in the order of £450,000 to £500,000 but will deliver ongoing savings in excess of this amount. It is expected that the redundancy costs will be incurred in 2019/20 and therefore is in addition to the £698,000 quoted above.
6. The ongoing impact of these overspends have also been considered as part of next year's detailed Revenue Budget requirement and the Medium Term Financial Plan, which were reported to Cabinet on 10 February 2020.

7. The main reasons for the variations identified at this stage are detailed in the paragraphs 8 to 18 below.

Executive Directors – Deficit £224,000

8. The predicted deficit has increased by £102,000 since Quarter 2, mainly due to potential legal costs of £40,000 in relation to planning appeals and further consultancy costs of £40,000 in relation to the Payroll Implementation Project.

Environmental Services – Surplus £78,000

9. Environmental Services' predicted surplus has increased only slightly by £7,000 since the last reported forecast.

Strategy and Planning – Surplus £96,000

10. The Strategy and Planning department forecast has changed from a deficit of £59,000 in Quarter 2 to a surplus of £96,000 mainly due to increased income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). The Council retains 5% of income received from developers for CIL to help fund administration costs. The timing of receiving CIL from developers is very difficult to forecast. This is due to the time delay between a liability notice being served on a developer and the point at which works actually begin, which can be prolonged. Receipts have been higher than originally anticipated and have resulted in an over achievement against budget of £121,000. Furthermore, Land Charges income is now expected to meet its target as opposed to being £21,000 under budget as reported in Quarter 2.
11. The department continues to experience a downturn in planning fee income and is currently forecast to be £231,000 under budget although this is offset by savings of £196,000 from continuing delays in appointments to vacant posts.

Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration – Deficit £259,000

12. The forecast deficit for the Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration department has reduced by £46,000 since Quarter 2. Members may recall from the previous forecast that rental income derived from properties purchased as part of the Property Investment Strategy (PIS) was expected to be short of the budget by £258,000. However since then, the Council has successfully acquired another property in Battle, which has helped to reduce the deficit by £38,000. Officers will continue to try and secure further properties in accordance within the aims of the PIS.

Housing and Community Services – Deficit £381,000

13. The Housing and Community Services department is predicted to be over spent by £381,000. This is £145,000 lower than the previous forecast and is due to several changes.
14. A review of the variable services delivered under the Waste Collection and Street Cleansing Contract has indicated that the forecast overspend will be around £287,000, some £40,000 less than previously reported.

15. The Homelessness Service continues to experience growing demand but due to the Rother Letting Service initiative, the financial impact is expected to be partially mitigated, reducing the projected overspend to £144,000, some £56,000 lower than previously forecast.
16. An overspend of £16,000 is forecast for Rye Area Parks and Gardens due to the replacement of broken play park equipment.
17. The overall salaries budget is forecast to be underspent due to a number of staff vacancies across the department, which reduces the overspend by £53,000.

Resources – Surplus £47,000

18. The Resources Service forecast for Quarter 3 shows an underspend of £47,000 compared to a deficit of £97,000 previously reported. The change follows a review of the Housing Benefit payments recovery from the Department of Work and Pensions, which has indicated the recovery of a further £255,000. Further restructuring costs in the Accountancy division have reduced this saving by £60,000.
19. In order to comply with accounting standards, the Council is undertaking a valuation review of its property estate. This is a complex exercise requiring the services of specialist providers and the recent procurement process has indicated a cost of £40,000. Ordinarily this cost can be accommodated within existing budgets but this year it has not been possible.

Non Service Budgets

20. Interest income from investments remain in line with the budget although there may be some small change depending on treasury management and property investment decisions made between now and finalising the financial year accounts.
21. A review of the Capital Programme has resulted in Reserves for 2019/20 meeting £658,000 of capital expenditure. This is a small reduction of £46,000 since the last forecast and has been reflected in the funding of the Capital Programme shown in Appendix A.
22. As mentioned in the last monitoring report to Members, delays in acquiring properties under the PIS has resulted in lower than anticipated levels of external borrowing. This means the amounts required to be set aside for the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and interest payable have reduced by £428,000 since the last forecast.

Collection Fund

23. The Council Tax part of the Collection Fund is currently forecast to be in surplus at year end by £744,000. Rother's share of this is estimated to be £91,000. This has been reflected in the opening position for the 2020/21 Revenue Budget agreed by Cabinet at its February meeting. The collection performance to the end of December is shown overleaf:

Council Tax	Equivalent Period		
	2019/20	2018/19	2017/18
Collectable Annual debit (at 100% collection)	£75,588,312.90	£72,387,056.78	£67,899,534.12
Income Received	£64,143,353.52	£61,572,952.47	£57,984,594,74
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	84.86%	85.06%	85.40%
Budgeted yield (at 98.5% collection)	£74,549,856.52	£71,114,683.69	£66,599,906.61
Income Received as a % of budgeted yield	86.04%	86.58%	87.06%

24. As reported to Cabinet at its February meeting, business rates are forecast to be in surplus of £1.8m by financial year end. Rother's share of this is estimated to be £758,000. This also has been reflected in the opening position for the 2020/21 Revenue Budget agreed by Cabinet at its February meeting. The following table shows the collection performance to the end of September:

Business Rates	2019/2020	Equivalent Period 2018/2019
Collectable debit	£18,498,410.77	£18,501,218.10
Income Received	£15,450,341.21	£15,767,993.33
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	83.25%	85.23%
Amount outstanding for year	£3,048,069.56	£2,733,224.87

Capital Programme

25. Capital spend to the end of December 2019 totals £13.6m including the recent acquisition of the freehold of Market Square, Battle at a total cost of £3.2m. A summary of spend to the end of December is shown at Appendix A. The overall Capital Programme as approved by Cabinet on the 10 February 2020 will need to be updated once the final spend and funding has been agreed for the 2019/20 financial year.

Conclusion

26. The current forecast projects that for 2019/20, the Council will overspend by £698,000 at the end of the financial year, excluding the cost of redundancies. Officers continue to monitor spending and income closely and to take positive action as set out in this report to mitigate the additional cost and its impact on the Council's reserves.

Malcolm Johnston
Executive Director

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Regular financial reporting is integral to good decision making and therefore Members and officers need an up-to-date understanding of the Council's financial position.

Capital Programme 2019/20 – 31 December 2019

	2019/20 Budget £ (000)	Spend to 31 Dec £ (000)	2019/20 Outturn £ (000)	2019/20 Variance £ (000)
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration				
Community Grants	130	263	263	133
East Parade - project B - Shelters and Heritage Hub	32		32	0
Cemetery Entrance	240	27	240	0
Blackfriars Housing Development	0	74	0	0
Solar Panels	0	(2)	0	0
1066 Pathways	164	92	164	0
Rother 2020 Programme				
PIS - Beeching Road/Wainwright Road	250	357	357	107
PIS - Glovers House	7,812	7,844	7,844	32
PIS- Barnhorn Road	605	603	605	0
PIS - Beeching Road site 18-40	500	11	500	0
PIS - Market Square, Battle	3,256	3,221	3,256	0
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	45	0	45	0
Housing and Community Services				
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	53	54	53	0
Bexhill Seafront - Fountain	0	0	0	0
Fairlight Coastal Protection	70	55	70	0
Sidley Sports and Recreation	0	17	17	17
Land Swap re Former High School Site	0	0	0	0
Bexhill Leisure Centre – site development	415	51	415	0
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,625	876	1,625	0
New Bins	121	105	121	0
Bexhill Promenade – Protective Barriers	50	0	50	0
Housing (purchases – temp accommodation)	1,000	0	1,000	0
Reinforcement Works to Camber Car Parks	0	0	0	0
Strategy and Planning				
Highways works - London Road Bexhill	300	0	300	0
CIL Payments to Parish/Town Councils	200	0	200	0
Executive Directors & Corporate Core				
Accommodation Strategy	75	4	75	0
Lift for Amherst Road Offices	100	0	100	0
Resources				
Enterprise Resource Planning System upgrade	36	(39)	36	0
ICT Infrastructure – Ongoing Upgrade Programme	166	26	166	0
Total Capital Programme	17,245	13,639	17,534	289

	2019/20 Budget £ (000)		2019/20 Outturn £ (000)	2018/19 Variance £ (000)
Funded By:				
Capital Receipts	415			(415)
Grants and contributions	2,859			(2,859)
CIL	0			0
Borrowing	13,263			(13,263)
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	658			(658)
Unfunded	50			(50)
Total Funding	17,245		0	(17,245)

This page is intentionally left blank

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Community Grant Scheme – Round 2

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

- 1) the community grants listed at paragraph 7 of the report as recommended by the Grants Panel be approved, subject to specific conditions relating to each application; and
 - 2) to finance the over commitment by one of the options in paragraph 12.
-

Head of Service: Ben Hook**Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Prochak****Introduction**

1. The Council's Community Grant Scheme (CGS) makes provision for up to £130,000 per annum to be made available to community groups or organisations that meet the grant criteria of the Rother District Council (RDC) CGS, as agreed by Cabinet in 2013 (Minute CB12/120 refers).

Budget Position

2. A total of £67,541 was awarded during Round 1 of the CGS. A further £500 has been awarded through the Small Grants Scheme (SGS) (See Appendix 3).
3. The Council agreed to ring-fence £10,000 for small grants for VE (8 May 2020) commemorative / celebratory events (Minute CB19/42 refers), and £40,000 for Healthy Aging and Innovation in Rural Europe (HAIRE) project match funding (Minute CB19/41 refers), £15,000 of which would be committed from the 2019-20 budget.
4. This leaves a total of £36,959 for Round 2 of the CGS, as set out below:

Budget for 2019-20	£130,000
Amount awarded during Round 1:	£67,541
Amount awarded through Small Grants Scheme:	£500
Amount ring-fenced for VE events	£10,000
Amount committed Year 1 HAIRE project	£15,000
Total awarded/committed:	£93,041.00
Remaining budget for Round 2, 2019-20:	£36,959

5. The Community Grant Panel had been instructed to assess and recommend each application based on its merits rather than the budget position. This was due to the reduction in the budget created by the VE events ring-fencing and HAIRE project commitment and an agreement from the Leader that applicants should not be penalised as a result. The CGS budget sits within the Council's approved Capital Programme and any overspend during this round will be offset against slippage from other capital projects.

Community Grants

6. Round 2 of the CGS for 2019-20 closed on 15 January 2020. A total of eleven applications were received, one of which did not meet the scheme criteria and was discounted.
7. Cabinet is asked to consider the applications at Appendix 1 (a summary of each is set out below):

Applicant	Panel Recommend	Applicant Request
Battle Community Singers	£1,400	£1,400
Battle Memorial Hall	£4,000	£4,000
Camber Parish Council	£29,340	£29,340
Hastings & Rother Furniture Service	£7,350	£11,500
Robertsbridge Cricket Club	£10,000	£10,000
Stonegate Village Hall	£6,000	£6,000
St James The Great Church	£5,000	£5,000
Strandliners	£877	£877
The Archive Resource Centre, Pett Village Hall	£3,000	£3,000
The Camber Memorial Hall	£5,000	£5,000
	£71,967	£76,117
Battle Local Action Planning Group	£5,000	£5,000
Total	£76,967	£81,117

Table1: Applications, recommendations, applicant requests: CSG Round 2, 2019-20

8. Additionally, a request was received from Battle Local Action Planning Group (BLAPG) for the remaining £5,000 shortfall in their previous request for £30,000 to support the delivery of a healthy walk/cycle pathway at Battle Recreation Ground. Cabinet had previously agreed a reduced award of £25,000 (Minute CB18/78 refers) with a proviso that the applicant could apply for the remaining £5,000 during Round 1 of 2019/2020 CGS if they were still short of funding for the project. BLAPG has since sent in this request together with a project update and timeline. The details of the project as previously reported to Cabinet is attached at Appendix 2.
9. Should Cabinet agree with the Panel's recommendation to award the applications above, and the additional award to BLAPG, then this will result in a maximum of £76,967 being awarded in Round 2. For this financial year the total amount committed from the overall budget of £130,000 will be £171,008. This will result in an overspend of £41,008. Members are reminded that the SGS remains open and therefore opportunities for community groups to submit an application during this financial year are still available.

10. Members are reminded that conditions are applied when awarding the grants which include that full funding is obtained in advance of any Rother payments being made and that RDC is acknowledged in any publicity and promotional material associated with these projects. Other specific conditions will also be applied to grants as appropriate.

Hastings & Rother Furniture Service

11. Elements of the project breakdown provided by Hastings & Rother Furniture Service did not meet the scheme criteria; the Panel agreed to recommend match funding for the elements of the project that meet the criteria and this has resulted in the recommendation of a reduced award, as set out in Table 1 above.
12. If Cabinet approve the list of grants as presented in Appendix 1 then this will over commit the CGS Capital Programme provision for this year. Previously, Members agreed to not cap the current award fund following approval for the HAIRE Project and therefore, the shortfall in funding will need to be met from reserves. Members could reduce the 2020-21 Capital Programme provision by the amount of overspend if all projects in this report are approved. Alternatively, Members could consider the following:
 - i. Reduce each application by an equal percentage to come within budget.
 - ii. Defer some grant applications until the next round.
 - iii. Approve all applications and reduce the available community grants for FY20/21 and only have one round of community grants.
 - iv. Fund the shortfall from reserves.

Future of Community Grants

13. Members have indicated that they may like to review the CGS and whether it could for example be superseded by either a local lottery, use of local Community Infrastructure Levy money or crowd funding. If Members are minded to review the community grants then it is suggested the Panel are best placed to make recommendations to Cabinet.

Conclusion

14. Members are requested to consider the Panel's recommendations, set out at paragraph 7 above, with summaries of the applications attached at Appendix 1, mindful of the clear benefits these offer to their communities.
15. The CGS offers a robust assessment process that benefits communities applying for grants, and secures considerable additional value for money benefits for the Council.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

The assessment and monitoring system for community grants will mitigate much of the financial and reputational risks associated with handing over grant finance. The Council attaches specific conditions to grant applications to mitigate risk. Nonetheless, we are often in the hands of voluntary groups as to the amount of time, effort and other financial support that they can commit to their projects. This is mitigated by the good working relationships that exist across the district.

COMMUNITY GRANTS – ROUND 2, FINANCIAL YEAR: 2019/20**1. Battle Community Singers**Applicant and Grant Request Details

Battle Community Singers (BCS) were founded in 2015 as an all-inclusive, non-profit making local group who enjoy meeting together to sing and socialise. The group support those with a wide range of challenges including physical and mental health issues.

BCS are seeking an award to support in the cost of the following:

- Coach travel to Stratford to take part in the National Community Choirs Festival.
- Conductors' staging and trolley, for use at local concerts.
- The cost of copywrite sheet music.

Benefits

Members of the BCS will benefit directly, however the project will encourage others in the community to join and benefit from an 'enriching, engaging and uplifting experience'

Other Funding Sources

BCS are part funding the project and have an application in with Battle Town Council (BTC). The outcome of the BTC application will not be known until after 28 January.

Project Sustainability

BCS has been running for almost five years. The Conductors staging and trolley will enable more local concerts to take place. The equipment will be maintained by the group.

Support for the Project

Written support has been received by:

- Rotary Club of Battle
- Battle Festival
- Optivo
- BTC (funding support to be confirmed)
- Ward Councillor support from Councillors Mrs Cook and Field

Panel Comments and Recommendation

There was some concern about funding being sought for coach travel as part of this project, however, agreement that this element of the project is about raising the profile of the group in order to attract a larger local membership.

Recommend an award of £1,400 on the condition that evidence is provided of funding from the BTC (to be confirmed following BTC meeting on Tuesday 28 January).

2. **Battle Memorial Hall**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Battle Memorial Hall is requesting a grant for the replacement of projector equipment and screen which are nearing the end of their useful life and which are used for a community cinema.

Benefits

The initiative to hold monthly film shows was taken some time ago as part of a scheme to raise sufficient funds to install tiered seating in the main hall. Although the scheme was successful and the project completed, the popularity of the film shows was such that requests were made by many attendees to continue with the arrangement. Poor bus services and difficulties for some people accessing a cinema if they have to travel, has led to a sense of isolation and for them the cinema evening has become a regular date. Films specifically for children are also now shown and organisations such as the Battle Festival make use of the equipment. However, the quality of the shows has been decreasing as the projector has become aged and the small size screen needs to be enlarged.

Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from:

- Battle Muffin Club
- Battle Rotary Club
- Battle Town Council (BTC)
- Donations

Support for the Project

The project has the support of Ward Members Councillors Dixon and Field. BTC also supports the project with funding of £500.

Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel raised concerns about whether the venue was properly licensed to show films and felt that the ticket prices should be realistic to ensure that equipment can be maintained.

Recommend an award of £4,000 on the condition that evidence is provided showing that the project is licence compliant.

3. **Camber Parish Council**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

The grant will be used to deliver Phase 2 of the Jubilee Green enhancement project to provide a sympathetically designed play area to sit adjacent to the recently completed Phase 1 project to complete a landscaped space for local people and visitors to enjoy. Phase 1 (which also received community grant funding) used reclaimed beach timber from the sea defence work to make benches and picnic tables. Phase 2 will continue the beach theme by including a play boat which can be used for all ages and abilities as its main feature. The existing play area has come to the end of its useful life being installed in 2005 with much of the equipment recently removed on the advice of Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

Benefits

All children up to the age of 11 years living in the village as well as visitors to Camber will benefit from the new facilities. The adjacent Memorial Hall committee will benefit, increasing their opportunity for 'birthday party' bookings – this will contribute towards the sustainability of the Hall as a valuable community resource.

Other Funding Sources

Camber Parish Council (CPC) has committed 50% of costs of the project.

Support for the Project

Written support has been provided by:

- Camber After School Club
- Flip flops pre-school

Additionally, CPC undertook consultation with residents with children on the design and this feedback was included with the application. Written support has been provided by Ward Member Councillor Osbourne.

Panel Comments and Recommendation:

The Panel were pleased to see that Phase 1 of the project has been delivered on schedule. The project benefits local children, visitors and the local village hall which is located within a deprived area. Good project sustainability has been demonstrated within the CPC's budget.

Recommend an award of £30,000 with usual conditions.

4. Hastings & Rother Furniture Service

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Hastings & Rother Furniture Service (HRFS) are a charitable company limited by guarantee. The grant will be used to take forward their 'Bexhill People's Shed' project (like a Men's Shed, but open to everyone). HRFS has the space to develop this project at their premises in Bexhill, but the space requires refurbishment before it is fit for purpose.

The space, once refurbished, will help them to develop the facilities needed to use the workshop space to bring people together to share skills, reuse materials and make things together.

Benefits

The beneficiaries will be adults of all ages, many of them over 60 and on low incomes. We anticipate that there will be 40 training sessions in the workspace, providing 320 learning opportunities over the next year.

Other Funding Sources

HRFS has received funding of £10,000 from Awards for All.

Support for the Project

Whilst there is no written support (other than Ward Members), this project has been developed in consultation with HRFS service users.

Ward Members Councillors Bayliss and Courtel have provided written support for the project.

Panel Discussion and Recommendation

As costs had been included in the project for staff time, only 50% of funding could be recommended to match fund the elements of the project that meet the grants criteria.

Councillor Courtel confirmed that the CEO of HRFS would be in agreement with this decision.

Recommend an award of £7,350 based on 50% of match funding for the elements within the project that meet the criteria.

Also, evidence to be provided that the shortfall (as a result of reduced award) in funding is met.

5. **Robertsbridge Cricket Club**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Robertsbridge Cricket Club (RCC) will use the grant to upgrade and renew the facilities with brand new, state of the art pitches and nets, up to the recommended England & Wales Cricket Board (ECB) standards for youth coaching.

Benefits

The improved facilities will enable the club to continue to expand on the youth training programme. Revenues from the youth setup and competitions account for over 50% of the club's revenues, so the replacement of these facilities will ensure the ongoing health and sustainability of the club for the Village.

Other Funding Sources

£10,000 has been pledged from the ECB (subject to other funding being secured); the applicants have committed £10,000 to the project. The applicant is awaiting the outcome of a request for funding from Salehurst & Robertsbridge Parish Council (SRPC), although this additional amount will not be required if the community grant is awarded in full.

Support for the Project

Support has been received from:

- Hurst Green Cricket Club
- Sussex Cricket
- RDC Sports Development Officer
- SRPC (funding to be confirmed)
- Ward Member – Councillor Prochak

Panel Comments and Recommendation

Good support from the ECB and Adrian Gaylon, the Council's Sports Development Officer.

Awaiting decision from the Parish Council regarding additional funding.

Agree award up to £10,000 taking account of any award made by the Parish Council.

6. **Stonegate Village Hall**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Stonegate Village Hall is a registered charity. The applicant will use the grant towards precautionary and preventative works on the hall's flat roof (to the rear of the building) to avoid substantial costs in the future as the flat roof is showing signs of deterioration. Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) has advised on this application and stated the following via email to the applicant:

"RDC do fund capital work through the Community Grants Scheme but they have to be sure that the work does not fall into 'routine maintenance' in other words they would be looking to make sure the roof had been well maintained and had now reached the end of its natural life, which is true in the case of Stonegate Village Hall".

Evidence of ongoing maintenance has since been provided by the applicant.

Benefits

The users of the hall will benefit from the project.

Other Funding Sources

Ticehurst Parish Council has committed £3,000 to match the applicant's own contribution.

Support for the Project

Written support has been provided by:

- Jane Coleman School of Dancing
- Stonegate Amateur Dramatic Society
- Ward Member Councillor Mrs Barnes has provided written support.

Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel expressed some concern that this came under repairs and maintenance. However, RVA had assessed the condition of the flat roof and had given reassurance that it had reached its end of life. Additionally, evidence had since been supplied that the roof had been maintained throughout its life.

Recommend an award of £6,000 based on the usual conditions.

7. **St James The Great Church, Ewhurst Green**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

The applicant will use the grant towards the installation of a tea station. The tea station is the first part of a 2-part project which includes the installation of an accessible toilet. The Parish has no building with adequate acoustics or a piano other than the church; the intention is to be able to offer refreshments and therefore make the church available to the community for events.

A number of estimates have been provided which cover the budget for the following:

- Kitchen units, work top, boiling hot tap and sink
- Fitting
- Plumbing
- Electrics

- Plastering

Benefits

The project will benefit the community of Ewhurst and other members of the public who attend various events at the church. The applicant is very keen to widen the use of the church to the entire parish. Currently the average attendance at the 'talks @ St James' is 40 (monthly talks given by visiting speakers, covering a wide variety of subjects and open to church goers and non-churchgoers. There is no entrance fee, but donations are requested which are directed to a charity of the speakers' choice or put to the tea station fund. Causes which have benefited include – Street Pastors in Hastings, the RNLI, the local hospital scanner appeal, Rwanda Aid and St Michaels' Hospice); monthly coffee mornings attract 30 (currently dirty crockery must be taken away by a volunteer).

Other Funding Sources

Funding of £12,500 has been committed by the applicant and a further £500 by the Parish Council.

Support for the Project

Support for the project has come from the Parish Council and Ewhurst Green Residents Association.

Ward Member support has come from Councillors Ganly and Mooney.

Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel agreed that this is not just a tea station but more of a community café facility which will greatly benefit the community for events.

Recommend an award of £5,000 based on the usual conditions.

8. Strandliners CIC

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Strandliners are a Community Interest Company whose objective is to clear toxic waste from Rother's beaches and riverbanks. Their longer-term goals include stemming the tide of plastic waste at source by:

- interacting with polluters;
- raising public awareness in the community; and
- working with local and regional governments to effect long-lasting change.

Funding will be used exclusively in the purchase of necessary materials and equipment. They fall into three main categories: 1) collection equipment; 2) safety gear; 3) promotional materials.

Benefits

According to data recorded by the Ocean Project, 1,000 kilos of plastic waste flow into the sea from the River Rother and Military Canal annually. Plastic strewn area beaches and waterways are not just an eyesore – they present a dangerous health hazard both to local residents and out of town visitors. Keeping these areas clean presents benefits to local residents and the local tourism industry, additionally, there are longer term environmental benefits.

Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from The Rye Fund (£250) and Little Cheyne Court Wind Farm Community Fund (£630).

Support for the Project

Councillors Gray, Mrs Hart, Mier, Norton and Prochak.

Panel Comments and Recommendation

Panel noted that no funding had been received from Rye Town Council due to a lack of funds.

The project meets all the criteria and has the support of at least five Members. The Project contributes to the Council's commitment to tackle the climate emergency.

Recommend an award of £877 with the suggestion that the applicant approaches RDC to highlight and publicise all its upcoming events on the MyAlerts facility to include a request for volunteers.

9. The Archive Resource Centre (Pett Village Hall)

Applicant and Grant Request Details

The Archive Resource Centre (ARC) are a Membership Society set up to establish and operate a local history archive centre, collecting, preserving and cataloguing historical documents, images and artefacts from the parishes of Fairlight, Guestling, and Pett and making them available for viewing and examination by the community's residents and ARC society members.

The grant will be used to convert an existing space within Pett Village Hall into a dedicated, secure archive room and equip it with appropriate equipment including computers, printer, scanner and archive containers.

Benefits

The project will benefit residents of all three parishes (Pett, Fairlight, Guestling) – either by the preservation of archive materials donated by them or by their ability to view and inspect materials donated by others, in the centre or online. Initially this will particularly benefit older residents and local students, but as time passes all future generations will be able to gain a better understanding of their community's past.

Other Funding Sources

Funding has been confirmed from the following:

- Fairlight Parish Council (£200)
- Guestling Parish Council (£100)
- Pett Parish Council (£200)

Funding applications have been sent to Isabel Blackman Foundation, ACRE, Persimmon. An application has been pre-registered with HLF.

Support for the Project

- Ward Members Councillors Bird and Mier
- Support, including funding from the Three Parish Councils
- Fairlight History Group

Panel Comments and Recommendation

The Panel notes a shortfall in funding of £6,000, however, the applicant has made several funding applications to other sources.

Panel members felt this was a good project which will benefit local residents and those with an interest in the history of the local area.

Funding also provided by the three local Parish Councils.

Recommend an award of £3,000 on the condition that evidence of the shortfall in funding is met.

10. **The Camber Memorial Hall**

Applicant and Grant Request Details

Camber Memorial Hall intend to use the funding on improving access to the main building and the doctor's surgery which is used four days a week. Access will be improved by resurfacing the communal parking area for all users, including marking out parking bays including disabled and doctors spaces, and putting in place a designated walkway to ensure safety for wheelchair users and patients to the doctors surgery located at the rear of the building.

Benefits

As well as patients, the project will provide benefits for all users of the Memorial Hall, including yoga, after school kids club, Nifty Fifties for elderly residents, short mat bowls, training for beach rescue teams and many more. The building is also designated as an emergency rest centre and used for national and local elections.

Other Funding Sources

Funding has been received from Cheney Windfarm (£5,000) and Rye Community Grant (£500), with £800 committed by the applicant.

An application was made to Camber Parish Council, but no funding received (written support provided)

Support for the Project

Ward Member Councillor Osbourne
Camber Parish Council

Panel Comments and Recommendation

No funding from the Parish Council – Panel Members felt this may be due to substantial funding being provided to the PC's own project.

Recommend an award of £5,000 based on the usual conditions.

1. Battle Local Action Planning GroupApplicant and Grant Request Details

The Battle Local Action Planning Group is a constituted voluntary organisation whose main aim is to enhance the quality of life for the local community of Battle.

The grant will be used to pump-prime a healthy walk/cycle pathway at Battle Recreation Ground. This will be complimentary to creating a cycle skills area known as a 'Pump Track' to increase educational awareness and skills on cycling – funding for this element of the project is being sought from Sport England.

Benefits

The project will benefit young people in Battle who currently have nowhere to learn to ride their bikes. It will also benefit people with mobility problems (65+), parents with buggies or people with disabilities who want a traffic free, unpolluted experience for walking.

The pathway will potentially make a difference in terms of local peoples' health and mental wellbeing. It will offer residents who walk, cycle, ride or travel in mobility vehicles, an opportunity to be physically active, and socialise with those who they may not usually meet in their day to day lives, which could enhance local community cohesion.

RDC Corporate Objectives

The project meets two strategic aims within the RDC Corporate Plan: 'Stronger Safer Communities' and 'A Quality Physical Environment'. Under 'Stronger Safer Communities' the project will address some road safety issues; develop facilities which promote active lifestyles, linked to needs and for all ages; encourage participation in physical activity; and communicate the value of healthy lifestyles. Under 'A Quality Physical Environment' the project will contribute to maintaining the quality of parks and open spaces; support nature conservation and biodiversity; support local public, active and community transport initiatives; and give strong support to walking and cycling initiatives.

Other Funding Sources

The applicant has raised £8,022 through their own fund raising efforts. Additionally, the Battle Town Council is supporting the project with a grant of £30,000. The applicant has also been successful in gaining £93,118 through a Big Lottery Grant.

Project Sustainability

Battle Town Council has agreed to be responsible for the long term maintenance of Battle Health Pathway.

Support for the Project

Support from the project has been received from the following:

- Battle Town Council (including financial support)
- Hastings & Rother CCG
- Busybees toddler group

- Sustrans – England South
- Battle Brownies
- Active Rother
- Individual residents
- NHS Mental Health
- Claverham Community College
- Battle & Langton CE Primary School
- 1066 Cycle Club
- Saxonwood Care Home
- Martins Oak GP Surgery
- Rother Environmental Group
- ES NHS Trust

The two District Ward Councillors Dixon and Field are in support of the project.

SMALL GRANT AWARDS 2019-20

Organisation	Project	Amount
Peasmarsh Memorial Hall	Hot Water System Improvements	£500
	Total	£500.00

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Funding Grant to Light Up Bexhill Community Interest Company to Support the Delivery of Victory in Europe Day Celebration Event

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That one of the following options be agreed subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 10 and 11 to enable the delivery of a Victory in Europe Day event on the De La Warr lawns on 8 May 2020:

- a) a total grant of up to 100% of the grant request (£5,000) be awarded to Light Up Bexhill Community Interest Company, to be met from the Medium Term Financial Plan Earmarked Reserve; or
 - b) a total grant of up to 50% of the grant request (£2,500), be awarded to Light Up Bexhill Community Interest Company, to be met from the Medium Term Financial Plan earmarked reserve; or
 - c) a total grant of £500 be offered, in line with the Victory in Europe Day event grant scheme, to be met from the Victory in Europe ringfenced portion of the Community Grant Scheme; or
 - d) funding of up to £2,000 be offered from the Rother Events grant scheme programme.
-

Head of Service: Ben Hook

Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Mrs Earl-Williams

Introduction

1. A request has been received from Light Up Bexhill Community Interest Company (CIC) for a grant of £5,000 towards the cost of delivering a Victory in Europe (VE) Day celebration event on the De La Warr Pavilion lawns on VE Day – 8 May 2020.

Light Up Bexhill CIC

2. Light Up Bexhill are incorporated as a Community Interest Company a 'not for profit' entity. There are three Directors of the CIC; these are Councillor Hazel Timpe, Councillor Terry Byrne and Susan Briant. The objective of the CIC is to provide Christmas Lights and festivities in Bexhill.

VE Day in Bexhill – event outline and costs

3. The purpose of the event is to celebrate VE Day and to ‘mark with respect the past and to celebrate our peaceful future’. The highlight of the day will include the displaying of a ‘message to the nation’. An expected turnout of 1,200 residents and visitors will hold individual cards in formation, which when turned over will show the Union Jack with the middle section showing the word ‘PEACE’. This will be filmed from the air.
4. The event will be family focused with stage performances by local youth performing arts groups of music and dance. A kids vintage fun fair, circus workshops, swing orchestra in period costume and dance exhibitions from the period plus a “Merrie England” stunt action show will provide entertainment for the day. It is expected that there will be vintage and classic cars, along with a small market and four food outlets.
5. A breakdown of expected total costs is set out below:

Stage and PA	£800
Big Screen	£1,200
First Aid	£200
Stuntmen, fighting knights	£1,500
Union Jack cards	£680
Union Jack flags to hold	£450
Piper or trumpeter	£100
Insurance	£1,400
Total	£6,630

Financial Consideration

6. Cabinet have previously agreed to ringfence £10,000 from the Community Grant Scheme (CGS) budget to match fund small grants (up to £500) to enable communities to celebrate and commemorate VE Day (Cabinet Minute CB19/42 refers). The application from Light Up Bexhill CIC does not meet the criteria for this fund for the following reasons:
 - a) Their request is in excess of £500
 - b) Their request does not meet 50% ‘match funding’ criteria
7. A total of £18,000 is available this year through the Rother Visitor Events grants pot. The fund, which is open Rother wide, is to support development of year round visitor events (April 2020 to March 2021). Bids of between £250 and £2,000 are encouraged and high interest is expected.
8. No specific budget provision exists for this event; it does not fit with the criteria for the CGS, the VE portion of the CGS, or the Rother Visitor events grants - at the amount being requested. However, if Members were minded to support the proposal, then the following options could be considered:
 - a) up to £5,000 of funds from this scheme could be committed from the Medium Term Financial Plan earmarked reserve;
 - b) up to 50% of the grant request (£2,500), could be awarded from Medium Term Financial Plan earmarked reserve;
 - c) a total grant of £500 be offered, in line with the VE event grant scheme; or

d) funding of up to £2,000 be offered from the Rother Events grant scheme programme.

9. It should be noted that the Council would not normally 'double-fund'; therefore, if Members were minded to agree, for example option b) above, a further application, for example to the Rother Events grant programme, would not be permitted.

Conditions

10. Should Members be minded to offer a grant in any form, this should be subject to the following conditions:
- evidence of the total costs for the day are provided;
 - a full risk assessment is completed (this has been submitted) and been agreed as satisfactory;
 - evidence of event insurance cover is submitted; and
 - evidence of sponsorship or further funding to cover any shortfall is submitted.
11. Should Members be minded to agree the first option (up to £5,000) if total costs for the day fall below £5,000, the award will be reduced to cover the cost of the event minus any sponsorship payments which have been received.

Conclusion

12. Members are requested to consider the information given in this report and from the options given, agree to contribute some funding to Light Up Bexhill, subject to the conditions set out in paragraphs 10 and 11.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to support this grant application could result in the loss of opportunity to secure an event in Bexhill to commemorate VE Day.

This page is intentionally left blank

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject -		High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Housing Design Guide

Recommendation to COUNCIL: That the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Housing Design Guide be formally adopted as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Head of Service: Tim Hickling
Lead Cabinet Member: Councillor Vine-Hall

Introduction

1. The High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership, including the 15 local authorities with land in the AONB, has prepared a Design Guide for new housing development in the High Weald. The Housing Design Guide has been prepared to support the objectives of High Weald AONB Management Plan 2019-2024, which was adopted by this Council on 11 February 2019 (Minute CB18/72 refers).
2. The Housing Design Guide aims to give succinct, practical and consistent advice to set clear design expectations for new housing development within the High Weald AONB. This will help to ensure higher quality and landscaped design that reflects intrinsic High Weald character, and is embedded with a true sense of place, without stifling innovation and creativity. Whilst the Design Guide is not a formal planning policy document as such, it will be a material consideration in relation to planning policy and the determination of planning applications.
3. Copies of the Guidance have been left in the Members' room; below is a link to the online copy:

<http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/land-management-guidance/legislation-and-planning/2345-high-weald-housing-design-guidance/file.html>
4. The High Weald Partnership carried out a public consultation on a draft Design Guide from 19 June until Wednesday 14 August 2019. The consultation is considered to have had due regard to our adopted Statement of Community Involvement. On the 15 July 2019 a consultation workshop, with an invited group of developers, architects and Registered Providers, was also hosted by the High Weald Unit and supported by Local Authority officers. Following the public consultation, all comments received on the draft Housing Design Guide were summarised, and duly considered with a number of amendments made to the Guide. Full details of the consultation process and

the summary of representations and responses can be found in the Consultation Statement¹ published on the High Weald Unit's website.

5. At their meeting on the 25 November 2019, the High Weald AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) approved the revisions to the Design Guide and has recommended its adoption by the constituent Local Authorities.

Commentary

6. The level of housebuilding across the High Weald AONB as a whole has risen from an average of 186 units per year 2001-2011; to 895 units per year 2015-2017. Delivering appropriate new housing development within the AONB is a key part of local planning policy for the local authorities covering the High Weald, and for qualifying bodies producing Neighbourhood Plans. Within Rother District specifically, over 82% of the district lies within the High Weald AONB, and environmental factors such as the AONB were very influential in setting the levels of development in Rother. The Rother Local Plan Core Strategy sets housing targets for some 1900 houses (approximately) within the AONB over the plan period 2011-2028.
7. Housing development within the High Weald is necessary and desirable in creating a thriving and successful place, but it is also a responsibility and privilege to make long lasting interventions in such a special and protected landscape. The imposition of generic and poor design for housing development in the High Weald AONB can be a threat to its settlement character, as set out in the Management Plan. The Housing Design Guide has been written to help balance housing delivery with the statutory duty on local authorities to conserve and enhance the AONB, and setting the standards expected of new housing development in the High Weald.
8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that "*The creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve*". It advocates Design Guides in order to provide maximum clarity about design expectations at an early stage. It sets out that design guides provide a framework for creating distinctive places, with a consistent and high quality standard of design.
9. The Housing Design Guide brings together policies, best practice and analysis from a wide range of areas, from national policies relating to design quality, to local studies of landscape character and identity, in order to provide a concise and easy to access resource for designers and decision makers. The Guide is broadly based on 'Building for Life 12', a widely accepted national industry standard, along with the design guidance in the NPPF and Planning Practice Guidance, and the National Design Guide, adapted to be locally specific to the High Weald.
10. The Design Guide is structured in four sections:
 - i. Chapter 1 introduces the Housing Design Guide, explains the development challenge in the High Weald AONB, and explains the aims of the Guide.

¹ <http://www.highweald.org/downloads/publications/2347-high-weald-housing-design-guide-consultation-statement/file.html>

- ii. Chapter 2 provides a brief explanation of the High Weald AONB and its settlement character.
- iii. Chapter 3 is the core of the Design Guide, and contains guidance relating to the most common design issues, with a particular emphasis on tailoring design approaches and decisions to support the overall character and identity of the High Weald. To achieve this, it consists of 10 design themes:
 - a. Response to Site and Landscape Context
 - b. Connecting Beyond the Site
 - c. Layout and Structuring the Site
 - d. Using Buildings to Define Streets and Spaces
 - e. The Right Built Form
 - f. Parking Strategies
 - g. Building Appearance, Local Details and Sustainable Design
 - h. Ancillary and Storage
 - i. Detailing the Street
 - j. Reinforcing Local Planting Character and Habitats

Each theme contains detailed analysis and advice, illustrated with photographs and diagrams, and a summary checklist. The format is intended to help structure the design process, so that the setting of the High Weald is dealt with first, placemaking principles next, and detailed design built in towards the end.

- iv. Chapter 4 includes advice for developers on creating a meaningful Design and Access Statement for planning applications, along with information about how the Housing Design Guide relates to the range of other policy and guidance documents, such as national planning policy and guidance, County Landscape Studies, Local Authority Development Plans, and High Weald AONB documents.
- 11. The Housing Design Guide aligns well with the adopted Rother Local Plan Core Strategy, in particular – Policy EN3: Design Quality. The Guide will help support this Council’s various roles in the planning process, from Plan-Making, through to Neighbourhood Plan liaison, and the Development Management process, helping us to successfully deliver housing requirements and meet NPPF and Core Strategy policy objectives.
 - 12. Following adoption, it is intended that the Design Guide will be promoted on the Council’s website, circulated directly to Parish and Town Councils and Neighbourhood Planning groups, and to housing developers working in the district.

Conclusion

- 13. It is considered that the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide is a supportable and appropriate framework for considering housing design in the AONB and can be adopted as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Housing Design Guide has been subject to public and expert engagement and scrutiny.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to adopt the High Weald AONB Housing Design Guide would undermine the Council's ability to carry out its duties with regard to the High Weald AONB.

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Cabinet
Date	-	9 March 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Probity in Planning - Revised Guidance Note on the Role of Councillors and Officers

The Planning Committee meeting held on 13 February 2020, considered a report on the revised version of 'Probity in Planning: for Councillors and officers'. The recommendation, minute arising and original report at Appendix A is reproduced below.

Recommendation to COUNCIL: That the best practice advice 'Probity in Planning: for Councillors and officers' second revised edition 2019 be adopted as guidance and incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

PL19/117. **PROBITY IN PLANNING – REVISED GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE ROLE OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS**

In November 2009, the best practice advice from the Local Government Association (LGA), "Probity in Planning: the role of Councillors and officers" was adopted. The revised edition was then adopted in April 2013. A further revised and updated version dated December 2019 had now been produced by the LGA which was disseminated to the Planning Committee Members at the meeting.

The revised guidance reflected on changes to legislation and the 2019 National Planning Policy Framework. It clarified how Councillors could get involved in planning discussions on plan making and on applications, on behalf of their communities, in a fair, impartial and transparent way. Three areas were specifically highlighted, as the advice had significantly changed or been updated, namely how Councillors dealt with social media; predisposition, predetermination or bias; and the role of legal support. The purpose of the guide was to assist Members in their community engagement role whilst making good standards of probity. The Committee was encouraged to familiarise themselves with the updated guidance.

(Planning Committee Agenda Item 13).

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Rother District Council

Report to	-	Planning Committee
Date	-	13 February 2020
Report of the	-	Executive Director
Subject	-	Probity in Planning - Revised Guidance Note on the Role of Councillors and Officers

Recommendation: It be **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to recommend to Council that the best practice advice 'Probity in Planning: for Councillors and officers' second revised edition 2019 be adopted as guidance and incorporated into the Council's Constitution.

Head of Service: Tim Hickling

1. This report is seeking the views of Planning Committee on the Probity and Planning revised edition. Views and comments of the Committee will then be presented to Cabinet.
2. The best practice advice 'Probity in Planning: the role of Councillors and officers', issued by the Local Government Association (LGA) (May 2009), was originally adopted by Councillors in November 2009. The first revision (current edition) was updated in 2013 by the LGA in association with the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) and this is our current guidance.
3. The LGA has now produced a second revision (December 2019) stating:

'Probity in planning is about ensuring that decisions on plan making and planning applications are undertaken, on behalf of communities, in a fair, impartial and transparent way. This guide has been written for officers and councillors involved in making planning decisions in their local authority'. It is informed by contributions from Councillors and officers and includes:

- a brief overview of the planning system and the role of decision makers;
- Councillor and officer conduct;
- registration and disclosure of interests;
- predisposition, predetermination or bias;
- lobbying of and by Councillors;
- discussions before a decision is taken;
- officer reports;
- public speaking at planning committees;
- decisions which differ from an officer's recommendation;
- committee site visits;
- reviewing past planning decisions and the outcomes; and
- complaints and record keeping.

A link to the document is below:

https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/34.2_Probity_in_Planni

A hard copy of the document will be circulated to Members at Planning Committee.

4. The advice contained in the current revision builds on the previous editions (2009 and 2013) reflecting on changes to legislation and the National Planning Policy Framework (2019). There are changes in the nuances of the advice in part and therefore Members are strongly recommended to read and familiarise themselves of these updates. There are three areas where the advice has significantly changed or updated.

5. Firstly, under Section 3 (Councillors and Officer Conduct) reference is made on how to deal with social media:

'Care needs to be taken in the use of social media, such as Twitter, Facebook or Instagram, by officers and councillors, where it relates to decision making functions (see Section 5 on predetermination and bias). The Local Government Ethical Standards Report 2019 also addresses issues related to social media use.'

6. Under Section 5 (Predisposition, predetermination or bias) a new section has been included:

'Local planning authorities will usually have a cabinet or executive member responsible for development and planning (sometimes known as the portfolio holder). PAS advise that the leader and portfolio holder of a local authority, who play an important role driving planning policies and proposals, should normally exclude themselves from decision making committees. This is to avoid the perception of a conflict of interests and predisposition.'

'In smaller councils it may be necessary for a portfolio holder to be on a planning committee. PAS suggest that in these situations they will need to be extremely careful and will need to withdraw when the committee is considering the council's own schemes or other applications that they have been seen to support previously.'

7. Finally, under Section 9 (Officer Reports) the role of legal support is highlighted:

'Careful reviews of draft reports, which may involve consultation with the council's legal team, is always recommended. Similarly, appropriate interventions by the legal officer at the committee meeting itself might be needed in order to correct any misconceptions on specific issues.'

8. The purpose of the guide is to assist Members in their community engagement role whilst maintaining good standards of probity and therefore it is recommended for adoption as guidance.

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director

Risk Assessment Statement

Failure to adopt and enact the provisions of this guide would run the risk that planning decisions on planning applications and plan making are not undertaken in a fair, impartial and transparent way which may lead to Judicial Reviews, Local Ombudsman complaints and award of costs at planning appeals; all of which will adversely impact on the general reputation of the Council.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank