

Cabinet

Date and Time - **Monday 2 November 2020 – 6.30 pm**

Venue - **Remote Meeting**

Councillors appointed to the Committee:

Councillor D.B. Oliver (Leader), S.M. Prochak, MBE (Deputy Leader), C.A. Bayliss, J.H.F. Brewerton, T.J.C. Byrne, K.P. Dixon, K.M. Field, H.L. Timpe and J. Vine-Hall.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 October 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 12 - Discretionary Free Parking in Car Parks December 2020

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

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6. **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021-22 TO 2025-26** (Pages 1 - 20)
7. **TOURISM EVENTS FUNDING** (Pages 21 - 26)
8. **FEES AND CHARGES FOR 2021/22** (Pages 27 - 44)
9. **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 16 REPORT IN RESPECT OF BURWASH PARISH COUNCIL** (Pages 45 - 60)
10. **ECONOMIC RECOVERY ACTION PLAN** (Pages 61 - 70)
11. **WAINWRIGHT ROAD CAR PARK** (Pages 71 - 74)
12. **DISCRETIONARY FREE PARKING IN CAR PARKS DECEMBER 2020**
(Pages 75 - 76)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 23 October 2020

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2025/26

Report of: Robin Vennard, Assistant Director Resources

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dixon

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To review the financial issues affecting the Council and their impact on the financial forecast for the five years ending 2025/26.

Decision Type: Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That:

- 1) the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme be affirmed and continue for the 2021/22 financial year; and
- 2) the Treasury Management Strategy be updated with regard to borrowing as outlined in the report.

AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the financial forecast and proposed way forward be noted;
- 2) the Council maintain its policy of maximising the annual increase in Council Tax within the Government's referendum limit;
- 3) any additional funding from New Homes Bonus Grant be used to reduce the amount of reserves being applied to support the Revenue Budget;
- 4) the Assistant Director Resources be authorised to finalise the wording of the consultation literature in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management; and
- 5) the Council continues to be part of the East Sussex Business Rate pool in 2021/22 and the Assistant Director Resources be granted delegated authority to finalise the necessary agreement with the member authorities in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management.

Reasons for

Recommendations: If supported, the recommendations underpin some of the assumptions within the financial forecast presented in this report, including local taxation and managing New Homes Bonus grant. This provides the basis for the development of the detailed financial plans, revenue budget for 2021/22

and the Capital Programme for approval in February 2021. The forecast also forms the basis of the public consultation on next year's budget and council tax.

Introduction

1. Members will be aware that since 2010, the Council has made significant savings to enable it to manage increased demand for vital services such as homelessness and central Government's continued real terms reduction in funding across local government.
2. The current lack of certainty to the national funding of local government is limiting the ability to produce reliable financial forecasts for the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The uncertainty around future Government funding, particularly for Business Rate income and potentially negative Revenue Support Grant, together with the economic impacts of COVID-19 and BREXIT mean the Council's income is very difficult to predict with any certainty. In contrast, the cost pressures on Council services remain relentless and the expectations of the public remain high. The following report describes the key financial pressures and some of the measures the Council is implementing to help alleviate these. What is clear however is that the scale of the challenge is beyond the scope of the Council's reserves. The Council will be required to take actions to achieve a balanced budget as required by law. A balanced budget is where the Council's expenditure can be met from its income. This includes the use of reserves where appropriate, to help meet this expenditure.
3. Members should note that the financial forecast at Appendix A is a work in progress and some of the issues discussed in this report have yet to be fully quantified.

Budget Process

4. The budget process follows three main phases. The first phase is to update the MTFP which sets out the areas of budgetary pressure and estimates the size of the budget deficit over the next five years.
5. The second phase of the budget process will be the detailed draft budget report to Cabinet in January 2021, which will bring forward further details of the proposals to deliver a balanced Revenue Budget over the next five years.
6. The third phase will commence in January 2021, once the Government settlement has been announced. Any proposed savings will need to be agreed and the Capital Strategy and Revised Capital Programme will be prepared and incorporated into the MTFP for approval by Cabinet and full Council in February 2021.

Local Government Settlement 2021/22 and beyond

7. To remind Members, since 2010, the Council has seen a substantial fall in funding. Taking both Revenue Support Grant and share of business rates, this was at £6.6m in 2010. The Council no longer receives Revenue Support Grant and is budgeting for a net retained income from business rates for 2020/21 of

£3.5m. This is a fall of £3.1m in cash terms and ignores the effects of inflation on the Council's costs.

8. In July, the Government launched their comprehensive spending review, the outcome of which is yet to be published. The actual financial settlement for 2021/22 is expected in December 2020.

Non-Domestic Rates (Business Rates)

9. The Council is currently part of the East Sussex 50% Business Rate Pool. The Pool enables the normal Government levy on business rate growth to be retained in the East Sussex area. Ahead of the business rate reset, for the purposes of this report it has been assumed that the current pooling arrangements will continue.
10. The financial forecast also assumes that the Council's share in the growth of business rate income since 2013/14 continues. There is however, no certainty that this income growth will continue to be kept in part or its entirety, when the Government resets how Business Rates is shared between councils from 2021/22. It is expected that as a minimum, there will be some redistribution to the county councils to help support the cost of social care. If growth is reset to the 2020/21 business rate baseline this would result in a reduction of income in excess of £1m per annum.

New Homes Bonus Grant

11. The New Homes Bonus grant (NHB) was introduced in 2011 to provide an incentive for local authorities to encourage housing growth in their areas and is funded through a top slice of non-domestic rate income. In December 2016, the Government announced a reduction of the number of years NHB is paid to five in 2017-18 and four in 2018-19. They also introduced a national baseline for growth of 0.4% of council tax base and payments of NHB would only be made above this level. No recent information has been announced regarding the future of NHB. However, the five year forecast currently assumes that the Council will not achieve any additional grant and that reliance on this funding will be removed from the base Revenue Budget. Should further funds be received it is proposed that they be used to reduce the amount of reserves used to balance the Revenue Budget.

Council Tax and Council Tax Base

12. As Council Tax is a major source of income to the Council, the MTFP assumes that the Council will increase Council Tax by the maximum allowed before a referendum is required. The forecast currently assumes an annual increase of 2% which based on the 2020/21 taxbase would have generated additional income of £140,000. However, at the time of writing this report, the number of households claiming council tax relief (CTR) had risen since the taxbase was last set. With the ending of the furlough scheme, over the coming months it is expected that the number of CTR claimants will continue to rise as people are made redundant. For the purposes of the financial forecast, it is assumed that the taxbase will fall by 750 Band D equivalent properties in 2021/22 but will improve over the two subsequent years to pre-pandemic levels by 2024/25. If the taxbase falls in this way, the additional amount of Council Tax income raised by the 2% rise would halve to around £70,000.

13. The Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group are also considering options regarding a future CTR scheme from April 2022. It is too early to predict the outcome of this work or the impact on the scheme costs, should the Council approve any changes. It does however represent a financial risk to the Council should the total cost of the scheme rise. Given that any changes to the CTR scheme will not take effect until April 2022, it is necessary to request full Council to confirm that the current CTR scheme will carry forward into 2021/22.

Cost Pressures

14. **Homelessness demands** – the Council continues to experience pressure on this budget as a result of an increase in the number of cases and a projected £648,000 overspend in 2020/21 has been reported to Cabinet. High levels of demand are expected to continue into 2021/22 although Members will be aware that the Council is trying to hold costs through the purchase of high-quality temporary accommodation. This is designed to alleviate budget pressure by reducing the use of more expensive private rented accommodation. It is expected that cost savings will be generated in 2020/21 and these have been reflected in the five year forecast.
15. **Staffing Costs** – the forecast assumes an increase of 2% each year for the annual pay award, estimated to add £190,000 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 by £288,000 each year.
16. **Service Contracts – Non-Pay Inflation** – a global increase of 2% has been applied to major service contracts which is estimated to add a further £51,000 annually to the budget.
17. **COVID-19 impact** – there are a number of areas that have potential to increase costs or reduce income through the ongoing impact of COVID-19. These include:
 - a. Commercial Tenants – the Council supported its commercial tenants through the COVID-19 lockdown period by deferring their rental payments. The ongoing trading difficulties now suggests that part of this income will be foregone and potentially there will be protracted period of voids with some of the Council's older commercial property stock.
 - b. Council Tax Reduction Support Scheme (CTRS) – the increase in the number of claimants of CTRS so far has been around 400 to 500 households. This is expected to continue to rise as Government financial support schemes for business start to unwind. The impact on this will mean a decline in the Council's taxbase as discussed above.
 - c. Leisure, Swimming Centres, Cultural Services – the Council largely delivers these through two charitable trusts, Freedom Leisure is focused on Sports and the De La Warr Pavilion Trust is focused on the arts and culture. The Council has committed significant resources to supporting these two organisations. Should COVID-19 restrictions continue into 2021/22 then this will severely curtail their recovery and would require the Council to

maintain a level of financial support, even if to only ensure buildings and plant are adequately maintained. In 2020/21 this is expected to cost the Council approximately £730,000.

18. **Corporate Plan** – the Council is in the process of developing its next Corporate Plan. There is expected to be an emphasis within the plan to:
 - a. Accelerate the development of new housing in Rother, both market and affordable.
 - b. Deliver on the commitment to be a carbon neutral district by 2030.
 - c. Regenerate the local economy through investment.
19. To deliver on these ambitions will cause the Council’s borrowing commitment to increase substantially and this brings a risk to the Revenue Budget if the projects fail to cover their costs and deliver the returns expected. The financial framework that will underpin the Corporate Plan is currently being developed.

Estimated Revenue Budget 2021/22

20. The table overleaf shows how the overall Revenue Budget position for 2021/22 has moved from that expected when the last MTFP was adopted in February 2020. This takes into account the budget pressures detailed above and possible changes to council tax, business rates and grant income.
21. The table also shows the significant increase in the funding gap that the Council faces. This also assumes the delivery of substantial income generation and savings plans. There will however be a need to deliver new income and savings over the coming five years which are discussed below.

Line		2021/22 Forecast as at Feb 20 £'000	2021/22 Forecast as at Oct 20 £'000	Change £'000
	Head of Service Departmental Budgets			
1	Executive Directors & Corporate Core	2,042	1,888	(154)
2	Environmental Services	698	596	(102)
3	Strategy and Planning	993	1,176	183
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(228)	(261)	(33)
5	Housing and Community Services	8,344	8,922	578
6	Resources	3,356	3,126	(230)
7	Non-Pay & Income Inflation at 2%	51	51	0
8	Salaries pay award inflation @ 2% of 2019/20 Base Budget	188	188	0
9	Salaries turnover @ 3% of 2019/20 Base Budget	(288)	(288)	0
10	Total Cost of Services	15,156	15,398	242
11	Interest from Investments	(169)	(326)	(157)
12	Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	291	184	(107)
13	MRP and interest payments	1,227	2,263	1,036
				0
	Savings and Income generation			0
14	(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy	(605)	(74)	531
15	(ii) Increase income (net) – other	(107)	(107)	0
16	(iii) Business Transformation (previously Lean and Demand)	(180)	(180)	0
17	(iv) Devolvement and Service Prioritisation	(1,600)	(250)	1,350
18	(vi) Reduced Staffing Structure	(500)	(78)	422
19	(vii) Shared Services	TBD	0	0
20	Net Cost of Services	13,513	16,830	3,317
21	Special Expenses	0	(687)	(687)
22	Business Rates			
	Local Share of business rates 44% 2019/20 and 40% thereafter	(7,101)	(7,043)	58
24	Section 31 Grants	(1,892)	(2,019)	(127)
25	Tariff	5,121	5,152	31
26	Levy	195	195	0
				0
27	Non-Specific Revenue Grants			0
28	New Homes Bonus Grant	(12)	(12)	0
29	Rural services delivery grant	(50)	(31)	19
30	Local Council tax Support Grant	(104)	(104)	(0)
31	Benefits Administration Grant	(223)	(215)	8
32	New Burdens Grant & other non-specific Grants	0	0	0
33	Homelessness Grant - New Burdens	(126)	(129)	(3)
34	Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(275)	(281)	(6)
35	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,199)	(7,090)	109
36	Other Financing			0
37	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0	110	110
38	Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure Contributions to/(from) General Fund Balance and Reserves	(346)	(184)	162
39		0	0	0
40	Total Income	(12,012)	(12,337)	(325)
41	Funding Gap	1,501	4,493	2,992

Cost Saving and Income Generation (Rother 2025)

22. There are five main workstreams designed to deliver the income and savings required and minimise the amount of reserves used to balance the budget over the next five years:
- 1) **Business Transformation Programme** – this workstream builds on the previous work of the Lean and Demand programme. The work is looking to delivery improved service efficiency and greater customer focus of services.
 - 2) **Devolvement and Service Prioritisation** – this workstream is looking at how each service supports the Council's aims and objectives and will need to align with the new Corporate Plan. This workstream is not necessarily looking to stop services being provided, but will consider who is best to deliver them and review the scope of services (statutory/non statutory/quality). This may include new partnerships and devolvement of services to parish and town councils, including the new Bexhill Town Council. An important part of this work is to consider the implications on users of these services if they are no longer provided by the Council.
 - 3) **Income generation** – the forecast includes income from the Council's Property Investment Strategy (PIS). This represents a significant challenge based on progress to date. Most of the projects involve new construction or refurbishment and will deliver income towards the end of the financial planning time horizon. There is a risk therefore that additional income will be difficult to deliver for 2021/22 and 2022/23. The forecast assumes an increase in fees and charges income, primarily through increased garden waste income from increasing the annual charge by £5 from 2021/22 for the subsequent two years. This will mean the charge per bin per property will reach £50 by 2024/25. Income from off-street carparks is forecast to increase by £150,000 (gross of increased operating costs) following on from the decriminalisation of on-street parking offences in Rother. However, this is largely dependent on how driver behaviour changes as a result of decriminalisation and will need to be monitored closely.
 - 4) **Reduced Staffing structure** – As part of the Council's Rother 2020 programme ongoing service based savings were to be delivered through a contraction of the workforce. A number of voluntary redundancies were agreed with ongoing savings achieved. Some of these savings were attributable to the outcome of the lean and demand reviews and greater efficiency through investment in software. Further contraction of the workforce maybe needed over the next three to five years. In addition to support the aspirations of the Council's new Corporate Plan and through the devolvement and service prioritisation workstream, redirection of staff resources may be required.
 - 5) **Shared Services** – sharing the provision of services with other local authorities can reduce costs, largely through the sharing of management. The savings can, however, be modest in reality and will in the early stages be offset by an investment requirement, e.g. in harmonising IT software. Sharing services does however build service resilience and its appropriateness will be considered as part of the service prioritisation process. A specific target saving has not been set at this stage for new shared services. Any savings achieved would help reduce the funding gap.

23. The expected savings from each of the work streams is summarised in the table below:

	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)
(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy (gross of cost of borrowing)	(73)	(1,716)	(2,995)	(3,353)	(3,449)
(ii) Increase income (net) - other	(107)	(202)	(202)	(202)	(202)
(iii) Council Transformation	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)
(iv) Service Prioritisation and Devolvement	(250)	(1,600)	(1,660)	(1,720)	(1,720)
(v) Reduced Staffing Structure	(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)
(vi) Shared Services	0	0	0	0	0
Total	(688)	(3,776)	(5,115)	(5,533)	(5,629)

Revenue Reserves and General Fund Balance

24. The latest financial monitoring for 2020/21 suggests there will be an overspend by £1.9m at outturn and if this happens then revenue reserves will fall to 12.7m after the use of reserves to fund capital expenditure. The MTFP estimates that £11.5m of reserves would be needed to support the Revenue Budget over the next five years which includes £2.3m to support the Capital Programme. The Capital Programme and its funding have been reviewed and it has significantly reduced its reliance on reserve funding. The reserve funding has largely been replaced with borrowing. The forecast shows that Capital Receipts will be expended by 2023, but no assumption has been made for future receipts, save for receipts from Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd following disposals/sales of residential properties.
25. By the end of the five year forecast revenue reserves and balances would be approximately £3.5m depending on the final outturn for 2020/21. Should the Council's share of Business Rates fall to the current baseline from 2021/22, then unless there is growth in business rates or additional savings in excess of £1m per annum are delivered, Reserves will be completely depleted by the end of 2024/25.
26. The following table summarises the expected use of reserves and further detail is given at Appendix B:

Potential Use of Reserves	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)
Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves	(12,694)	(8,017)	(5,795)	(4,541)	(3,985)
Use of Reserves	4,677	2,221	1,254	557	523
Total Reserves	(8,017)	(5,795)	(4,541)	(3,985)	(3,462)

Capital Programme

27. Members will recognise that over the last year there has been a radical change to the scale and ambition of capital investment the Council intends to make in the district. The draft Capital Programme at Appendix C totals some £180m

and includes £80m for housing development through the new housing company. The majority of the investment supports the economic and social regeneration of the district through both commercial and residential development. The residential development will be delivered through the Councils newly formed Housing Company, Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd. At this point, the funding of the development programme is to be determined but it is expected that it will be a mix of loan and grant. The £80m reflects the business plan previously approved by Members. The programme now includes the development of offices at North East Bexhill. This development is expected to cost £45m and will deliver security to 1,800 jobs and a net income to the Council of approximately £230,000 per annum.

28. The scale of the investment will increase the Council's exposure to borrowing significantly albeit some will be short term (less than five years). This will need to be reflected in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy. It is important that the Council maximises the security of income from either rentals or capital receipts from disposals in order to minimise the risk to the Revenue Budget in meeting the debt and interest repayments. It also needs to maintain sufficient reserves in order to mitigate the risks associated with delays in delivering the new properties and in future meeting the impact of long-term voids if they occur. Taking account of the forecast Revenue Budget, this will be difficult to achieve and further emphasises the need to deliver the extra income and savings on time.
29. On 18 July, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) announced new funding for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP). The programme and fund have been created to ensure no return to rough sleeping for the nearly 15,000 people brought into Temporary Accommodation (TA) during the COVID-19 outbreak. The fund includes capital match funding to secure accommodation that provides longer-term solutions for rough sleepers. The East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) has submitted a joint bid to the NSAP to support its Housing First accommodation initiative. The Council has received positive feedback to its bid and we are working with the MHCLG to finalise the award of £430,000 in capital grant to provide 60% match funding for four units of Housing First accommodation in Rother during 2020/21. The outstanding capital contribution required from the Council of 40% equates to £285,000. The investment is seen a good value for the Council as it will secure 60% match funding from the NSAP, improve outcomes for rough sleepers and avoid the cost of otherwise having to accommodate these clients in TA. It is proposed that the provision in the approved Capital Programme for Housing purchases of TA be used to meet the Council's contribution to the purchase of these units.

Treasury Management

30. As a result of the increase in the capital spend and associated borrowing there is a need to update the current Treasury Management Strategy. The level of borrowing will increase substantially over the forecast period and is likely to peak at around £93m excluding the housing development. The current operational and authorised borrowing limits of £52m and £57.4m respectively. The table overleaf proposes the increases to these limits including an allowance for temporary and cashflow borrowing of up to £30m:

	2020/21 limit	2021/22 limit	2022/23 limit	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit	2025/26 Limit
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Operational Boundary - total external debt	61,370	89,960	113,980	117,480	117,330	117,070
Authorised limit – total external debt	66,370	94,960	118,980	122,480	122,330	122,070

31. In addition, Members need to recognise the increased risk associated with the level of borrowing, particularly as a significant proportion relates to assets that deliver an income to the Council. The following table indicates the percentage of the Council's revenue income that the repayment of the debt reflects:

	2020/21 Forecast	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast	2023/24 Forecast	2024/25 Forecast	2025/26 Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest on Borrowing	610	1,716	1,693	1,670	1,647	1,622
Interest on Investments	-252	-400	-400	-400	-400	-400
MRP	242	548	880	1,236	1,395	1,519
	600	1,864	2,173	2,506	2,642	2,741
Net Revenue Stream	-15,415	-12,263	-11,698	-11,882	-12,121	-12,366
Proportion of Net Revenue Stream	3.89%	15.20%	18.58%	21.09%	21.79%	22.17%

Budget Consultation

32. The Council is required to consult on its budget and council tax proposals with its residents and local businesses. The opinions of residents, partner organisations, businesses and other interested parties are an important part of the budget setting process. It is planned to consult between 1 December 2020 and 31 January 2021. An interim report on the consultation will be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 25 January 2021.
33. In addition to the likely Council Tax proposals, the consultation will need to highlight the scale of the financial challenge and the Council's response for dealing with it. It is proposed that delegation be given to the Assistant Director Resources to finalise the wording of the consultation literature in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio holder for Finance and Performance Management.

Conclusion

34. Despite the many pressures, the Council has been able to deliver a balanced budget via sound financial management and an imaginative programme to deliver extra income and cost savings. However, this programme has slowed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic with resources redirected on supporting the community. New impetus is required to ensure the organisation is sufficiently focused on delivering this programme. In addition, the resources of the Council will need to be reorganised to reflect the new priorities and ambitions set out in the Corporate Plan. With the level of reserves and a

commitment to sensible borrowing in line with CIPFA’s Prudential Code, the Council has created an ability to invest in its area, transform the delivery of its services and find new ways of working to create a sustainable budget. However, this report shows that to meet the latest challenge, the Council does have to commit to delivering the income and savings set out in this report. In addition, it is important in relation to the delivery of day to day services, the Council has now to operate each financial year within a cash limit set by the forecast to prevent further unplanned calls on reserves. Failure to do so will impact on the Council’s ability to meet its statutory obligations.

Human Resources Implications

35. The report highlights the possibility of further changes to staffing over the period of the financial forecast. The Council would need to follow its established procedures for this including consultation with the relevant Unions and Staff Side.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	Yes
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Assistant Director, Resources:	Robin Vennard
Report Contact Officer:	Anthony Baden, Finance Manager
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Appendices:	A – Financial Forecast.
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.

ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL
2020/21-2024/25 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

	Original 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	Revised 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)
1 Departmental Budgets							
2 Executive Directors & Corporate Core	2,042	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999	1,999
3 Environmental Services	698	575	575	575	575	575	575
4 Strategy and Planning	993	950	950	950	950	950	950
5 Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(188)	(321)	(321)	(321)	(321)	(321)	(321)
6 Housing and Community Services	8,374	8,262	8,262	8,262	8,262	8,262	8,262
7 Resources	3,402	3,152	3,152	3,152	3,152	3,152	3,152
8 Total Cost of Services	15,321	14,617	14,617	14,617	14,617	14,617	14,617
9 Interest from Investments	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)	(400)
10 Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	1,359	1,359	184	185	186	187	184
11 MRP	242	242	see budget changes				
12 Interest payments	610	610	see budget changes				
13 Non-Pay & Income Inflation at 2%	0	0	51	102	153	204	255
14 Salaries pay award inflation @ 2% of 2019/20 Base Budget	0	0	188	376	564	752	940
15 Salaries turnover	(282)	0	(288)	(299)	(316)	(338)	(366)
16 Growth							
17 Council Transformation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
18 Corporate Plan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
19 Savings and Income generation							
20 (i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy	(544)	(544)	see budget changes				
21 (ii) Increase income (net) - other	(14)	(14)	(107)	(202)	(202)	(202)	(202)
22 (iii) Lean and Demand	(90)	(90)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)
23 (iv) Service Prioritisation/Devolvement	(100)	(100)	(250)	(1,600)	(1,660)	(1,720)	(1,720)
24 (v) Reduced Staffing Structure	(500)	(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)	(78)
25 (vi) Shared Services	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
26 See Budget Changes tab	0	0	3,203	1,398	452	(165)	(161)
27 Net Cost of Services	15,602	15,602	16,940	13,919	13,136	12,677	12,889

	Original 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	Revised 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)
28 Special Expenses	(687)	(687)	(687)	0	0	0	0
29 Business Rates							
30 Local Share of business rates 44% 2019/20 and 40% thereafter	(7,157)	(7,157)	(7,043)	(7,043)	(7,043)	(7,043)	(7,043)
31 Section 31 Grants	(1,892)	(1,892)	(2,019)	(2,019)	(2,019)	(2,019)	(2,019)
32 Tariff	5,121	5,121	5,152	5,152	5,152	5,152	5,152
33 Levy	195	195	195	195	195	195	195
34 Non-Specific Revenue Grants							
35 New Homes Bonus Grant	(247)	(247)	(12)	0	0	0	0
36 Rural services delivery grant	(50)	(50)	(31)	(32)	(32)	(33)	(34)
37 Local Council tax Support Grant	(102)	(102)	(104)	(106)	(108)	(110)	(113)
38 Benefits Administration Grant	(238)	(238)	(215)	(219)	(224)	(228)	(233)
39 New Burdens Grant & other non-specific Grants	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
40 Homelessness Grant - New Burdens	(126)	(126)	(129)	(131)	(134)	(136)	(139)
41 Homelessness Grant - Preventions	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
42 Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(275)	(275)	(281)	(286)	(292)	(298)	(304)
43 Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,019)	(7,019)	(7,090)	(7,208)	(7,377)	(7,600)	(7,829)
44 Other Financing							
45 Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(849)	(849)	0	0	0	0	0
46 Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure	(1,359)	(1,359)	(184)	(185)	(186)	(187)	(184)
47 Contributions to/(from) General Fund Balance and Reserves	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
48 Total Income	(14,685)	(14,685)	(12,447)	(11,883)	(12,068)	(12,308)	(12,550)
49 Funding Gap	917	917	4,493	2,036	1,068	370	339
50 Council Tax Base - Properties per CTR form	38,124.60	38,124.60	37,755.80	37,633.40	37,759.70	38,137.30	38,518.70
51 Average Council Tax Charge (Band D)	184.10	184.10	187.78	191.54	195.37	199.28	203.26

Budget Change		2021/22 Budget £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	2023/24 Budget £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000
Executive Directors & Corporate Core						
1	Savings from Senior Staff Restructure	(111)	(111)	(111)	(111)	(111)
Environmental Services						
2	Licensing income downturn	13	5	5	5	5
3	Pest Control income downturn	0	0	0	0	0
4	Training Income	8	3	3	3	3
Strategy and Planning						
5	Planning Fees	105	42	42	42	42
6	Land Charges	21	8	8	8	8
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration						
7	NE Bexhill Development - new PIS	(10)	(821)	(1,669)	(1,669)	(1,669)
8	Barnhorn Green - Little Common/Old Town surgeries - new PIS	0	(133)	(133)	(133)	(53)
9	Mount View - Retail & Employment development - new PIS	0	0	(597)	(597)	(597)
10	35, Beeching Road - Skinner's sheds - new PIS	(64)	(64)	37	(144)	(320)
11	Property Rents changes - existing PIS portfolio	0	(699)	(633)	(810)	(810)
12	Property Rents downturn - non PIS	100	40	40	40	40
13	Consultancy costs to develop the Environmental Sustainability Strategy	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)	(40)
Housing and Community Services						
14	Bexhill Leisure Centre contract extension cost to March 2024	285	285	285	0	0
15	Concession Income in Bexhill Parks	12	5	5	5	5
16	Camber Beach & Foreshore Rents (Net)	5	2	2	2	2
17	Bexhill Promenade & Foreshore	2	1	1	1	1
18	Garden Waste income	93	0	0	0	0
19	Recycling income	21	21	21	21	21
20	Car Parking Income	70	28	28	28	28
21	Temporary Accommodation - longer client stays	92	37	37	37	37
22	Rough Sleepers	0	0	0	0	0
23	Housing Benefits under recovery from clients	110	44	44	44	44

Budget Change		2021/22 Budget £'000	2022/23 Budget £'000	2023/24 Budget £'000	2024/25 Budget £'000	2025/26 Budget £'000
24	Local Housing Company	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)	(30)
	Resources					
25	Printing Income from 3rd parties	21	8	8	8	8
26	Costs of interim staff to support technical projects	(46)	(46)	(46)	(46)	(46)
	Centrally Held Budgets					
27	Investment Income	74	30	30	30	30
28	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)	548	880	1,236	1,395	1,519
29	Interest - existing PWLB portfolio	291	288	285	282	278
30	Interest - new Borrowing	1,425	1,405	1,385	1,365	1,344
31	Planning Appeals provision	100	100	100	100	100
32	Centrally Held Income					
33	Collection Fund surplus/deficit - NNDR - Impact of COVID-19 on	12	12	12	0	0
34	Collection Fund surplus/deficit - Council Tax - Impact of COVID-19 on	98	98	98	0	0
	Total Budget Changes	3,203	1,398	452	(165)	(161)

GENERAL FUND BALANCE AND EARMARKED RESERVES

Name of Reserve	Balance 31 March 2020 £'000	Balance 31 March 2021 £'000	Balance 31 March 2022 £'000	Balance 31 March 2023 £'000	Balance 31 March 2024 £'000	Balance 31 March 2025 £'000	Balance 31 March 2026 £'000
Medium Term Financial Strategy Reserve	(1,164)	(1,164)	0	0	0	0	0
Economic Development Fund	(319)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Risk Management Fund	(195)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Repairs and Renewals Reserve	(943)	(901)	0	0	0	0	0
Affordable Housing Reserve	(921)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Development Reserve	(345)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Planning Improvement & LDF Reserve	(240)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Homelessness Reserve	(214)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Grants Reserve	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,612)	(2,612)
Treasury Investment Reserve	(7,017)	(7,017)	(4,405)	(2,184)	(930)	(373)	0
Total	(13,970)	(11,694)	(7,017)	(4,796)	(3,542)	(2,985)	(2,612)
General Fund Balance	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(850)
Total Usable Reserves	(14,970)	(12,694)	(8,017)	(5,796)	(4,542)	(3,985)	(3,462)

**ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL
CAPITAL PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

		Revised 2020/21 £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)	Total £ (000)
1	<u>Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration</u>							
2	Other Schemes							
3	Community Grants	130	130	130	130	130	130	780
4	Cemetery Entrance	233						233
5	Rother Transformation ICT Investment Corporate Document Image Processing	384						384
6	System	435						435
7	1066 Pathways	93						93
8	Ravenside Roundabout	200						200
9								
10	Property Investment Strategy							
11	Property Investment Strategy - uncommitted	0						0
12	Office Development NE Bexhill Mount View Street Development -	10,611	15,737	19,496				45,844
13	Public/Commercial	964						964
14	PIS - Beeching Road/Wainwright Road	3,000						3,000
15	PIS - Barnhorn Road	995	8,495	500				9,990
16	PIS - Beeching Road 18-40	944						944
17	PIS - 35 Beeching Road	675						675
18								
19	Housing Development Schemes							
20	Community Led Housing Schemes	450	150					600
21	Blackfriars Housing Development	11,325						11,325
22	Mount View Street Development - Housing	3,286	3,657	3,657	3,482			14,082
23	Former Bexhill High School site - Housing	0						
24	Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd	0	25,000	37,000	18,000			80,000

		Revised 2020/21 £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)	Total £ (000)
25								
26	<u>Housing and Community Services</u>							
27	De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	54	54	55	56	57		276
28	Sidley Sports and Recreation	300						300
29	Land Swap re Former High School Site	1,085						1,085
30	Bexhill Leisure Centre - site development	536						536
31	Disabled Facilities Grant	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	9,750
32	New bins	183	125	125	125	125	125	808
33	Bexhill Promenade - Outflow pipe	100						100
34	Bexhill Promenade - Protective Barriers	50						50
35	Housing (purchases - temp accommodation)	3,000						3,000
36								
37	<u>Strategy & Planning</u>							
38	Highways Work - London Road - Bexhill	300						300
39	Grants to Parishes - CIL	163						163
40								
41	<u>Executive Directors & Corporate Core</u>							
42	Accommodation Strategy	75						75
43	Lift for Amherst Road Offices	100						100
44								
45	<u>Resources</u>							
46	ICT Infrastructure – Ongoing Upgrade Programme	140						140
47								
48	Total Capital Programme	41,436	54,973	62,588	23,418	1,937	1,880	186,232

		Revised 2020/21 for COVID Impact £ (000)	2021/22 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)	Total £ (000)
49	Funded By:							
50	Capital Receipts	1,085	0	0	0	0	0	1,085
51	Grants and contributions	14,487	1,775	1,625	1,625	1,625	1,625	22,762
52	CIL	613	0	0	0	0	0	613
53	Borrowing	23,412	28,014	23,778	3,607	125	125	79,061
54	Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	1,839	184	185	186	187	130	2,711
55	Unfunded	0	25,000	37,000	18,000	0	0	80,000
56	Total Funding	41,436	54,973	62,588	23,418	1,937	1,880	186,232

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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Tourism Events Funding

Report of: Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration

Cabinet Member: Councillor Timpe

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To consider the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny and agree a way forward for Tourism Events Funding and to consider a funding request from Light Up Bexhill.

Decision Type: Non- Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the constitution of a Bexhill Marketing Group be deferred until the establishment of the new Bexhill Parish (Town) Council in April 2021;
- 2) £3,500 of the events funding for Bexhill, Rye and the Rural areas not allocated in the 2020/21 financial year be allocated to Light Up Bexhill as an additional contribution towards the Bexhill town centre Christmas lights
- 3) £500 of the events funding for Bexhill, Rye and the Rural areas not allocated in the 2020/21 financial year be allocated to both Sidley and Little Common areas as an additional contribution towards their own Christmas lights displays; and
- 4) the remaining £13,500 of the events funding for Bexhill, Rye and the Rural areas not allocated in the 2020/21 financial year be carried forward to 2021/22.

Introduction

1. Following the debate at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) held on 14 September (OSC 20/21 refers) further discussions have been held with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Tourism. Consideration has been given to the recommendations made by the OSC, in particular, those relating to the setting up of a Bexhill Marketing Group. The Minutes arising from the OSC are attached at Appendix 1 for reference.
2. It is recognised that with the approval of a new Parish Council in Bexhill (Bexhill Town Council) (C20/38 refers) that it would be more appropriate to defer decisions about marketing and events for the town, until such a time as the Bexhill Town Council can be properly consulted.

3. A request for additional funding has also been received by representatives of Light Up Bexhill (LUB), who receive £13,000 per year from the Council as a contribution towards the Christmas lights in Bexhill town centre.
4. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, fundraising from local businesses has been problematic as they face uncertain trading conditions and futures. As such, LUB have requested additional funding from the Council to help ensure an attractive 2020 display, drawing residents into the town for their seasonal shopping.
5. As no events grants were paid in 2020 there is still an amount available for use. The combined £18,000 pot for Bexhill, Rye and the Rural areas could be utilised, in part, to support these additional contributions.
6. It is therefore recommended that £3,500 of the events funding not allocated in 2020/21 be awarded to LUB as an additional contribution towards the Bexhill town centre Christmas lights, together with £500 each to both Sidley and Little Common areas as an additional contribution towards their own Christmas lights displays.
7. The remaining funding could be carried forward to 2020/21 financial year to support more events and the tourism industry as a whole during the COVID-19 recovery period, in line with the draft Economic Recovery Plan.

Conclusions

8. Events remain an important part of the tourism industry in the district. Ensuring their funding into the future will be critical to the economic recovery of the area. Carrying forward funding will enable the Council to support more events in 2021 supporting local businesses as they seek to recover from losses in 2020.
9. Bexhill town centre businesses have experienced an extremely difficult year and supporting the Christmas lights with additional funding will help draw additional footfall during the festive period. The same principle applies to other areas of the town such as Sidley and Little Common who receive small contributions towards their displays. Although no request has been made by these areas, a small additional contribution would provide parity.
10. A Bexhill Marketing Group requires proper support and administering infrastructure. The Bexhill Town Council presents an opportunity to provide this and therefore it is recommended that any new approach be deferred until after the Town Council has been established with effect from 1 April and the elections in May 2021.

Financial Implications

11. Carrying forward unspent funds will mean that these cannot then be captured as savings against the revenue budget.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No

Risk Management	No
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration
e-mail address:	ben.hook@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	1 – OSC Reference
Relevant Previous Minutes:	OSC 20/21
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

Extract from Overview and Scrutiny Committee Minutes of 14 September 2020

OSC 20/21. TOURISM EVENTS FUNDING

Members were requested to review the allocation of funding for visitor events in light of the impact of COVID-19 on the events industry. In June 2019, Cabinet had approved the recommendations from the Tourism Task and Finish Group that included a recommendation to consolidate the visitor events funding into a single programme for the whole of the district, with effect from April 2020.

The events budget was managed by officers in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Tourism. The budget available was £18,000 per annum and covered Bexhill, Rye and rural Rother, but not Battle which had a separate arrangement in which £9,000 funding was allocated to the area, as detailed in the report.

The COVID-19 crisis had resulted in the cancellation of all events planned for the year which would otherwise have received Council support and accordingly all applications had been postponed. Funding that would have been allocated towards events during the current year had therefore not been spent and it was recommended that this funding be rolled forward to the next financial year. This would enable the Council to support more events to assist with restarting the visitor economy in 2021.

The Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Communities, Culture and Tourism had indicated a wish to establish a Marketing Group for Bexhill, to co-ordinate local marketing and promotion for Bexhill, in much the same way as existed in Battle. A Bexhill Marketing Group would bring together key stakeholders including Rother District Council, Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism, the De La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill Museum and others. A suggested Terms of Reference was attached at Appendix A to the report.

It was proposed that £9,000 of the events budget (equivalent to the amount previously ringfenced for Bexhill events), be devolved to the Bexhill Marketing Group and for a legally constituted Accountable Body to be identified in the future to enter into a Service Level Agreement with the Council to receive and pay funds and be accountable for the use of the Council's funding. Rother District Council could undertake this role for the first year of the arrangement but could not provide secretariat support. Members were keen to ensure that the emphasis remained on the supporting of events and agreed to re-look at the Terms of Reference, with a revised version to be presented to Cabinet that included other organisations such as the Bexhill Old Town Preservation Society.

A request had been received by Rye Bay Marketing Ltd to assist with the shortfall in the 2021 funding for their annual Rye Visitor Guide. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the summer season, only 50% of their 130,000 guides had been distributed, which were privately

funded through advertising revenue (many of the contributing businesses had experienced significant losses, therefore the future of the guide remained in doubt). In most years, £9,000 would have been spent on part-funding events in the town through the Council events budget, but as no events have been supported through this fund during the current year, it was recommended that Cabinet be requested to make this money available for one year only, to Rye Bay Marketing Ltd to ensure that they have sufficient funding to produce the 2021 visitor guide. Members, however, did not support this and it was recommended and agreed that the funds be rolled forward and allocated to the Rye Events Group.

On-going, the remaining £9,000 from the annual budget would continue to be ringfenced for the support of events in Rye and rural Rother under the existing guidelines for events support and administered by Council officers in consultation with the Lead Member.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet be requested to:

- 1) authorise the constitution of a Bexhill Events and Marketing Group under a revised Terms of Reference;
- 2) allocate the £9,000 from the Council's Events Budget to Bexhill Events and Marketing Group, to support the marketing, promotion and events of Bexhill from 2021/22 onwards;
- 3) approve that £9,000 events funding for Bexhill not allocated in the 2020/21 financial year be carried forward to 2021/22; and
- 4) the £9,000 usually allocated for Rye, to be awarded as a one-off grant to Rye Bay Marketing Ltd for their 2021 campaign not be supported and that the money be rolled forward and allocated to the Rye and rural Rother Events.

(Councillor Dixon declared a personal interest in this matter as a member Battle Marketing Group and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof.)

(Councillors Gray and Madeley each declared a personal interest in this matter as members of the Bexhill Old Town Preservation Society and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof.)

OSC Agenda Item 7

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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Fees and Charges 2021/22

Report of: Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community

Cabinet Member: Councillor Brewerton

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To propose a set of revised fees and charges for a range of services provided by the Council.

Decision Type: Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) the charges shown in Appendices 1 - 6 be approved and brought into effect from 1 April 2021;
- 2) the charges shown in Appendix 5(b) be brought in from July 2021; and
- 3) the charges in Appendix 9 be brought into effect from January 2021.
- 4) the Head of Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Environment and Place be given delegated authority to implement an incentive scheme for new garden waste customers who sign up before March 2021.

Reasons for

Recommendations: To ensure that the Council achieves sufficient income and thereby reduces subsidy on non-essential services which may compromise the Council's ability to fund statutory services.

Introduction

1. This report proposes a set of revised fees and charges for a range of services provided by the Council. The Council regularly reviews and revises its rates for fees and charges so that either all or a proportion of the cost of service provision can be met and built into the Revenue Budget accordingly. In most cases the recommended increases to fees and charges are in line with the current cost of inflation as based on the Retail Price Index (RPI). The RPI rate as of September 2020 is 0.5%. If approved, the new rates for fees and charges will be built into the draft Revenue Budget for 2021/22.
2. It should be noted that if the increases in charges are too high income levels may drop due to customer resistance and affordability for the customer.

Usage and uptake of services needs to continue at optimum levels to support funding of increasing service costs, including administration and contract uplifts where applicable. Failure to achieve sufficient income and thereby reduce subsidy on non-essential services may compromise the Council's ability to fund statutory services and savings may need to be made elsewhere in the budget to mitigate a loss of income.

3. The charges set out are inclusive of value added tax (VAT) at the current rate, where appropriate. Charges are rounded to the nearest 25p if under £50.00 or the nearest £1.00 if £50.00 or over.

Park Activities – Sports Pitches

4. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for Park Activities and Sports Pitches can be found at Appendix 1.
5. Sports pitches across the District provide areas for local clubs to carry out their activities. These clubs play an important role in maintaining the health and wellbeing of residents as well as providing activities for young people.
6. Current charges for sports pitches help to subsidise the costs to the Council in providing them. The pitches are maintained by our grounds maintenance contractors and their costs are subject to an annual increase based on inflation (RPI). Additional costs in providing services such as showers are also subject to increases in contractor cleaning charges and the cost of utilities. Therefore, officers recommend that an increase of 0.5% is applied to all charges to cover the effects of inflation.

Park Activities – Special Events

7. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for special events can be found at Appendix 1.
8. The number of events being held on public land within the District was steadily increasing prior to COVID-19. We expect the trend to continue after the COVID-19 restrictions are lifted. It is important that the level of charges for both charitable and commercial events are not be perceived as a deterrent.
9. The administration and the level of associated staff resources required for park events continues to increase and there is an ever more stringent responsibility to ensure that each event has the appropriate safety measures, insurance and risk assessments in place.
10. Work carried out to parks and open spaces by contractors to maintain areas before and after events and to provide assistance during events are subject to annual increases in contract charges based on RPI.
11. Therefore, officers recommend that an increase in line with inflation of 0.5% is applied to all charges to cover the effects of inflation and work undertaken by officers.

Park Activities – Allotments

12. With regard to the Bexhill-on-Sea allotments held under the Allotments Acts, following the establishment of the Bexhill-on-Sea Parish (Town) Council, these will all transfer by operation of law in accordance with Regulation 9 of the Local Government (Parishes and Parish councils) (England) Regulations 2008.
13. Whilst it is for this Council to set the budget and the precept for the new Parish Council it is considered appropriate that the rates remain the same as any increase would not take effect until 1 April 2021 at which time this Council will cease to manage and operate the Bexhill-on-Sea allotments. Any new rates to apply from 1 April 2021 should be set and agreed by the new Parish (Town) Council.
14. Officers recommend therefore that the rates remain the same and no increase is applied in respect of the two Bexhill-on-Sea Allotments sites that are currently managed by RDC (Preston Road and All Saints, Turkey Road). The management of all other allotment sites have been devolved.

Cemetery Charges

15. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for cemetery services can be found at Appendix 2.
16. In October 2017 officers reported to Cabinet on the provision of cemetery services (Minute CB17/29 refers). This report outlined the challenges for the service and compared charges with other local authorities. These challenges have persisted during 2020/21.
17. The current charges for interments (burials and cremated remains) have remained static since 2016 to encourage use of local services; however, contractor costs for services have risen annually in line with inflation creating a real terms reduction in income to the Council over the period. The current rates of fees and charges no longer meet the cost to the Council. Therefore, it is recommended that these fees are increased by the rate of inflation of 0.5% in 2021/22.
18. The Council provides a range of memorial services such as installing benches, tree planting, grounds maintenance and the hire of the chapel. It is recommended that the fees for cemetery services are increased by 0.5% in line with inflation to match the equivalent rise in the Council's costs.

Beach and Foreshore

19. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for Beach Activities can be found at Appendix 3.
20. Beach hut sites are extremely popular and remain in high demand. The recommendation therefore is for the licence fee for beach huts to rise by £9 per licence in 2021/2022 to £530 per annum, equivalent to a 1.7% increase.
21. It is recommended that charges for Seasonal Tent sites increase by a similar amount as above of 1.7% to £368 for the 6 months season.

22. For other foreshore services, such as winch and boat licences it is recommended that these increase by the rate of inflation of 0.5% is applied.

Car Parking

23. A detailed illustration of the current and inflationary increases to fees and charges for car parking can be found at Appendix 4.
24. In October 2020 some of the current car parking charges were changed, and some charges introduced into car parks that were previously free to use following the introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) and on-street charges. In addition, the Council sought alignment of some parking charges between equivalent areas of the district. These changes to car park charges are identified in Appendix 4.
25. In October 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee formed the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group to consider the impact of CPE on its off-street car parks. It is recommended that the current charging structure be left unchanged until such time that the proposed Task and Finish Group can make recommendations to Members on whether or not to change car park charges further.
26. We have observed a significant increase in the costs of managing Camber Western car park during 2020. In addition to recent improvements to the car park surface, we have consulted with Sussex Police and decided to increase the security presence at the car park to better manage increased levels of antisocial behaviour. It is proposed, therefore, that the summer season tariffs (from 1 April to 30 September) are increased in all Camber Sands car parks managed by the Council, as shown in Appendix 4, from £5 to £6 (1 to 3 hrs); £10 to £12 (3 to 6hrs); £12 to £15 (for 6hrs +).
27. Members should note that the Off-Street Car Parks Task and Finish Group will review the viability of introducing a new two-tier charging system in car parks that experience high visitor numbers, such as Camber. The approach would charge Rother residents a reduced rate relative to visitors from outside the District.

Bulky Waste Collections

28. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for Bulky Waste Collections can be found at Appendix 5.
29. The recommendation is that the fee for the Council collecting one to three bulky waste items increases from £38 to £40.
30. It is important that the set of charges for bulky waste collection does not deter people from using the service and so increase fly tipping. This small increase in charges for the two most popular of the three price brackets will help cover the cost of collection and provide a contribution towards the administration of the service.
31. There is a risk that an increase in price may deter residents from using the service and increase fly tipping. This risk is felt to be low.

Garden Waste Collections

32. A detailed illustration of the recommended increases to fees and charges for Garden Waste Collections can be found at Appendix 5.
33. The annual charge for the garden waste collection service was increased from 15 July 2020 to £40 per bin per annum for all **new** customers subscribing to the service. The subscription was held at £35 for renewing customers who had missed out on several collections due to COVID-19 and the consequent suspension of the service.
34. The total cost of the service to the Council is approximately £930,000 per annum. It is projected that in 2021/22 the present charge of £40 per subscription would generate an income to the Council of approximately £790,000 across the present 19,700 subscribers. Therefore, the £40 per subscription charge will leave the Council with a deficit of approximately £140,000 to operate the garden waste collection service in 2021/22.
35. It is recommended therefore that the subscription cost for garden waste service be increased from £40 to £45 per bin which, at the current rate of subscription, would increase the income to the Council to approximately £890,000 and which would go some way to reducing the deficit while minimising the risk of detracting from new subscribers.
36. Members should note that the waste contract has a tiered charging structure for garden waste collections. This means that there is a lower cost per collection available to local authority areas that reach 20,000 subscribers. The present number of garden waste collection subscribers in Rother is approximately 19,600. The Council will be working to increase the number of subscribers to 20,000 households by 31 March 2021 using a focused marketing campaign and so achieve savings.
37. Officers are currently working on ways to incentivise new subscribers to the service before March 2021. Members are requested to give delegated authority to the Head of Service Housing and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management Environment and Place to implement such an incentive scheme.
38. There is a risk that the higher cost of the service will deter some residents from renewing their garden waste collection subscription in July 2021. If the total number of subscribers falls below 14,999 by 31 March 2022 we would fall into a higher cost per subscription tier from where we are presently. If this were to happen there would be an increased deficit of £4.42per household and an overall increased deficit of up to £66,000 per annum. It is felt that this risk is unlikely to occur but it is a possibility.
39. Officers are exploring options to work with for example local garden centres and other relevant businesses to offer incentives for residents using the garden waste service.
40. The garden waste subscription charge in neighboring authorities are:

Hastings £70
Eastbourne £52

Lewes £70
Wealden £50

Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013

41. It is recommended that the charges for scrap metal dealers as set out in Appendix 6 do not increase as there has been no increase in costs to the Council.

Localism Act 2011

42. To ensure that the costs of providing non-statutory services are covered by the user, officers in the Environmental Health and Licensing Service have previously identified two areas where a charge can be levied under Section 3 of the Localism Act 2011:

a. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

A revisit to rate a premises under the FHRS is not a statutory duty and it is therefore recommended that the scale of fees shown in Appendix 7 is approved. As a Council we would want food businesses to have the highest rating and therefore the fee only reflects the costs incurred by the Council.

b. Health Certificates (for food exported)

The Council receives requests for health certificates which must be signed by Environmental Health Officers or Official Veterinary Surgeons. If the health certificates are not correct and do not have a wet signature, the Port Health Authority of the importing country will reject the consignment of food. By issuing health certificates the Council is supporting local businesses to export food. The fees in Appendix 8 are recommended to cover the Council's costs, which are only sufficient if businesses provide adequate time and accurate information to allow certificates to be produced efficiently.

HMO Licences

43. A Supreme Court judgement has determined that local authorities must have two sets of fees. One fee to cover the costs of applying for a licence (not refundable) and a fee for issuing the licence and on-going enforcement. It is recommended that the Council also have a combined fee to reflect the reduced administration costs associated with only one fee being paid and processed, as set out in Appendix 9. Fees can only be set which reflect the costs incurred by the Council.

Conclusion

44. The increases recommended within this report support the Medium Term Financial Strategy of the Council, ensure that non-statutory services are broadly self-funding and ensure that income levels are protected against the effects of inflation.

45. Members are requested to consider the proposals and determine the range of charges applying for 2021/22.

Implications

Financial Implications

46. As highlighted within this report, if the increases in charges are too high income levels may drop due to customer resistance and affordability for the customer. Failure to achieve sufficient income and to reduce subsidy on non-essential services may compromise the Council's ability to fund statutory services in the future.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community
e-mail address:	joe.powell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	1 - 9
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB17/29
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

PARKS ACTIVITIES

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

Sports Bookings

	Current Charges per Booking per Pitch (2020/2021)			Proposed Charges per Booking per Pitch (2021/2022)		
	Adult (over 18)	Youth (12 – 18)	Under 12's	Adult (over 18)	Youth (12 – 18)	Under 12's
Football Pitch	£80.00	£17.75	£13.75	£81.00	£17.75	£13.75
	Adult (Over 18)	Colts		Adult (Over 18)	Colts	
Cricket Pitch	£78.00	£17.25		£79.00	£17.25	

		Current Charges per Booking per Pitch (2020/2021)	Proposed Charges per Booking per Pitch (2021/2022)
Stoolball Pitch	Casual Games	£27.00	£27.25
Additional Charges	Showers	£28.00	£28.25
	Closed Gate	£47.00	£47.25
	Cancellation (pitch fees)	£23.00	£23.00

Events and Fairs

		Current Charges (2020/2021)	Proposed Charges (2021/2022)
Commercial Event – Small	Per Day	£115.00	£116.00
Commercial Event – Med	Per Day	£344.00	£346.00
Commercial Event – Large	Per Day 1 – 4	£646.00	£649.00
	Per Day 5 +	£496.00	£499.00
Charitable / Not for Profit Event – Small	Per Day	£62.00	£62.00
Charitable / Not for Profit - Medium	Per Day	£192.00	£193.00
Charitable / Not for Profit - Large	Per Day 1 – 4	£354.00	£356.00
	Per Day 5 + days	£281.00	£283.00
Damage Deposits	Small Events	£329.00	£331.00
	Medium Events	£547.00	£550.00
	Large Events	£1,093.00	£1,099.00

Allotment Gardens

		Current Charges per Plot per Annum (2020/2021)	Proposed Charges per Plot per Annum (2021/2022)
Small Plot	<125sqm	£50.00	NIL
Large Plot	>125sqm	£95.50	NIL

CEMETERY CHARGES

	Current Charges (2020/2021)	Proposed Charges (2021/2022)
INTERMENTS – For the burial of:		
The body of a child up to 18 years old	£0	£0
The body of a person whose age at the time of death exceeded 18 years. At 1.52m (5') deep	£950.00	£955.00
Each additional 0.61m (2') depth	£380.00	£382.00
Cremated remains - interment	£260.00	£261.00
EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS – For the Exclusive Right of Burial at the time of interment, for 50 years, including the preparation of the Deed of Grant		
Full size plot (2.74m x 1.22m)	£950.00	£955.00
Small size plots (1.37m x 0.61m)	£470.00	£472.00
Garden of Remembrance at Rye (0.69m x 0.61m)	£270.00	£271.00
Plot Reservation for 5 year period		
Full size plot (2.74m x 1.22m)	£240.00	£241.00
Small size plots (1.37m x 0.61m)	£120.00	£121.00
Garden of Remembrance at Rye (0.69m x 0.61m)	£70.00	£70.00
OTHER CHARGES		
Use of Chapel	£193.00	£194.00
Transfer of burial rights	£122.00	£123.00
Search fee – 10 years to present	No Charge	No Charge
Search fee – before 10 years	£122.00	£123.00
d) Disinterring: Double appropriate re-opening fees, plus any additional charges to be determined by the proper officer according to the circumstances.		

Cemetery Charges

The whole of the foregoing fees and charges will be doubled in the case of any person who at the time of death was not a Council Tax payer or resident of the Rother District and has not so resided at any time during the twelve months preceding his or her death.

CEMETERY CHARGES – continued

	Charges (2020/2021)	Proposed Charges (2021/2022)
GROUNDWORK – maintenance and planting in respect of Bexhill Cemetery only		
Lawn Sections Twice yearly planting with bedding plants For Exclusive Burial Rights	£156.00 £2095.00	£157.00 £2106.00
Traditional Sections Turving of a grave space Maintenance with twice yearly planting per annum	£177.00 £469.00	£178.00 £471.00
MEMORIALS		
Permission to erect a memorial – (Cemeteries Only)	£122.00	£123.00
Permission to insert an additional inscription – (Cemeteries Only)	£50.00	£50.00
Commemorative BENCHES AND TREES		
Commemorative Benches 10 year scheme, including installation, plaque and 10 year maintenance. Cost of bench to be in addition - selection of four benches provided at current cost plus 5% charge.	£703.00 On request	£707.00 On request
Replacement / Additional Plaque for bench (not including inscription)	-	-
Replacement / Additional Plaque for bench, including inscription - maximum of four lines of text	£158.00	£159.00
Commemorative Trees Planting of a commemorative tree, including ground preparation, soil nourishment, stabilisation and protection of the sapling. Cost price plus 5% charge (not including tree) A selection of trees and shrubs are available for planting, cost for the supply of the tree will be provided at time of request, current cost plus 5% charge	£226.00 On Request	£227.00 On Request
Plaque – including up to four lines of inscription	£65.00	£65.00
Installation and Plaque Mount for commemorative tree	£190.00	£191.00
Additional line of engraving on plaque	£7.50	£7.50
FOR INSCRIPTIONS IN THE BOOK OF REMEMBRANCE		

Up to five-line entry	£260.00	£261.00
Standard Embellishments (Extra)	£395.00	£397.00

BEACH AND FORESHORE

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

	Charges 2020/2021	Proposed Charges 2021/2022
Beach Hut Site Licenses – Annual charge per hut East/West Parade	£521.00	£530.00
Glyne Gap	£521.00	£530.00
Beach Hut Site Licenses – Seasonal charge per site Tent Sites, 6 months only	£362.00	£368.00
Beach Hut Site Transfer Fee per hut	Minimum fee £1,575 or 10% of sale price (whichever is highest)	£1,583.00
Foreshore License –Annual charge per item: One Boat Site	£73.00	£73.00
Winches –Annual charge per winch	£36.50	£36.75
Equipment Boxes –Annual charge per box	£36.50	£36.75
Sailing/Angling Boat Site	£48.00	£48.25
Commercial Fishing Boat Site	£363.00	£365.00

CAR PARK PERMITS

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

	Charges 2020/2021	Proposed Charges 2021/2022
Annual Permit for One Car– All Car Parks	£815.00	£819.00
Half Yearly Permit for One Car– All Car Parks	£498.50	£501.00
Nominated Permit for One Car– Single Named Car Park	£498.50 until 15.10.20 then £321.50	£323.00
Wainwright Road –Annual Permit per Car	£125.00 until 15.10.20 then £321.50	£323.00
Gibbets Marsh - Annual Permit per Car	£321.50	£323.00
Little Common- Annual Permit per Car	£175.00 until 15.10.20 then £321.50	£323.00
Gun Gardens – Rye- Annual Permit per Car	£1,090.00	£1,096.00
Western Road – Bexhill- Annual Permit per Car	£715.00	£719.00
The Strand – Rye- Annual Permit per Car	£655.00	£658.00

Car Parks – Camber Summer Tariffs (1 April – 30 September)

	Charges 2020-2021	Proposed Charges 2021-2022
Up to 1 hour	£1.50	£1.50
1 – 3 hours	£5.00	£6.00
3 – 6 hours	£10.00	£12.00
6+ hours	£12.00	£15.00

All other current car park tariffs, including pay and display charges are available online at www.rother.gov.uk/carparks

WASTE CHARGES

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

Bulky Waste Charges (a)

	Charges 2020/2021	Proposed Charges 2021/2022
Up to 3 items	£38.00	£40.00
4 – 6 items	£73.00	£73.00
7 – 9 items	£108.00	£108.00
Additional items above, per 3 items	£38.00	£40.00

Garden Waste Charges (b)

	Charges 2020/2021	Proposed Charges 2021/2022 (From July 2021)
Annual charge per container	£35.00 (existing subscribers) £40.00 (new subscribers)	£45.00

SCRAP METAL DEALER LICENCE (3 years)

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

	Current Charge 2020/2021	Proposed Charge 2021/2022
New Application	£500.00	£500.00
Renewal	£400.00	£400.00
Variation	£60.00	£60.00

Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

	Current Charge 2020/2021	Proposed Charge 2021/2022
First request for an inspection for FHRS scoring within 3 months of planned inspection	£150.00	£150.00
Further request for an inspection for FHRS scoring within 3 months of planned inspection	£200.00	£200.00
First request for an inspection for FHRS scoring after 3 months of planned inspection	Free	Free
Further request for an inspection for FHRS scoring after 3 months of planned inspection	£200.00	£200.00

Appendix 8**Health Certificates (for food exported)**

Unless stated all charges include VAT @ 20%

	Current Charge 2020/2021	Proposed Charge 2021/2022
First certificate issued	£70.00	£70.00
Subsequent certificates issued on the same working day (same batch)	£20.00 each	£20.00 each

Appendix 9**HMO Licences (5 years)**

	Current Charge 2020/2021	Proposed Charge from January 2021
Initial (first) Application Fee	£920.00	£920.00
Initial Issuing Fee	£50.00	£50.00
Combined Fee (if paid at the same time)	£950.00	£950.00
Additional fee if premises inspected and found not to be licensed	£300.00	£300.00
Renewal Application Fee	£650.00	£650.00
Renewal Issuing Fee	£50.00	£50.00
Combined Fee (if paid at the same time)	£680.00	£680.00

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Burwash Neighbourhood Plan – Rother District Council Representations to the Regulation 16 Consultation

Report of: Tim Hickling, Head of Service - Strategy and Planning

Cabinet Member: Councillor Vine-Hall

Ward(s): Burwash and The Weald

Purpose of Report: To present the council representations made for the Regulation 16 Consultation on the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan

Decision Type: Non-Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED** That:

- 1) the representations set out at Appendix 1 be submitted, together with supporting material, for consideration by the Examiner in relation to the submitted Burwash Neighbourhood Plan; and
- 2) the Chief Executive be authorised to consider any potential modifications to the Neighbourhood Plan that may be raised through the examination process in order to secure a Neighbourhood Plan in general conformity with the adopted Core Strategy and Development and Site Allocations Local Plan.

The Chairman of Council has already agreed that, subject to the approval of Cabinet, this decision can be taken as an urgent decision to allow the Council to respond to the Consultation by the deadline of 6 November 2020.

Introduction

1. The Burwash Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Burwash Parish Council following designation of the parish as a Neighbourhood Area in 2016. It is currently the subject of a statutory public consultation ending on 6 November 2020 during which period representations may be made. Duly-made representations will be considered through an examination process by an independent Examiner to determine whether the Plan meets the 'basic conditions' required in order for the Plan to proceed to referendum.
2. This report is to enable Cabinet to make representations on behalf of the Council as part of this process. Given that the consultation period ends four days after this Cabinet meeting, this is an urgent decision and will therefore be outside the scope of the call-in procedure. In accordance with the call-in

procedure, the Chairman of Council has given his consent to this matter being taken as an urgent decision.

3. This report is to enable Cabinet to make representations on behalf of the Council as part of this process.

Analysis

4. The Neighbourhood Plan, together with supporting documents, can be viewed on the Council's website at <https://www.rother.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/burwash-neighbourhood-plan/>.

The submitted documents are:

- Burwash Parish Boundary Map
- Burwash Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2028 - Submission Version
- Consultation Statement
- Basic Conditions Statement
- Strategic Environmental Assessment

Additional Documents

- Burwash Character Appraisal
- Burwash Development Boundaries
- Burwash Infrastructure Assessment
- Business Survey
- Call for Sites Evaluation Report
- Call for Sites Report
- Community and Engagement Strategy
- Consultation Event Records
- East Sussex Landscape Assessment – High Weald
- Housing Needs Survey
- Listed Buildings
- Neighbourhood Plan Survey
- Planning Permissions
- SHLAA – Burwash
- Traffic and Transport Survey
- Wishes of Local Residents
- Wishes of Young People

5. The Neighbourhood Plan has 20 planning policies and additional community aspirations which are as follows:

List of BNP Planning Policies

General Policies

- GP01 Protection of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty landscape
- GP02 Views into and from the AONB
- GP03 Heritage
- GP04 Development boundaries
- GP05 Design standards
- GP06 Existing open spaces
- GP08 Sustainable development

Housing

HO01 Housing and tenure mix

HO02 Rural Exception sites

Environment

EN01 Land Management

EN02 Natural environment protection

EN03 Green infrastructure: footpaths and bridleways

EN04 Dark skies

EN05 Historic landscape environment

EN06 Integration of landscaping

Infrastructure (Leisure, Economy, Tourism)

IN01 Pedestrian safety

IN02 Parking

IN03 Supporting business

IN04 Retention of existing business premises

Future Projects

Parish Council Rolling Plan – Community and Communications, Environment and Maintenance, Traffic and Transport

Aspirational capital projects for the future

6. The Neighbourhood Plan relates to the period 2020-2028 in line with the end date of the Core Strategy.

General conformity and other ‘basic conditions’ requirements

7. As stated in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019: *‘Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan.’* Paragraph 29 goes on to state:

‘Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhood plans should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies.’

8. Other basic conditions relate to: having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; having special regard to the desirability of preserving any listed building (or its setting) or conservation area; contributing to the achievement of sustainable development; and compatibility with EU obligations.
9. Hence, a critical function of this Council is to consider and advise on whether each Neighbourhood Plan policy – and the Plan overall – is in ‘general conformity’ with the policies of the adopted Local Plan Core Strategy.

Key Core Strategy policies and housing provisions

10. In considering ‘general conformity’ of the Neighbourhood Plan’s development provisions, reference is made to the overall spatial strategy for development across the District as set out in policy OSS1 of the Core Strategy. Part (iii) of this policy is to:

Identify suitable sites in accordance with the following spatial distribution:

- (c) *Facilitate the limited growth of villages that contain a range of services and which contributes to supporting vibrant, mixed rural communities, notably in relation to service provision and local housing needs, and is compatible with the character and setting of the village;*
 - (d) *Allow for small-scale infill and redevelopment, and otherwise enable local needs for housing and community facilities to be met in other villages; and*
 - (e) *Give particular attention to the ecological, agricultural, public enjoyment and intrinsic value of the countryside, and continue to generally restrict new development to that for which a countryside location is necessary or appropriate to promoting sustainable land-based industries and sensitive diversification, primarily for employment uses.*
11. This spatial strategy is elaborated upon for Rural Areas through policy RA1, which sets out the approach to villages in policies RA2-RA4 in relation to development in the countryside. Of particular relevance, Part (v) of policy RA1 states:
- (v) *In order to meet housing needs and ensure the continued vitality of villages, the provision of 1,670 additional dwellings (comprising existing commitments, new allocations and windfalls) in villages over the Plan period 2011 to 2028. This will be located in accordance with Figure 12, subject to refinement in the light of further investigation via the Development and Site Allocations Local Plan and/or Neighbourhood Plans.*
12. In relation to Burwash Parish, Figure 12 referred to in Policy RA1 identifies that, as of 1st April 2013, 52 dwellings must be identified and built on new sites in Burwash Village in order to meet the target for rural areas. Taking into account an extant planning application, Strand Meadow, as at 1 April 2019 the residual figure is 22.
13. In addition to Policies OSS1 and RA1-RA4, other significant core policies are:
- OSS2 – the basis for determining development boundaries
 - OSS3 – other factors for the location of development
 - OSS4 – general development considerations
 - EN1 – for the good stewardship of the landscape, notably the character and features of the High Weald AONB
 - EN2 – for stewardship of the historic built environment
 - DHG1 – for affordable housing

Key Issues

14. The supporting text to the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan places a strong emphasis on local support for development, which is welcomed by the Council, however the NPPF 2019, paragraph 29, sets out that *'Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.'* When Burwash Parish Council submitted their application for Burwash parish

to be designated a Neighbourhood Area, it was formally agreed that the allocation of housing sites to meet the target set out within the adopted Core Strategy was 'scoped' into the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Burwash NDP does not allocate any housing sites to meet the target of 52 dwellings (seen as a *minimum* figure), nor does it make any amendments to the existing development boundary to accommodate the outstanding figure for the settlement of Burwash, therefore the Submission BNP does not meet the following basic condition as set out by planning policy guidance, '*the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).*' The Core Strategy sets out the vision and objectives to guide the future pattern and form of development up to 2028, provides broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development and contains strategic policies to support the vision and objectives. The Development and Site Allocations Plan (DaSA)¹ also contains a small number of policies which also are considered to be strategic. Policy RA1: Villages is one of the key strategic policies in the Core Strategy which sets out the overall quantity/distribution of housing per settlement in the Rural Area, including that of village of Burwash.

15. Comments made by Rother District Council at the Regulation 14 stage emphasised that site allocations are imperative to progress the Plan to Regulation 16, or risk failing the aforementioned basic condition. As expressed in the consultation comments, it is difficult to ascertain what the approach of being pro-development, whilst not updating the development boundary which is taken from the Rother Local Plan 2006, nor allocating any sites, is trying to achieve. The residual amount of housing of 22 dwellings² to be allocated is highly likely to require a revised development boundary.
16. There are two 2013 SHLAA sites, Strand Meadow³ and Shrub Lane⁴ (which were categorised as green and amber sites respectively) which have not been allocated within the Plan and there is no clear evidence to support this decision. Strand Meadow is a saved policy in the 2006 Local Plan (Policy VL1) and whilst it has extant outline planning permission it should be included as a site allocation in the BNP. A reserved matters planning application for the site at Strand Meadow has been recently submitted (October 2020) for a scheme of 30 dwellings. The use of a positively worded policy relating to the site would have assisted in the consideration of future applications relating to detail of the site and could ensure local vernacular is reflected in its design, for example.
17. Whilst a planning application at Shrub Lane by Denton Homes was refused in 2017 by Planning Committee, the decision was made in respect of a scheme submitted for 42 dwellings. This decision does not rule out an application for a smaller scheme being successful. The SHLAA comments for the site (BU12a) set out mitigation criteria for a scheme of approximately 30 dwellings, namely that a village edge scheme is desired which implements a broad-leaved woodland buffer across the northern and eastern perimeters of the site. The suitability of the development is also dependant on access. Developers'

¹ Policy DHG1: Affordable Housing, DHG2: Rural Exception Sites, DEN3: Strategic Gaps, HAS1: Combe Valley Countryside Park, RY1 (xii), HF1(iii) and HF1(i)

² Taken from the minimum target of 52 dwellings for Burwash village minus the extant outline planning permission at Strand Meadow of 30 dwellings, thus leaving a residual requirement of 22 dwellings.

³ Site BU2

⁴ Site BU12a

contributions will be required to implement footway provision towards the bus service and village centre, as well as allotments and sports pitches in order to be policy compliant. The evidence supporting the Neighbourhood Plan has not considered whether a smaller scheme would be acceptable and has simply ruled out development on this site altogether.

18. Notwithstanding the comments made above that the BNP does not meet the basic conditions, as stated previously in the RDC Regulation 14 comments, in the absence of allocations set out in the NDP, planning applications for development within Burwash Parish will be considered in the context of Policy OVE1 in the DaSA which states:

'Until such time as a Neighbourhood Plan for the relevant settlement with an outstanding Core Strategy housing requirement is in force, planning applications will be favourably considered for development proposals in those settlements where:

- (i) they contribute to meeting the housing target for that settlement and accord with the relevant spatial strategy; and (ii) the site and development proposals are otherwise suitable having regard to other relevant policies of the Core Strategy, including the considerations in OSS2 and OSS3, and of this Plan.'*

19. Including allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan ensures positive planning for development in the area and does not leave the parish vulnerable to speculative planning applications. Having a Neighbourhood Plan, which includes housing allocations to meet the outstanding target, offers far better protection from speculative development than without it. When making the application to undertake the Neighbourhood Plan, BPC opted to include allocations within the Plan and as such no respective housing allocations were considered within the District Council's now adopted DaSA Local Plan. This leaves a 'planning void' in Burwash parish, with no possible positive planned remedy to fill this void. This leaves the parish very vulnerable to speculative housing development. Therefore, it is considered that it is for the Neighbourhood Plan to make these allocations to meet the target set out in the adopted Core Strategy.

BNP Overview

General comments

20. Overall, whilst the policies are relevant for the parish, the plan lacks the structure and focus required of a neighbourhood development plan. A large amount of the supporting text sets out local opinion to development, but this is not sufficient to justify the policies. The anecdotal evidence could be substituted with a comprehensive overview of the parish, which is key to giving context to the policies. Information regarding population, size, demographics, employment, local issues, infrastructure and public services would all help create a sense of place for the reader and decision maker. The Character Appraisal helps to give some context, however a summary of this document would have been better placed to form the History and Background (or Past and Present) sections of the plan introduction. This section currently

does not give a complete picture of the parish, and mainly focuses on architectural styles.

21. The main document contains a substantial amount of information which belongs within supporting documents or the appendices; some careful editing would have given more focus to the Plan and made it more accessible for decision making. The section 'Community Development' gives a comprehensive explanation of the consultation process, community engagement and the outcomes, however this would be better retained in the Consultation Statement rather than in the main body of the BNP. This also applies to the section 'Assessment of Development Opportunities'. This is supporting evidence and should be omitted from the main body of the Plan. The section includes information regarding an anticipated planning application, which is anecdotal and will soon be dated. The sections 'Community Support for Developments' and 'Housing Conclusion' would also be more appropriate as supporting evidence for the Plan or inserted into the Consultation Statement.
22. Regarding formatting and editing, there are typographical errors which undermine the quality of the BNP and the document has a noticeable absence of parish photographs, which would have served to strengthen the identity of the parish to a reader/decision maker who does not know Burwash well, as well as illustrating the plan's objective to protect its well-regarded natural and historic environment. Some of the maps would be more legible in a larger A4 format rather than inserted within the text.
23. Several proposed policies repeat national and/or local policy including GP01 Protection of the AONB Landscape, GP04 Development Boundaries, HO01 Housing Tenure and Mix, HO02 Rural Exception Sites, EN01 Land Management, EN02 Natural Environment Protection, EN05 Historic Landscape Environment and IN02 Parking. Neighbourhood Plan policies can be successfully crafted to expand on local/national policy and be more relevant to the local area, however repeating local and national policy is unnecessary and does not add any benefit in considering applications in the parish. The draft Plan does not take the opportunity to add any parish specific elements to policies to safeguard local elements unique to the parish of Burwash.
24. Policies in the BNP could be worded more positively; the NPPF encourages plans to be positively prepared. Policies GP05 Design Standards, GPO6 Existing Open Spaces, EN01 Land Management, EN05 Historic Landscape Management, should be re-worded to be supportive of development. The policy text could often be more succinct which would assist a decision maker when determining an application. The language often makes the policy ambiguous and it can be difficult to understand the exact intent. The clear use and therefore interpretation of the language used within these policies is critical when using for decision-making.

Conclusion

25. The Burwash Neighbourhood Plan does not meet all of the Basic Conditions set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (amended) 2012, required for a plan to undergo a successful examination and proceed to referendum.

The omission of site allocations as well as non-amendment to the 2006 development boundary, leave the Council in a position unable to support this Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is therefore recommended to Cabinet that the full comments made at Appendix 1 to this report are submitted on behalf of the District Council in response to the Regulation 16 consultation.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
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Appendices:	Appendix 1
Relevant	None
Previous Minutes:	
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

Rother District Council Representations

1. General comments on the Neighbourhood Plan itself

The Council appreciates the amount of resources that are harnessed in order to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP). In this case it is clear that a strong drive to protect the parish of Burwash exists within the community and this is clearly reflected throughout the document. Despite this, the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan (BNP) would have benefited from some considered editing and consultation with the Local Planning Authority which may have identified the following errors before it was submitted at Regulation 15.

The plan date should read Burwash Neighbourhood Development Plan 2019-2028 as this is the start date to which it relates, as with all NDPs, to the latest development figures made available when the plan is submitted. There is some apparent confusion regarding the neighbourhood planning process which is clarified here:

Neighbourhood Plans which are successful at examination i.e. when the examiner indicates that the plan should proceed to referendum, are given weight whilst waiting for the referendum. The timeline between the examination and the referendum is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations (General) 2012; the Local Planning Authority is not obliged to hold the referendum 'as soon as possible'. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) and Development Management Procedure (Amendment) Regulations 2016 set out the time allowed between the examiner's report being issued, the publication of the decision statement and the date of the referendum. The LPA has five weeks from when the examiner's report is issued until the decision statement must be published. The referendum must then be held within 56 days of this date. Regulations linked to the Coronavirus Act 2020 mean that referendums cannot take place until May 6th, 2021. Government guidance states that these provisions will be kept under review and may be amended or revoked in response to changing circumstances.

A large amount of the text in the main body of the BNP belongs in the appendices or as supporting evidence. The main issue with the lack of editing is that the resulting document is difficult to navigate and often superfluous. This undermines the very intention of the NDP which is to be deftly used by decision makers who are determining applications in the parish. A further issue which would have been resolved in consultation with the Local Planning Authority is the repetition of local and national policy, which is unnecessary and does not add value to the BNP. Examiners are generally not supportive of repeating national and local policies within Neighbourhood Plans as it unnecessarily complicates the consideration of planning applications and does not add value, as a result these may be recommended to be removed within the Examination process. Detailed comments on this are expanded in more detail below.

The supporting text to the Burwash Neighbourhood Plan places a strong emphasis on local support for development, which is welcomed by the Council, however the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2019, paragraph 29, sets out that '*Neighbourhood Plans should not promote less*

development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies.' When Burwash Parish Council (BPC) submitted their application for Burwash parish to be designated a Neighbourhood Area, it was agreed that the allocation of housing sites to meet the target set out within the adopted Core Strategy was 'scoped' into the remit of the Neighbourhood Plan. However, the Burwash NDP does not allocate any housing sites to meet the target of 52 dwellings (seen as a *minimum* figure), nor does it make any amendments to the existing development boundary to accommodate the outstanding figure for the settlement of Burwash, therefore it is the view of Rother District Council (RDC) that the Submission BNP does not meet the following basic condition as set out by planning policy guidance, *'the making of the order (or neighbourhood plan) is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of the authority (or any part of that area).'*' The Core Strategy sets out the vision and objectives to guide the future pattern and form of development up to 2028, provides broad guidance on the scale and distribution of development and contains strategic policies to support the vision and objectives. The Development and Site Allocations Plan (DaSA)⁵ also contains a small number of policies which also are considered to be strategic. Policy RA1: Villages is one of the key strategic policies in the Core Strategy which sets out the overall quantity/distribution of housing per settlement in the Rural Area, including that of village of Burwash.

Comments made by RDC at the Regulation 14 stage emphasised that site allocations are imperative to progress the Plan to Regulation 16, or risk failing the aforementioned basic condition. As expressed in those consultation comments, it is difficult to ascertain what the approach of being pro-development, whilst not updating the development boundary which is taken from the Rother Local Plan 2006, nor allocating any sites, is trying to achieve. The residual amount of housing of 22 dwellings⁶ to be allocated is highly likely to require a revised development boundary.

There are two 2013 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) sites, Strand Meadow⁷ and Shrub Lane⁸ (which were categorised as green and amber sites respectively) which have not been allocated within the Plan and there is no clear evidence to support this decision. Strand Meadow is a saved policy in the 2006 Local Plan (Policy VL1) and whilst it has extant outline planning permission it should be included as a site allocation in the BNP. A reserved matters planning application for the site at Strand Meadow has been recently submitted (October 2020) for a scheme of 30 dwellings. The use of a positively worded policy relating to the site would have assisted in the consideration of future applications relating to detail of the site and could ensure local vernacular is reflected in its design, for example.

Whilst a planning application at Shrub Lane by Denton Homes was refused in 2017 by the Planning Committee, the decision was made in respect of a scheme submitted for 42 dwellings. This decision does not rule out an application for a smaller scheme being successful. The SHLAA comments for the site (BU12a) set out mitigation criteria for a scheme of approximately 30

⁵ Policy DHG1: Affordable Housing, DHG2: Rural Exception Sites, DEN3: Strategic Gaps, HAS1: Combe Valley Countryside Park, RY1 (xii), HF1(iii) and HF1(i)

⁶ Taken from the minimum target of 52 dwellings for Burwash village minus the extant outline planning permission at Strand Meadow of 30 dwellings, thus leaving a residual requirement of 22 dwellings.

⁷ Site BU2

⁸ Site BU12a

dwellings, namely that a village edge scheme is desired which implements a broad-leaved woodland buffer across the northern and eastern perimeters of the site. The suitability of the development is also dependant on access. Developers' contributions will be required to implement footway provision towards the bus service and village centre, as well as allotments and sports pitches in order to be policy compliant. The evidence supporting the Neighbourhood Plan has not considered whether a smaller scheme would be acceptable and has simply ruled out development on this site altogether.

Notwithstanding the comments made above that the BNP does not meet the basic conditions, as stated previously in the RDC Regulation 14 comments, in the absence of allocations set out in the NDP, planning applications for development within Burwash Parish will be considered in the context of Policy OVE1 in the DaSA which states:

'Until such time as a Neighbourhood Plan for the relevant settlement with an outstanding Core Strategy housing requirement is in force, planning applications will be favourably considered for development proposals in those settlements where:

- (ii) they contribute to meeting the housing target for that settlement and accord with the relevant spatial strategy; and (ii) the site and development proposals are otherwise suitable having regard to other relevant policies of the Core Strategy, including the considerations in OSS2 and OSS3, and of this Plan.'*

Including allocations within the Neighbourhood Plan ensures positive planning for development in the area and does not leave the parish vulnerable to speculative planning applications. Having a Neighbourhood Plan, which includes housing allocations to meet the outstanding target, offers far better protection from speculative development than without it. When making the application to undertake the Neighbourhood Plan, BPC opted to include allocations within the Plan and as such no respective housing allocations were considered within the District Council's now adopted DaSA Local Plan. This leaves a 'planning void' in Burwash parish, with no possible positive planned remedy to fill this void. This leaves the parish very vulnerable to speculative housing development. Therefore, it is considered that it is for the Neighbourhood Plan to make these allocations to meet the target set out in the adopted Core Strategy.

Overall, whilst the policies are relevant for the parish, the plan lacks the structure and focus required of a neighbourhood development plan. A large amount of the supporting text sets out local opinion to development, but this is not sufficient to justify the policies. The anecdotal evidence could be substituted with a comprehensive overview of the parish, which is key to giving context to the policies. Information regarding population, size, demographics, employment, local issues, infrastructure and public services would all help create a sense of place for the reader and decision maker. The Character Appraisal helps to give some context, however a summary of this document would have been better placed to form the History and Background (or Past and Present) sections of the plan introduction. This section currently does not give a complete picture of the parish, and mainly focuses on architectural styles.

The main document contains a substantial amount of information which belongs within supporting documents or the appendices; some careful editing would have given more focus to the Plan and made it more accessible for decision making. The section 'Community Development' gives a comprehensive explanation of the consultation process, community engagement and the outcomes, however this would be better retained in the Consultation Statement rather than in the main body of the BNP. This also applies to the section 'Assessment of Development Opportunities'. This is supporting evidence and should be omitted from the main body of the Plan. The section includes information regarding an anticipated planning application, which is anecdotal and will soon be dated. The sections 'Community Support for Developments' and 'Housing Conclusion' would also be more appropriate as supporting evidence for the Plan or inserted into the Consultation Statement.

Regarding formatting and editing, there are typographical errors which undermine the quality of the BNP and the document has a noticeable absence of parish photographs, which would have served to strengthen the identity of the parish to a reader/decision maker who does not know Burwash well, as well as illustrating the plan's objective to protect its well-regarded natural and historic environment. Some of the maps would be more legible in a larger A4 format rather than inserted within the text.

Several proposed policies repeat national and/or local policy including GP01 Protection of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Landscape, GP04 Development Boundaries, HO01 Housing Tenure and Mix, HO02 Rural Exception Sites, EN01 Land Management, EN02 Natural Environment Protection, EN05 Historic Landscape Environment and IN02 Parking. Neighbourhood Plan policies can be successfully crafted to expand on local/national policy and be more relevant to the local area, however repeating local and national policy is unnecessary and does not add any benefit in considering applications in the parish. The draft Plan does not take the opportunity to add any parish specific elements to policies to safeguard local elements unique to the parish of Burwash.

Policies in the BNP could be worded more positively; the NPPF encourages plans to be positively prepared. Policies GP05 Design Standards, GPO6 Existing Open Spaces, EN01 Land Management, EN05 Historic Landscape Management, should be re-worded to be supportive of development. The policy text could often be more succinct which would assist a decision maker when determining an application. The language often makes the policy ambiguous and it can be difficult to understand the exact intent. The clear use and therefore interpretation of the language used within these policies is critical when using for decision-making.

2. Policy GP01 Protection of the AONB Landscape

Overall the policy repeats national and local policy in terms of protection given to the AONB and does not take the opportunity to set out criteria specific to the parish. The policy should be re-worded to be positively written, 'Development will be supported..' to replace 'Development will only be permitted...' in line with national guidance. Criterion b) is restrictive and it is not clear how this could be enforced for every planning application. The policy is unclear whether each criterion should be applied to every application for the parish. The policy could be re-worded to make it easier to interpret. It should

be considered that housing forms part of the character of the High Weald, and this can be embraced in order to maintain the sustainability of a settlement.

3. Policy GP02 Views into and from the AONB

This policy content would benefit by being re-worded to read in a positive manner. It could be tailored by citing certain views of the villages that have particular significance to local people rather than all views, making it more relevant to Burwash. It could be included as a criterion of Policy GP01 and deleted as a separate policy.

4. Policy GP03 Heritage

This policy would be difficult to interpret when determining an application. How exactly would development need to affect heritage assets in order to not be supported? Criteria here would be helpful.

Criteria could further be applied to the last paragraph setting out what the policy is supporting/not supporting in terms of damage to the heritage assets. Furthermore, GP03 does not add anything to local or national policy, the policy would benefit from re-wording with criteria that are specific to the parish or its removal from the Plan.

5. Policy GP04 Development Boundaries

This policy does not conform with strategic policies in the Core Strategy. The development boundary as set out in the BNP replicates the 2006 development boundary for Burwash and does not make provision for additional development to accommodate the outstanding housing target in the Local Plan, and therefore needs to be amended. The policy wording makes it clear that, excluding essential operational requirements of utility infrastructure providers, development will generally not be supported outside development boundaries and whilst that is the purpose of development boundaries, by not making any amendments from the 2006 boundary the plan has not taken a positive approach to development.

6. Policy GP05 Design Standards

The policy would benefit from editing where it repeats local/national policy (criteria e and j). Criteria d) and h) would be difficult to apply in its entirety to every planning decision. It is unclear whether every criterion is to be applied to each application. The addition of 'and' or 'or' would be helpful. References to 'the existing palette' under criteria c) is does not refer to a particular palette, whilst criteria i) is superfluous.

7. Policy GP06 Existing Open Spaces

The policy should be expanded to set out how development must not impact on existing open space. The policy should be more precise, and this could be achieved by listing criteria.

It is recommended that it should be re-worded in a positive manner to say how development will be supported when it does not detract from the visual and physical qualities, and the community benefit, from the listed open spaces. The open spaces would benefit from being identified on the respective policies map.

- 8. Policy GP07 New Open Spaces**
The second part of this policy will be difficult to enforce in all developments of 10+ homes. I recommend including this as an aspiration in the 'Future Plans' section of the NDP.
- 9. Policy GP08 Sustainable Development**
The aims of this policy are achievable however, clarification whether development is to achieve all or some of the criteria is necessary here. Out of date terms are used such as 'Sustainable Urban Drainage' and should be replaced with 'Sustainable Drainage Systems'. It is recommended to remove words such as 'generally' as this adds ambiguity for a decision maker.
- 10. Policy HO01 Housing Tenure and Mix**
Criterion a) is too vague and b) repeats affordable housing policy in the DaSA, albeit without a relevant threshold. It is recommended that a) sets out the type of housing that has been identified in the housing needs survey. Criteria b) should be removed from the policy. This policy suggests that all applications will be supported if they meet criteria a) and b) which it is not believed is the intent of the policy.
- 11. Policy HO02 Rural Exception Sites**
This policy does not expand on policy DHG2 in the DaSA and in fact is less detailed than that which is contained within it. References to the emerging DaSA should be removed as they are out of date.
- 12. Policy EN01 Land Management**
It is not clear what is meant by 'unacceptable impact'. This does not expand on DaSA policy and it is recommended it is deleted or criteria added to shape the policy around local issues.
- 13. Policy EN02 Natural Environment Protection**
This policy does not expand on local/national policy. It is recommended that inserting criteria which specifically protect identified natural capital of the villages.
- 14. Policy EN03 Green Infrastructure: Footpaths and Bridleways**
This policy is essentially requesting maintenance and would sit better in the 'aspirations' section of the BNP. It is unclear if it applies to all new development and how it would be enforced.
- 15. Policy EN04 Dark Skies**
Question is made as to whether this policy is enforceable as much outside lighting will not require planning permission. The policy should be clearer as to when the criteria would apply. There are no other dark skies policies in 'made' neighbourhood plans in Rother District. In Lewes District, Seaford and Ditchling, Westmeston and Streat Neighbourhood Plans contain policies which refer to the protection of dark skies, as the parishes are partly located in the South Downs National Park. The SDNP is designated as an International Dark Sky Reserve and this provides the background evidence the policies require. The AONB has not been given a dark skies designation and therefore further evidence is required to support this policy.

- 16. Policy EN05 Historic Landscape Environment**
This policy repeats local/national policy. It would read better if it was positively worded, with criteria setting out what would be supported.
- 17. Policy EN06 Integration of Landscaping**
No comments.
- 18. Policy IN01 Pedestrian Safety**
The policy suggests all development will be supported if it meets the criteria of this pedestrian safety policy, which is unlikely to be its intent. It is unclear whether the intent is to have all criteria complied with. It is also muddled between DDA requirements and highways improvements.
- 19. Policy IN02 Parking**
This policy repeats the East Sussex County Council parking standards which all planning applications must already take into account. It is recommended that the policy is deleted.
- 20. Policy IN03 Supporting Businesses**
It is not clear what is meant by 'isolated' sites and how this policy sits with the development boundary policy (GP04) where development outside development boundaries will not be supported. This creates an internal conflict within the BNP. It also infers that proposals for development of new or existing businesses which are not isolated will not be supported and this is unlikely to be the intention of the policy.
- 21. Policy IN04 Retention of Business Premises**
The policy repeats local/national policy and is therefore unnecessary.
- 22. Parish Council Rolling Plan**
This section is set out like the minutes of a Parish Council meeting and is not suitable for a development document in this format. It will become quickly outdated and it is unclear in many cases what the aspiration is. It might be more useful and relevant if fewer aspirations under each heading are selected and expanded on with more detail. Rye NDP has a good example of a community aspirations section for proposals which do not concern land use.

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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Economic Recovery Action Plan

Report of: Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration

Cabinet Member: Councillor Bayliss

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To adopt the Rother Economic Recovery Action Plan

Decision Type: Key

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That the Rother Economic Recovery Action Plan be approved and adopted;

AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That the Economic Recovery Steering Group report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee every six months on progress against the actions set out in the Plan.

Reasons for

Recommendations: To provide a framework for the work programme of the Regeneration Team.

Introduction

1. Following the UK's six month lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Council began to gather information on how this has affected businesses in Rother. In June 2020, Cabinet asked that an Economic Recovery Steering Group (ERSG) be set up to consider the impact of the crisis on the local economy and agree a recovery strategy and action plan to be recommended to Cabinet and Council, that articulates the activities that the Council is able to undertake within our existing resources and powers and how we can support partners, businesses and third sector organisations to recover.

2. Following the gradual easing of the lockdown measures from June 2020 onwards, businesses began to reopen whilst adhering to social distancing measures. These measures have had a significant effect on the financial forecast of many businesses as it has reduced capacity and, in some cases, has required significant capital spend for businesses to be classed COVID secure.

3. East Sussex County Council commissioned consultants to write the East Sussex Recovery Plan on behalf of Team East Sussex (TES), the local federated board for the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The Districts and Boroughs have been consulted throughout this process and the TES plan has guided the development of Rother's own Economic Recovery Action Plan (ERAP).
4. Rother District Council (RDC) set up a Member led ERSG to focus on the ambitions articulated in the county-wide plan and to form an appropriate local response in the form of an action plan.
5. The county-wide plan, titled; *East Sussex Reset Six missions: Recovery as opportunity*, was formally adopted by TES in September. To ensure consistency, the Rother plan reflects the headline ambitions set out in the county plan, but with local targets and actions reflecting local needs and priorities.
6. The Rother ERAP will become the principal work plan for the RDC Regeneration Team as the Council continues to respond to the impact of COVID-19 and the implications of the virus on the economic prosperity of the district.

Analysis

7. The ERSG has held three virtual meetings; the first to review evidence including data gathered at national and local levels and consider the emerging county-wide plan; the second to consider local priorities and actions within the county-wide framework; and the third to sign off the final version of the Rother ERAP. A copy of the ERAP is attached as the Appendix 1 to this report.
8. The ERAP sets out six broad ambitions, reflecting the format of the county-wide plan. These are:
 - 1) Thinking local, acting local.
 - 2) Building skills, creating jobs.
 - 3) Fast-forwarding business.
 - 4) Better places, fuller lives.
 - 5) Cleaner energy, greener transport.
 - 6) The future is digital.
9. Conversations with businesses have identified some key areas for improvement:
 - lack of adequate connectivity;
 - immediate cash flow, some of which was eased though the Government grants and furlough;
 - job retention, again eased by furlough but still a significant challenge; and
 - risk to supply chains.
10. Nationally, unemployment has risen sharply between March and July with 2.7m claiming Universal Credit up 117% according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), with the youngest, oldest, and manual workers worst hit. This does not include figures for those furloughed, a scheme which comes to an end in October following which the unemployment figure will rise again.

Unemployment will continue to be a key challenge throughout the recovery period, as the long-term effects of lockdown and continued restrictions on business operations become felt, along with changes to the support offered by Government

11. Business advice and guidance has been available through the Growth Hubs and online, with the Growth Hubs monitoring and reporting regularly on the numbers and types of enquiries received.
12. Numerous local businesses have been supported through the various rates relief and discretionary grant funds administered by this Council, with a total of £26,305,750 in grant funding administered benefitting a total of 2,312 businesses. In addition, the Council agreed to defer rent payments for a large number of its commercial tenants to assist with their cashflow during the lockdown period.
13. The tourism and hospitality sectors have been particularly hard hit by lockdown measures. Our partnership work with 1066Country Marketing meant members of that organisation were given up to date information, guidance and signposting which members tell us was an important pillar of support for them. Through the Partnership we were able to feedback to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) issues around those that had slipped through the grant net and were unable to claim support which was later amended.
14. A COVID Culture forum was set up with weekly Monday meetings, allowing Districts, Borough and County officers to understand the impact on the cultural sector and respond to the DCMS with evidence of the effects of the pandemic in East Sussex.
15. Throughout discussions there has been a drive to maximise the opportunities that the situation presents and make the most of the low COVID infection rate that was seen in Rother during the first peak. As described in the county document “looking forward we believe we can create change and opportunity, not just recover”.
16. Whilst we know that at national level, cities are finding the need to work from home is having an impact on city centres, there is anecdotal evidence that smaller high streets are benefiting from commuters being based locally, bringing spend and a sense of community back to towns and villages.
17. The ERSG has also expressed the desire to extend the scope of the aspirations set out in Ambition 5, to embrace environmental impact across all ambitions and in all our projects.

Conclusion

18. The Rother ERAP will need to maintain a degree of flexibility as the long-term economic impact of the pandemic becomes clearer, and as the Council and partner agencies continue to work to minimise the negative impacts and maximise the positive impacts of COVID-19.

19. Cabinet is recommended to adopt the Rother ERAP, which should form the basis of the work programme for the Council's Regeneration team over the next two years.
20. The ERSG will continue to meet at six monthly intervals and a report created for the consideration of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to update on progress being made.

Financial Implications

21. There are no additional financial commitments against the ERAP actions.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration
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Appendices:	1 – Economic Recovery Action Plan
Relevant Previous Minutes:	-
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

**Rother District Economic Recovery Action Plan
Priority areas**

General:

- Though we have a specific Ambition focusing on low carbon and energy efficiency we will aim to consider impact to the environment throughout.
- We anticipate that people’s mental health is considered in all aspects of project development and delivery.
- We would expect at all times to follow procurement processes and enter into dialogue with local suppliers wherever possible.

The order given for the Ambitions below reflects that of the East Sussex Recovery Plan: East Sussex Rest.

AMBITION 1: Support businesses to recover, grow and ensure increased investment in the local economy

East Sussex Reset: Thinking local, acting local

Objectives:

- Create and safeguard local jobs
- Support local businesses to adapt, recover and grow
- Work to increase local public and private sector spend within the District.
- Capitalise on inward investment potential created by the COVID-19 crisis

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome
Be ready for a second / further waves of COVID-19 and possible future local lockdowns.	<p>Much of the lockdown infrastructure has now been put in place and can be picked up again should further waves occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of local infection rates. • Communications with Director of Health on local lockdown protocol. • Engage directly with businesses. • Be clear with any further public messaging via communications team. • Work with Environmental Health on guidance and possible additional prevention support. 	Continuous from now – immediate conversations with relevant officers.	Speedy decisions.
Help promote training from external providers.	<p>Direct information through the RDC website and social media platforms.</p> <p>Brief newly appointed communication officers to supply up to date information to local businesses.</p>	Started and will be ongoing.	Local businesses accessing recovery support.

Push for increased capacity at the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	Work with other Districts and Boroughs to support additional funding for Growth Hub expansion. Signpost more local businesses to Growth Hub for bespoke advice. Be clear on Brexit in readiness for January 2021.	Already flagged as an issue and additional staff employed.	More capacity to support businesses.
Support businesses to reopen and trade whilst conforming to government guidelines on social distancing and safety measures.	Employ two communications officers (six month contracts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor business feedback • Survey broadband speeds 	Started 1 October	Businesses are confident in their approach.
Work with Locate East Sussex to match premises to businesses relocating to Rother.	Propose to sponsors board research project to identify vacant buildings. Work with Locate to start discussion with leisure operators.		Maximise opportunity for inward investment.
Promote the 'Better Business for All' Toolkit on the Sussex Chambers of Commerce website	Toolkit adapted for local use - led by BES.	Continual promotion and adaptation.	
AMBITION 2: Retain our skills infrastructure, support employment, build workforce resilience			
East Sussex Reset: Building skills, creating jobs			
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand our local skills base to increase employment opportunity • Support young people into training and work • Increase digital inclusion and digital skills 			
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome
Future proofing with digital skills development.	Work with businesses who wish to develop or enhance their online presence. Work with James Wilkinson Digital Skills Partnership Co-ordinator to see what can be offered in Rother.	Started and will continue	Digital awareness and increased skills. Retail moving online.
Work with LEP sub groups to develop sector skills funding binds.	Cultural bid being developed around high streets. Be mindful of Shared Prosperity Fund.	October deadline on SSF round 2 Poss January announcement	Maximise grant funding into the District.
Provision of affordable childcare	RDC supporting the provision of affordable childcare across the District to ensure parity of access to work.	To be picked up in the BTSSG meeting as a	Equitable increase in employment by gender.

		starting point	
Opportunities for young people.	Work with Skills East Sussex and intermediary organisations: Sussex Chambers / Artswork, using the Kickstart scheme to develop six month job placements for young people. Encourage local businesses to get involved. Encourage local young people to apply. Encourage creative pathways through partnerships established in the Beeching Road studios.	October start applications Workspace from Spring 2021	Clear career pathways in creative industries.
Local Skills and Employment Plans alongside construction projects.	Implement RDC planning policy changes that introduce a standardised requirement for Section 106 to support skills and employment plans. Encourage pathways into construction with on the job training. Increase number of CSCS (construction skills certification scheme) cards. Increase number of work placements and apprenticeships offered. Work with our most local communities first.	Currently working with RDC Planning Policy on inclusion in next Local Plan.	Standardised method for S106 for employment and skills. Local construction opportunities improved through local development.
AMBITION 3: Re-start the leisure, hospitality, tourism, retail and cultural economy to get people back into work			
East Sussex Reset: Fast-forwarding business			
Objectives:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support jobs in these sectors • Help freelancers to access advice, funding and guidance • Maintain the status of the District as a visitor attraction through safe and sustainable tourism • Sector skills development • Be mindful of local community health and wellbeing as key to growth and prosperity 			
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome
Encourage and promote use of the kite mark: We're Good to Go to show businesses are COVID compliant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.visit1066country.com/visitor-information/were-good-to-go • RDC social media 	1-2 months	Businesses using kitemark as standard at 21/07/2020 = 59 signed up
Work with the De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with DLWP for safe reopening of public 	Aug-March	Staff brought off furlough.

to re-promote Bexhill as a visitor destination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> events with consideration for staff and public. • Ensure DLWP avoids further lock-down by closely managing the amount of activity offered. 		Some small amount of risk assessed activity. Building up to events re-starting in March 2021.
Event strategy paper from Overview and Scrutiny Committee to November Cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devolve events budget to towns and roll over unallocated funds from 2020. • Towns (Rye & Bexhill) to programme own events in 2021. 	November Cabinet Implement by spring 2021 onwards	Events budget devolved to Rye & Bexhill (Battle already devolved)
Christmas Campaign to encourage people to shop in local high streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If viable in line with Government social distancing measures - work with 18 Hours for a 'Streets of' feel using the 2019/20 events pot. • Work with Town Councils to animate high streets for Christmas. • Website to direct traffic. • Christmas markets (local suppliers). 	2-3 months	Officer lead in partnership with 18 Hours and town/parish councils.
Enhancing the 1066Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the project as detailed and agreed in the EAFRD funding application. 	By summer 2021	Renewed attention on the 1066 walk.
Pudding and Pathways Marketing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led by 18 Hours event company this project supports the RDC led 1066 pathways project by marketing businesses along the route. • Discussion with restaurants and eateries along the route. • Ensure all participating businesses support the 'Were Good to Go' kitemark. 	Spring 2021	Direct support to local business on 1066walk.
Support events spring summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call out to promoters early 2021 – work with neighbourhood services to manage expectations with regards use of RDC land. • Cabinet approval for Section 106 funds to support railways station poster campaign. 	January 2021	Events budget
Re-start of live performances / cinemas / outdoor markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support events with licences as necessary and use of RDC spaces. 		Promote the area with live events
Review of tourism businesses at the end of the summer season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with 1066 Country on a members survey to understand where tourism businesses find themselves at the end of the season. 	November 2020	Understand how businesses are likely to fare over winter.
Promote Julie's Bicycle accreditation to creative businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certification scheme, Creative Green, is the recognised benchmark for sustainability achievement within the creative industries. 		Ensure environmental impact is considered in adaptation strategies.

AMBITION 4: Adapt and improve places			
East Sussex Reset: Better places, fuller lives			
Objectives:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support high street changes and adaptation • Create safe social spaces • Maintain strong community led change working with community leaders and the voluntary sector 			
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome
Monitor the impact of the temporary road changes made by ESCC under the Emergency Active Transport Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall counts • Business interviews • Local surveys 	Six months	Have a clear understanding to the impact of the scheme
Bexhill Town Centre strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Resident Representatives. • Bexhill Town Centre SG to relook at consultant brief and appoint consultant to undertake work. • Share the learning from this piece of work with other Town Centres. 	Interviews September 1 SG meeting September 29	Resident voice on the SG Consider changes in High Street post COVID.
Reopening the High Streets Safely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Banners for Bexhill / Rye / Battle. • Employment of 2 x communications officers. • Monitor impact on high streets through footfall. 	Waiting on grant Start 1 October	Towns highlight they are open for business message. Bespoke guidance for businesses across Rother.
Push for investment in public realm to improve town centre environments	Keep aware of funding streams as they become available and make bits as and when appropriate.	Ongoing	Grant funding investment into Rother.
Work with communities to maximise the benefits of rural areas of Rother.	Work with Environment Officer to assess the viability of improving places' aesthetics through greening and rewilding, with associated wellbeing and health benefits as well as benefits for the wildlife.	Spring 2021	
AMBITION 5: Expand low carbon transport and energy infrastructure			
East Sussex Reset: Cleaner energy, greener transport			
Objectives:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware in all projects of the RDC carbon neutral target by 2030 • Encourage clean methods of transport 			
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome

Local Growth Fund (LGF) walking and cycling infrastructure packages in growth corridor areas.	Work with ESCC's 2020/21 and emerging 2021/22 capital programme for local transport improvements, supporting design and delivery of LGF funded walking and cycling packages for Bexhill.	12 months+	
Match economic goals with environment objectives already specified in the RDC environment strategy.	RDC Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (currently in draft) https://www.rother.gov.uk/consultations/draft-environment-strategy/	Strategy adopted September 2020; awaiting subsequent action plan	Aligning this action plan and subsequent regeneration strategies with the RDC Environment Strategy.
Reduce unnecessary commuting.	Supporting people to work at home bring life back into local village communities and reducing carbon emissions.		People supported to work from home.
Grow public transport network.	Lobby for continued, improved public transport service.		Public transport as a viable option across Rother.
Local Plan	Work with officers to highlight areas where carbon neutral areas of economic growth could feed into the Local Plan.		All future growth is considered for its environmental impact.
AMBITION 6: Capitalise on digital connectivity			
East Sussex Reset: The future is digital			
Objectives:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embrace the new digital landscape and use it to best advantage • Ensure our communities; businesses and residents, are digitally skilled • Work for digital access to all areas of the District 			
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome
Support push for 100% ultrafast broadband cover for the area	Promote the government Gigabit voucher scheme (rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small SME to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections).	Scheme runs until end 2021	Communities encouraged to collaborate and apply to the scheme.
Support push for 5G rollout across the District	With 5G now available in Brighton and Eastbourne we will continue to lobby for roll out in Bexhill. Look for government schemes to be involved with 5G opportunities.		5G roll out in Rother

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	2 November 2020
Title:	Wainwright Road Car Park
Report of:	Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation, and Regeneration
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Bayliss
Ward(s):	Bexhill Central
Purpose of Report:	To approve works improving the accessibility and appearance of Wainwright Road Car Park.
Decision Type:	Non-key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED: That a budget of £50,000 be allocated from the Car Park reserve for improvement works to Wainwright Road Car Park.

Introduction

1. In September 2020, East Sussex County Council (ESCC) implemented a Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) regime throughout Rother District. At the same time, and partly in response, Cabinet approved a variation to the District of Rother (off-street) Parking Places Order 2020 (Minute CB20/45 refers).
2. This new order amended charging scales at existing car parks throughout the district, including Wainwright Road Car Park, with the aim of mitigating the impact of CPE, whilst managing demand. As a result, it is anticipated that additional income will be generated, some of which can be used to upgrade and improve existing facilities.

Car Park Improvements

3. Wainwright Road Car Park is located just off Beeching Road, to the rear of Bexhill Police Station. This car park has been significantly underutilised for a number of reasons. Highway signage to this car park is poor with only a single sign at the junction of Beeching Road and Terminus Road providing motorists with directions. The surface, fencing, and signage within the car park and access footpaths are all also in need of refurbishment. Pedestrian routes between the main shopping areas and the car park are unclear and unsigned meaning that users of the Town Centre tend to favour other car parks such as the De La Warr Pavilion and Sainsbury's which are more well known.
4. It is proposed that the fences are repaired and painted, and there is a renewal of car park signage. It is also proposed that lighting in the car park is upgraded to provide a safer and more welcoming environment for users. The

Council will commission this work through a local contractor. It is estimated that this work will cost £30,000.

5. To encourage users of the Town Centre to park and walk it is proposed that new signs are placed at the junctions of Wainwright Road/Beeching Road, Beeching Road/London Road and Sackville Road/Terminus Road. Pedestrian signage will also be installed directing pedestrians to use Victoria Road and Reginald Road as the most appropriate route to the Town Centre. This element of the work will be undertaken by ESCC Traffic and Safety but will be funded by Rother. This work is estimated to cost up to £20,000. Appendix A details the proposed works.
6. There is also an alleyway leading direct to Terminus Road that abuts the rear gardens of the homes on Reginald Road. Improvements are required but there are complications relating to land ownership. Therefore, the Council should seek to deliver these improvements at a future point once ownership and maintenance responsibility can be established.

Conclusion

7. Given the new charging regime it is important that the Council improves its parking facilities to create attractive and welcoming facilities, particularly in those areas most affected by the introduction of CPE.
8. As the second largest car park with sufficient proximity to Bexhill Town Centre, Wainwright Road Car Park has the capacity to accommodate displacement from the changes to on-street parking. Therefore, it is recommended that a budget of £50,000 to be funded through the Car Park Reserve be approved for the works outlined above.

Financial Implications

9. Increased usage of Wainwright Road car park will generate greater parking revenue receipts.

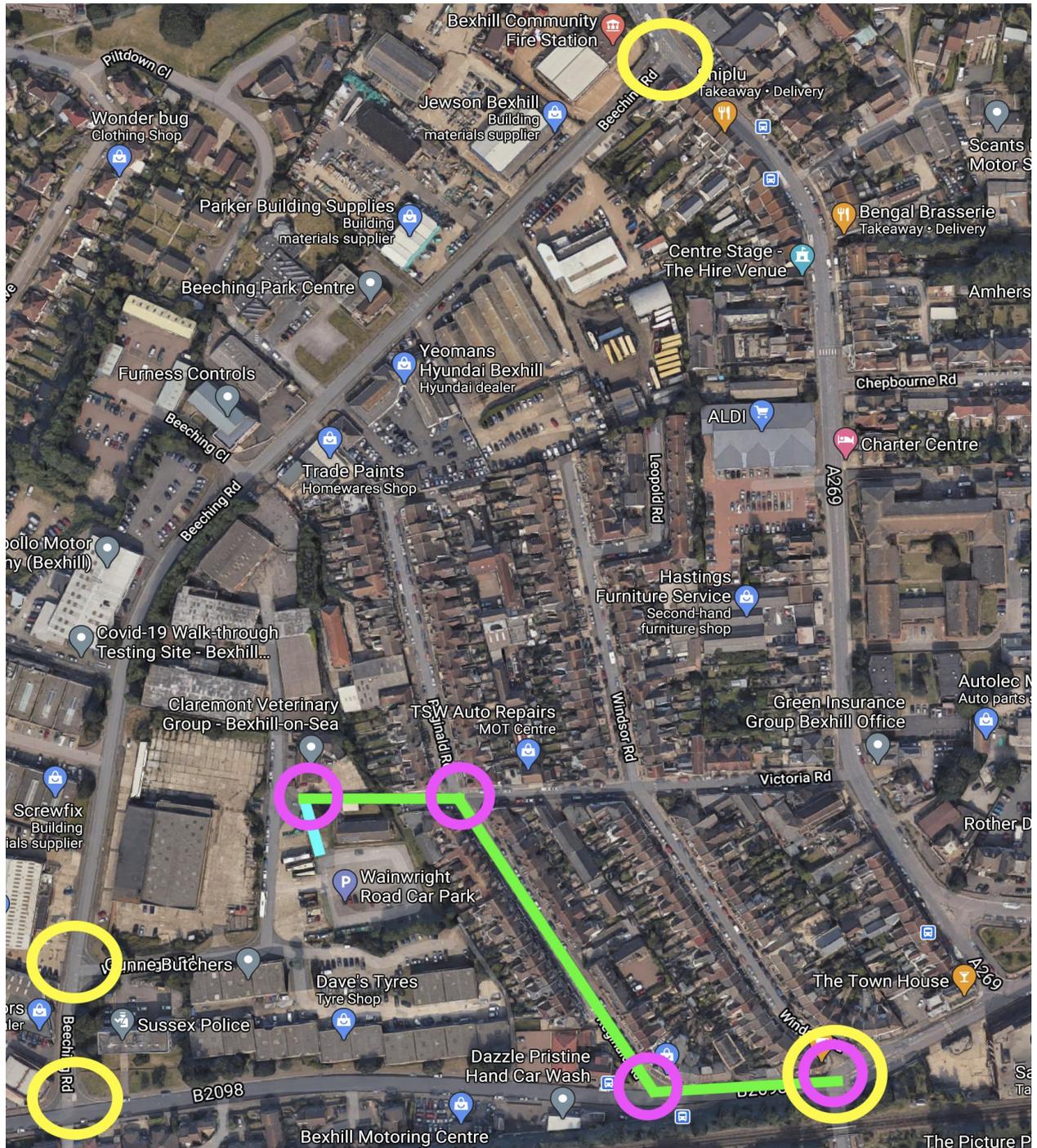
Environmental Implications

10. Encouraging use of this car park will reduce congestion within the Town Centre and improve pedestrian access to Bexhill's main shopping zones.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook, Head of Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration
e-mail address:	Ben.hook@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	A – Improvements Map
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB20/45
Background Papers:	None

Appendix A



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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 2 November 2020

Title: Discretionary Free Parking in Car Parks December 2020

Report of: Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community

Cabinet Member: Councillor Field

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To seek Members views on proposals to offer nine free parking days in Battle, Bexhill and Rye car parks during December 2020.

Decision Type: Key

Officer Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That Members views be sought on whether to agree nine free parking days in Bexhill, Battle and Rye town centre car parks during December 2020.

Reasons for Recommendations: To support the local business economy in the period leading up to Christmas.

Introduction

1. In previous years, the Council has granted three days of free parking to each town in the district during December. Officers have historically applied the existing delegated authority within the Council's Constitution that allows the award of up to seven days free parking annually (officer delegation 3.3.12). The actual dates of the free days have historically been selected by the Chamber of Commerce in each town to best meet their needs.

Proposal

2. The Council has received a request from Battle Chamber of Commerce to provide free parking on every Thursday and Saturday during December, equivalent to nine days. The Battle Chamber of Commerce has indicated that the measure would be beneficial for local businesses and encourage visitors to the town whilst enabling people to social distance by not limiting free parking to just three days as in previous years.
3. The average daily income from car park charging across Battle, Bexhill, and Rye is approx. £2,170 per day in total. Therefore, the Council would lose income of approximately £20,000 by providing nine free parking days in the town centres. Note that this is an additional £13,000 of lost income compared to a typical year where only three days free parking are provided.

Financial Implications

4. Car park income during 2020/21 has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic; current projections show an income shortfall in the region of £150,000 in 2020/21 due to reduced car park usage and the suspension of charges in all car parks between 26 March and 17 May 2020.
5. There is an added risk that the projected income shortfall could increase further during the second lockdown starting on 5 November 2020 and while the impact of Civil Parking Enforcement on off-street car parks emerges.
6. The impact of COVID-19 on the revenue of local businesses and the local economy has been significant to date and is likely to be made worse by the four-week lockdown planned for 5 November 2020. The intention is for lockdown measures to be eased in December 2020.

Conclusion

7. These proposed measures may encourage greater footfall in the town centres of Rother and support the local economy during December when lockdown restrictions may be eased.
8. Members views are sought on the proposals to offer nine days of free parking to the town centres of Battle, Bexhill and Rye during December 2020.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community
e-mail address:	joe.powell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	
Background Papers:	- None
Reference Documents:	Officer delegation 3.3.12 in the Constitution