

## Cabinet

Date and Time - **Monday 28 June 2021 – 6:30pm**

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

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### **Councillors appointed to the Committee:**

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

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on Monday 24 May 2021 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.

### **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.

### **6. CARAVAN SITES FIT AND PROPER PERSON FEES POLICY 2021 (Pages 1 - 4)**

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

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7. **POTENTIAL APPEAL COSTS - STRATEGY AND PLANNING** (Pages 5 - 8)
  - a) RR/2020/1822/P Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash; and
  - b) RR/2020/151/P Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove.
8. **RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANTI-POVERTY TASK & FINISH GROUP** (Pages 9 - 24)
9. **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY 2021-2025 (DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS)** (Pages 25 - 48)
10. **PROTECTING DISCRETIONARY SERVICES STRATEGY** (Pages 49 - 56)
11. **PERFORMANCE REPORT: FOURTH QUARTER 2020/21** (Pages 57 - 76)
12. **CORPORATE PROGRAMME 2014-2021 UPDATE AND CLOSE-OUT** (Pages 77 - 94)
13. **CORPORATE PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE AND CORPORATE PROGRAMME 2020-2027** (Pages 95 - 174)
14. **DISPOSAL OF LAND ADJOINING PAGES GAP, BEXHILL-ON-SEA** (Pages 175 - 178)
15. **EGERTON PARK LEASED TENNIS COURTS: DISPOSAL OF PUBLIC OPEN SPACE** (Pages 179 - 188)
16. **COUNCIL RESTRUCTURE** (Pages 189 - 194)
17. **ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT - DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RESTART GRANT SCHEME** (Pages 195 - 196)

Malcolm Johnston  
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 18 June 2021

**NOTE:**

Observers are kindly requested to watch the meeting live, via the YouTube broadcast and NOT attend the Town Hall in person, unless it is absolutely necessary. All observers present will be required to adhere to social distancing guidelines and wear a face covering at all times.

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Caravan Sites Fit and Proper Person Fees Policy 2021
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Service-Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Field
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To seek approval for a policy setting fees for maintaining a register of fit and proper persons to manage certain caravan sites.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Key
<b>Officer Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>Recommendation to COUNCIL:</b> That the Caravan Sites Fit and Proper Person Fees Policy 2021 be approved and adopted.
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 (as amended by section 8 of the Mobile Homes Act 2013) requires from 1 July 2021 that managers of caravan sites (not used for holiday purposes or otherwise not capable of being used all year round) are fit and proper persons. An application must be made including a fee set by the Council.

### Introduction

1. The Council licences caravan sites, which may be defined as for holiday use, permanent residential, mobile home or touring. New regulations commence on 1 July 2021 requiring the managers of mobile home parks to be fit and proper persons and for the Council to maintain a register of such persons. The Council licences four sites (130 units) that the new regulations would apply to. The Government has produced guidance to be followed in determining whether a person is fit and proper, including a Disclosure and Baring Service check.
2. A site owner under the Mobile Homes (Requirements for Manager of Site to be Fit and Proper Person) (England) Regulations 2020 (SI2020/1034) must apply to their local authority for the appointed manager to be added to the register of fit and proper persons managing sites in their area.
3. The Regulations permit the local authority to determine the fee for an application or registration for someone to be added to the register. An initial application fee and annual fee can be set.

4. Fees do not apply to sites used for holiday purposes or other non-permanent residential sites.
5. Charges are limited to recovering the costs of exercising the fit and proper person test function only.
6. The Council currently sets annual fees as set out below:

Relevant Protected Sites	Band				
	A (2 – 5)	B (6 - 24)	C (25 - 99)	D (100+)	E (Single unit sites and family sites)
Annual Fee	No Fee Charged	£185.00	£215.00	£235.00	No Fee Charged

### Fees Policy

7. The Council believes that fit and proper person assessment and/or checks to be included on the register will take from 120 to 150 minutes per application, including updating and publishing the register. On this basis the initial application fee is set at £70.
8. To cover the additional cost of monitoring the fit and proper person scheme, an additional annual fee for registration will be set at £0.50 per unit, to a maximum of £50, in accordance with Government guidance. No fee will be charged for smaller sites. The annual fee therefore to be charged from 1 April 2022:

Relevant Protected Sites	Band				
	A (2 – 5)	B (6 - 24)	C (25 - 99)	D (100+)	E (Single unit sites and family sites)
Annual Fee	No Fee Charged	£185.00 Plus £0.50 per unit for registration of fit and proper person	£215.00 Plus £0.50 per unit for registration of fit and proper person	£285.00	No Fee Charged

### Appointed Manager Fee

9. Where, with the consent of the site owner, the Council appoints an individual to manage the site, a fee of £100 will be incurred.
10. If an application to be included on the register is not approved the fee will not be refunded.

## Conclusion

11. It is recommended that the Council approves the Caravan Sites-Fit and Proper Person Fees Policy 2021.

## Financial

12. Contained within existing estimates.

## Legal

13. The Council has a statutory duty to licence caravan sites.

## Crime and Disorder

14. An effective licensing regime supports controlling crime and disorder in the district.

## Risk Management

15. The failure to have a valid policy may result in the Council's decisions being challenged.

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

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Appendix:	None
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/mobile-homes-a-fit-and-proper-person-test-for-park-home-sites">https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/mobile-homes-a-fit-and-proper-person-test-for-park-home-sites</a>

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## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Potential Appeal Costs – Strategy and Planning –

- a) RR/2020/1822/P Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash; and
- b) RR/2020/151/P Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove.

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

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Vine-Hall

**Ward(s):** Burwash and the Weald and Southern Rother

**Purpose of Report:** The purpose of this report is to outline the options and costs related to the defence of the appeals of the planning refusals and seek Cabinet agreement to the strategy.

**Decision Type:** Key

### Officer

**Recommendation(s):** It be **RESOLVED:** That the Planning Inspectorate be advised that the Local Planning Authority supports:

- 1) the Written Representations format in defending the Council's case for the appeal and application for full award of costs, in respect of 'Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash,' and that funding of up to £150,000 be set aside from earmarked reserves, to meet costs of defending the appeal; and
- 2) the Written Representations format in defending the Council's case for the appeal and any application for award of costs, in respect of 'Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight,' and that funding of up to £150,000 be set aside from earmarked reserves, to meet costs of defending the appeal.

### Reasons for

**Recommendations:** To ensure that the Council is prepared for the planning appeals.

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## Introduction

1. The purpose of this report is to advise Cabinet of the following refusals of planning permission and subsequent appeals:
  - a) RR/2020/1822/P Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash. Appeal has been lodged to the Planning Inspectorate along with an application for a full award of costs.

- b) RR/2020/151/P Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove. Appeal has been lodged to the Planning Inspectorate and likely to be accompanied by an application for an award of costs.

The potential costs for the defence of the appeals are set out below.

2. The appeals relate to the refusal of planning application:

- a) RR/2020/1822/P Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash which sought “*Reserved matters relating to residential development of 30 dwellings (outline permission RR/2017/582/P), conditions 1,2 and 3 together with the discharge of conditions 7 (foul and surface water drainage), 8 (parking and turning of vehicles), 9 and 10 (archaeology), 13 (levels) and 19 (landscaping).*”

This application was reported to and considered by the Planning Committee on 18 February 2021. The recommendation to the Committee was to approve Reserved Matters including details on drainage (in part), parking, archaeology, levels and landscaping. After discussion, the Planning Committee voted to overturn the recommendation and refuse the application.

- b) RR/2020/151/P Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove which sought “*Outline: Development of up to 43 residential units (including 40% affordable), including new vehicular access from Pett level Road.*”

This application was reported to and considered by the Planning Committee on 11 March 2021. The recommendation to the Committee was to grant outline planning permission, subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement. After discussion, the Planning Committee voted to overturn the recommendation and refuse the application.

### **Analysis / Details of the Proposals**

3. The Applicants (now appellant) for Strand Meadow has exercised their right to lodge an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and requested that it is considered by way of the Written Representations format. The Council is required to state its preferred appeal format. As Members will be aware having regard to the outstanding appeal for Spindlewood, the decision regarding whether the appeal is heard by written representations, hearing or public inquiry is taken by the Planning Inspectorate.
4. The Applicant (now appellant) for Fairlight is exercising their right to lodge an appeal to the Planning Inspectorate and has already started the procedure of preparing a Unilateral Agreement to accompany the appeal. At this stage it is unclear as to whether they will request the Planning Inspectorate to consider the appeal by way of the Written Representations, Hearing or Public Inquiry format. While the Council is required to state its preferred appeal format, the decision regarding whether the appeal is heard by written representations, hearing or public inquiry will be taken by the Planning Inspectorate.



## Appeal Options

5. Written Representations  
Officers could defend the Council's reasons for refusal by Written Representation. However, in both appeals officers would be likely to require additional expert advice to robustly defend the Council's case. This format would have the lowest cost but would still enable a robust defence of the appeal. The cost to appoint a consultant will vary for each case dependent upon the expertise required but could be in the region of £5,000 to £50,000. An additional contingency of a further £50,000 is also suggested in the unlikely event costs are awarded against the Council.
6. Hearing or Public Inquiry  
The Council's planning officers recommended that both applications be granted for the reasons set out in the relevant planning committee report. Consequently, it would not be possible, in a public forum and/or under cross examination (Hearing of Public Inquiry) for officers to robustly defend the Council's reasons for refusal. Therefore, if the appeal was heard at a Hearing or Public Inquiry the Council's case would need to be defended robustly by outside consultants with the input from Counsel (Barrister/Solicitor). Previous experience indicates that funding of up to £75,000 could be required to cover the costs of a planning consultant and Counsel. Costs are based on a 3-day inquiry and would be increased if longer was required.
7. In addition, no matter what the outcome, the Appellant could seek to claim their costs for all or part of the appeal. In advance of the Strand Meadow appeal, the Appellant has submitted a cost claim against the Council to the Planning Inspectorate. If successful, the Appellant's costs (in full) would likely be a similar amount to the Council's expenditure (cost). Therefore, a Hearing or Public Inquiry could cost the Council in the region of £150,000.
8. Not defend the appeals  
The Council could decide not to defend the refusals and therefore not incur the costs. However, some costs would be likely (yet unknown), as each appellant could seek to recover their costs incurred on abortive work to date in preparing their appeals.

## Conclusion

9. The appeal of the refusal, of both planning applications listed, RR/2020/1822/P Burwash and RR/2020/151/P Fairlight require a consideration of options and agreement of a strategy. As noted for Burwash, the Appellant has already requested Written Representations. The Council is requested to advise the Planning Inspectorate of its preferred format. The options are Written Representations, Hearing or Public Inquiry. It will ultimately be for the Planning Inspectorate to determine the format, but they are likely to agree to Written Representations if both the Appellant and Council support this format.
10. All three formats enable the Council to robustly defend the appeal, but a Hearing or Public Inquiry would lead to significant costs to the Council for the instruction of consultants and Counsel.

11. The Appellants could seek to claim their costs for the appeal, and these would be significantly higher for the Hearing and Public Inquiry format.
12. This report seeks Cabinet agreement for the Council to request the Written Representations format for both appeals. The report also seeks agreement for the defence of both appeals in respect of 'Land south west of Strand Meadow, Burwash', 'Land south of Pett Level Road, Fairlight Cove' should either be heard via Hearing or Public Inquiry, and to agree to funding being set aside to meet these eventualities, including any award of costs. For both appeals this could be in the region of £300,000.

### Financial Implications

13. In both cases there are significant financial risks if Rother District Council (RDC) was unsuccessful in defending the appeals. If RDC wins the appeal there will still be non-recoverable costs. If RDC chose not to defend the appeal there is a risk the Appellant will seek to recover costs incurred to date.
14. Members will be aware that if the Appellant, in both cases, wins the appeal against the decision then no New Homes Bonus Grant will be received. Based on the number of properties in the application, it is estimated that £200,520 of grant will be foregone for Burwash and £287,412 for Fairlight.

### Environmental Implications

15. Written representations will negate the need for parties to travel to and from the Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea, thus keeping the carbon footprint of the appeals process to a minimum. However, it is worth noting the Inspector will still need to visit the site.

### Legal Implications

16. The costs indicated do not include our legal services costs.

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
Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

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Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Recommendations of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group

**Report of:** Head of Service Housing and Community

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Byrne

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To consider the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2021, regarding the findings of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix C) should be read in conjunction with this report.

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

### Officer

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

- 1) an Anti-Poverty Strategy and Action Plan be developed for the district between partner services, led by the Council in partnership with Rother Voluntary Action and the Local Strategic Partnership;
- 2) the Council Tax Reduction Scheme Hardship Fund be reviewed by officers and report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on options for improving the promotion of the scheme and the potential of establishing a mechanism for public donations to supplement the Hardship Fund;
- 3) the maximum support under the Council Tax Reduction Scheme be increased above the current 80% when the Council achieves its financial stability ambition, as set out in the draft Corporate Plan; and
- 4) consultation takes place with the public and key stakeholders on improving access to Council Tax Reduction Scheme for self-employed people who are also carers and those self-employed residents who are registered disabled, as outlined in this report.

### Introduction

1. In January 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee approved the formation of an Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group (APT&FG) and set its Terms of Reference, attached at Appendix A. The aim of the APT&FG is to investigate the effects of income, health and housing poverty on local people and the local

services that support them. The original timetable for the activity of the APT&FG has been revised due to the impact of COVID-19.

2. The Council's emerging Corporate Plan 2020-2027 includes a number of objectives that aspire to improve the economic, housing, health and wellbeing outcomes of its residents; therefore, adopting measures and supporting local initiatives that address some of the causes of income, health and housing poverty (and alleviate its effects) will support the Council in its wider corporate ambitions.
3. The APT&FG held two events to gather evidence from external partners and internal Council colleagues to meet its objectives. The objectives are:
  - To undertake a review of the accessibility of appropriate financial products, including an analysis of the forms of less appropriate forms of credit and the extent of their use.
  - To assess how residents are educated about finances and consider what improvements can be made to financial literacy in the District.
  - To consider the impact of Council Tax Reduction policy and the accessibility of Council Tax Reduction to those experiencing financial hardship.
  - To consider the impact of Council administered discretionary housing benefit payments (DHP) its accessibility and the processes used to allocate DHP to those at risk of homelessness.
  - To investigate the availability of financial advice, homelessness advice, employment and training advice and the role of the Council in supporting these.
  - To investigate the availability of affordable fuel, food and other provisions and the Council's role in supporting these.
4. The first event was held on 17 November 2020 and invited a range of partner agencies to inform the APT&FG of the extent of poverty locally. The APT&FG asked the agencies invited to summarise the services they offer and provide details of the types of service user that access their services. The APT&FG also invited partner agencies to describe the main challenges service users experience in relation to poverty and where the main gaps in service provision exist.
5. The second event was held on the 9 December 2020 and focused on examining the role of Rother District Council (RDC) services. The APT&FG received presentations from the Council's housing needs, revenue and benefits and environmental health services and explored how these might be delivered differently to relieve poverty.
6. There was also a presentation to Members on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme delivered by the Council's technical consultant on the 27 April 2021. This summarised the range of CTR schemes nationally and how the Rother scheme compared.
7. The evidence gathering sessions provided reassuring evidence of the levels of commitment from the professionals present to alleviating the symptoms of poverty. There is a great deal of service activity locally and an impressive level of knowledge and expertise within both Council and partner services. In addition, Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) is commissioned to support the voluntary and community sectors and successfully coordinates much of the

existing activity in this area. The existing partnership between RVA and RDC is effective and successfully coordinates the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), providing a forum where voluntary and community agencies can collaborate with statutory partners.

8. However, the evidence gathering sessions identified areas for improvement in how Council and partner services are delivered. The way in which services are coordinated is sometimes disjointed and there was evidence of service duplication, particularly in the provision of benefits and budgeting support. In addition, while a wide range of specialist services are available to residents, they are not always delivered in a way that makes them accessible so that crisis situations can be prevented from developing; and finally, the way in which service information is promoted to service users and between professionals is uncoordinated at times and very focussed online. A multi-agency Anti-Poverty Strategy may well offer partners a means of achieving improvements in these areas.

### **Evidence Gathering**

9. The two events underlined to Members that the causes of poverty are complex and driven by a range of interrelated forces across income, health, housing, employment and education. Good working relationships exist between many of these services, notwithstanding the scope for improvement that has been identified; for example, the Local Strategic Partnership is a well-established forum delivered between RDC and RVA and has already identified many of the needs relating to income, health, food and housing poverty in the past; further, the Council already commissions benefits and budgeting advice services through Citizens Advice, as well as specialist legal advice to alleviate poor landlord practices through BHT Sussex.
10. The APT&FG was able to address at least three of its objectives through the process of listening to evidence from the range of providers that attended the first event. The APT&FG heard from local providers, who described using their specialist knowledge and expertise to successfully deliver a range of services to a large cohort of service users. The relative accessibility of financial products as well as the levels of financial literacy in the district are understood by these specialist partner services and there does not appear to be a gap in these expertise; further, there is seemingly no shortage of available housing and employment advice in the district.
11. The second event focused on the Council's housing needs, revenue and benefits and the private sector housing team services. A series of briefings were delivered to Members, describing the detail of the services the Council offers to residents. In a similar vein to the first event, it was noted that the Council provides a great deal of advice and support in these areas; however, the modes of service delivery are perhaps reactive and designed to be administratively efficient rather than to be accessible. It was also identified that these services could be more proactively promoted to residents, Members, and other service providers.
12. However, there was plenty of evidence to suggest that some families are routinely being forced to choose between heating their homes, feeding themselves or paying their rent. In addition, the level of unmet need – while unquantified – is very likely to be high, given the increase in food bank use,

presentation to benefits advice services, and levels of homelessness in recent years and more recently following COVID-19. It was also identified that the stigma associated with poverty makes some residents reluctant to seek help or 'be seen' to access services from a location associated with supporting those experiencing hardship.

## **Challenges**

### Service Coordination

13. The two events held identified challenges relating to the coordination of services and the confusion experienced by service users forced to navigate between an array of statutory, voluntary and community services. In addition, there did seem to be some evidence of a duplication of services.
- There are a high number of services available locally and there was concern that these may not be being coordinated between service providers and commissioners effectively at strategic levels.
  - There was evidence that there is no group locally coordinating the operational delivery of benefits advice, homelessness support, housing quality and food and fuel poverty services.
  - Every contact counts: a similar concern that front-line staff did not know what services are available locally and are unable to advise people holistically.
  - Barriers to data sharing need to be overcome so that organisations can share information between teams and organisations to share information to assist individuals effectively.
  - There is a strong link between financial and housing poverty and poor health outcomes and there is scope for greater coordination between support services and health providers.
  - The provision of affordable childcare is crucial in supporting access to employment as well as lifting children out of the effects of poverty through improved educational attainment.

### Service accessibility

14. Further challenges identified related to the accessibility of services and their promotion:
- Access to the internet is imperfect, particularly in rural areas and service providers should not assume internet access is effective across all demographics and geographical locations.
  - There is a lot of reliance locally on signposting individuals to services through online routes and the telephone when many vulnerable people may not be able to access online or telephone services.
  - Service locations are distant from one another and not always in convenient locations.
  - Rural areas are challenging places in which to deliver services; however, there is limited use of technology and utilising existing community locations such as parish / town council buildings to deliver services.
  - There needs to be an upskilling of RDC staff so that residents are provided with information and the right advice at the right time – making every contact count.

## Service promotion

- There is a low level of knowledge amongst professionals and service users of the existing East Sussex Community Information Service.
- Literacy levels among some is limited - with the average reading age being nine years old nationally - are services therefore reaching those with low literacy levels effectively, through written communication and promotion?
- There is an overwhelming amount of information produced that promotes different services and it is not coordinated through a central group that could target vulnerable groups collectively.

## **Solutions**

15. In addition to the challenges identified many solutions were proposed by attendees to the evidence gathering sessions, which are summarised here:

- **Hubs** – can we harness existing hubs and increase the number of services located together in different venues e.g. Council buildings, The Pelham, Citizens Advice Bureau.
- **Street sheet** – a leaflet summarising services and where they are located might support greater accessibility.
- **Making every contact count** – scale of activity and number of different services and grant-funding opportunities – we could inform the public and officers on the frontline what is out there more effectively.
- **Homelessness** – we might invest more in services that seek to prevent homelessness, particularly regards support with damp/disrepair and eviction.
- **Digital exclusion** – encourage parishes and community groups to open their offices to residents to access internet and support.
- Linked to the above is ‘virtual hubs’ and Zoom to improve access to services esp. rural residents.
- **Local Strategic Partnership** – logical vehicle for delivering an anti-poverty strategy – more partnership focused.
- **Communication** – a need to ensure services communicate in plain English and websites utilise software such as Recite, to support comprehension.
- **Philanthropy** – residents who can afford to make a donation to the Council to enhance the level of support provided to those in need of Council Tax relief; other councils have used such mechanisms as crowd funding.
- **Customer Services** – the Council’s Customer Services Team need to be up-to-date with all initiatives / grants / charitable organisations so they can advise residents and enable residents to access the support they require to access services effectively.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) & algorithms** – the use of AI and algorithms may improve accessibility and be less complicated than on-line forms that used algorithms to guide claimants; more assistance to those in community that have a learning disability.

## **Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

16. The CTR presentation in April 2021 illustrated that Rother is ahead of many local authority areas in having an income banded system in operation and that the level of financial support offered was typical. The income banded scheme had many advantages for the claimant and simplified the administration. Further work would be undertaken in time for any final decisions in June, to illustrate

the impact of increasing the amount of help given. It was, however, clear that moving towards a 100% CTR scheme would have significant implications on the Council and other organisations who receive a share of council tax revenue.

17. The APT&FG did however agree three actions to recommend to the OSC:
  - a. that the current CTR Scheme Hardship Fund should be reviewed and a plan for better promoting the scheme in the community be developed. In addition it was suggested that the Council should establish a donations page on the Council website to supplement the Hardship Fund.
  - b. that Cabinet be requested to consider increasing the maximum support under the CTR Scheme above the current 80% when the Council achieves its financial stability ambition, as set out in the draft Corporate Plan
  - c. that Cabinet be requested to consult with the public and key stakeholders on improving access to CTR Scheme for self-employed people who are also carers and those self-employed residents who are registered disabled. The current scheme reflected previous national benefits in assuming a minimum level of working and income. Experience has shown that the current scheme disadvantages those households where full-time work is not possible, and in particular where they are carers or where they are disabled. Details of the current scheme and the proposed changes are shown at Appendix B.

## Conclusion

18. It is clear from the evidence gathering sessions that the causes of poverty are multiple and complex and its symptoms wide ranging. The effects of poverty are felt by a range of different sectors of the community across different demographic groups and geographic locations. Therefore, strategic objectives should be developed between partner services alongside a Strategy Action Plan the delivery of which should be led by the Council and RVA, in partnership.
19. The recommended aim of the strategy is for statutory and community services operating in the Rother district to work together to reduce levels of poverty. The main objectives of the strategy are recommended as follows:
  - **Coordination:** develop local strategic commissioning and operational structures to coordinate services designed to alleviate poverty.
  - **Access:** maximise the accessibility of services so that those in the greatest need can be reached.
  - **Promotion:** promote information, advice and support to service users and professionals.
20. The delivery of the strategy is also a consideration and it is recommended that the development and delivery of the proposed strategy be coordinated in partnership with RVA through the Local Strategic Partnership.
21. Elsewhere on this Agenda the OSC will consider its Annual Work Programme and what Task and Finish Groups it wishes to maintain / re-appoint for the new municipal year. This will determine whether the resulting draft strategy will be considered by a further meeting of the APT&FG or reported back direct to the main OSC.



## Legal Implications

22. An Equalities Impact Assessment will need to be completed before a final Strategy is adopted.

## Environmental Implications

23. Current and future district environmental strategies and interventions will need to consider the needs of those experiencing poverty of access to adequate income, health, housing and education and ensure these needs are met.

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

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Appendices:	A – Terms of Reference – Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group B – Council Tax Reduction Scheme – Proposed Minimum Income Floor C – Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 June 2021
Relevant previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.

## Terms of Reference

### Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group

#### 1. Aims and origin

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

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

1.2 The aims of the Group are to:

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

#### 2. Objectives

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

#### 3. Background

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

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

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

#### 4. Resources

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

#### 5. Timetable

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

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

**Minimum Income Floor**

The minimum income floor affects those claimants who are currently self-employed. Financial support is given for a start-up period of one year after which it would be assumed that the claimant is achieving a minimum level of income when assessing CTR. This would be based on 35 hours multiplied by the National Minimum Wage and this is in line with the approach taken under Universal Credit.

It is proposed to amend the Minimum Income Floor as follows:

- For self-employed applicants with caring responsibilities for a vulnerable person (excluding care for dependent children) the Council will have the discretion to reduce the assumed hours worked from 35 per week to take into account the care and support being provided.
- For self-employed applicants who are lone parents, the income from self-employment will be calculated using the greater of either their actual income taken from their profit and loss accounts or 16 hours at the national living wage.
- For self-employed applicants who also undertake PAYE employment the Council will have discretion to use the number of self-employed hours at the national living wage that, when combined with the hours worked during the PAYE employment, does not exceed 35 hours per week.
- For self-employed applicants in receipt of a disability benefit, the income from self-employment will be calculated using the greater of either their actual income taken from their profit and loss accounts or 16 hours at the national living wage.

**Extract from the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme****20.0 Earnings of self-employed earners**

20.1 Subject to paragraph 20.2, 'earnings', in the case of employment as a self-employed earner, means the gross income of the employment plus any allowance paid under section 2 of the 1973 Act or section 2 of the Enterprise and New Towns (Scotland) Act 1990 to the applicant for the purpose of assisting him in carrying on his business unless at the date of claim the allowance has been terminated.

20.2 'Earnings' shall not include any payment in respect of a person accommodated with the applicant under arrangements made by a local authority or voluntary organisation and payments made to the applicant by a health authority, local authority or voluntary organisation in respect of persons temporarily in the applicant's care) nor shall it include any sports award.

20.3 This paragraph applies to –

- a. royalties or other sums paid as a consideration for the use of, or the right to use, any copyright, design, patent or trade mark; or
- b. any payment in respect of any
  - (i) book registered under the Public Lending Right Scheme 1982; or
  - (ii) work made under any international public lending right scheme that is analogous to the Public Lending Right Scheme 1982, where the applicant is the first owner of the copyright, design, patent or trade mark, or an original contributor to the book of work concerned.

## **21.0 Calculation of net profit of self-employed earners**

- 21.1 For the purposes of the average weekly earnings (of self-employed earners) the earnings of an applicant to be taken into account shall be:
- a. in the case of a self-employed earner who is engaged in employment on his own account, the net profit derived from that employment;
  - b. in the case of a self-employed earner whose employment is carried on in partnership or is that of a share fisherman within the meaning of the Social Security (Mariners' Benefits) Regulations 1975, his share of the net profit derived from that employment, less-
    1. an amount in respect of income tax and of national insurance contributions payable under the Act; and
    11. one-half of the amount calculated in respect of any qualifying premium; and
    111. £25, this deduction shall apply once only irrespective of whether a person is also employed or self-employed in a number of occupations. For the avoidance of doubt a single £25 per week disregard shall be granted to any claim. Irrespective of the household composition, the number of employed persons within the household or the type or number of employment (s) or self-employment(s).
- 21.2 The net profit of the employment shall be calculated by taking into account the earnings of the employment over the assessment period less any expenses wholly and exclusively incurred in that period for the purposes of the employment.
- 21.3 Subject to paragraph 21.4 no deduction shall be made, in respect of -
- a. any capital expenditure;
  - b. the depreciation of any capital asset;
  - c. any sum employed or intended to be employed in the setting up or expansion of the employment;
  - d. any loss incurred before the beginning of the assessment period;
  - e. the repayment of capital on any loan taken out for the purposes of the employment;
  - f. any expenses incurred in providing business entertainment, and
  - g. any debts, except bad debts proved to be such, but this sub-paragraph shall not apply to any expenses incurred in the recovery of a debt.
- 21.4 The authority shall refuse to make deduction in respect of any expenses where it is not satisfied given the nature and the amount of the expense that it has been reasonably incurred.
- 21.5 For the avoidance of doubt deduction shall not be made in respect of any sum unless it has been expended for the purposes of the business;
- 21.6 Where an applicant is engaged in employment, as a child minder the net profit of the employment shall be one third of the earnings of that employment, less an amount in respect of
- a. income tax; and
  - b. national insurance contributions payable under the Act; and
  - c. one-half of the amount in respect of any qualifying contribution; and

d. £25, this deduction shall apply once only irrespective of whether a person is also employed or self-employed in a number of occupations. For the avoidance of doubt a single £25 per week disregard shall be granted to any claim. Irrespective of the household composition, the number of employed persons within the household or the type or number of employments or self-employments.

21.7 For the avoidance of doubt where an applicant is engaged in employment as a self-employed earner and he is also engaged in one or more other employments as a self-employed or employed earner any loss incurred in any one of his employments shall not be offset against his earnings in any other of his employments.

21.8 The amount in respect of any qualifying premium shall be calculated by multiplying the daily amount of the qualifying premium by the number equal to the number of days in the assessment period; and for the purposes of this section the daily amount of the qualifying premium shall be determined

- a. where the qualifying premium is payable monthly, by multiplying the amount of the qualifying premium by 12 and divided the product by 365;
- b. in any other case, by dividing the amount of the qualifying premium by the number equal to the number of days in the period to which the qualifying premium relates.

21.9 In this section, 'qualifying premium' means any premium which is payable periodically in respect of a personal pension scheme and is so payable on or after the date of claim.

## **22.0 Deduction of tax and contributions of self-employed earners**

22.1 The amount to be deducted in respect of income tax under these sections shall be calculated on the basis of the amount of chargeable income and as if that income were assessable to income tax at the basic rate of tax applicable to the assessment period less only the personal relief to which the applicant is entitled under section 257(1) of the Income and Corporation Taxes Act 1988 (personal allowances) as is appropriate to his circumstances; but, if the assessment period is less than a year, the earnings to which the basic rate of tax is to be applied and the amount of the personal reliefs deductible under this paragraph shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.

22.2 The amount to be deducted in respect of national insurance contributions under this part shall be the amount of Class 4 contributions (if any) which would be payable under section 15 of the Act (Class 4 contributions recoverable under the Income Tax Acts) at the percentage rate applicable to the assessment period on so much of the chargeable income as exceeds the lower limit but does not exceed the upper limit of profits and gains applicable for the tax year applicable to the assessment period; but if the assessment period is less than a year, those limits shall be reduced pro rata.

22.3 In this section 'chargeable income' means-

- a. except where sub-paragraph (b) applies, the earnings derived from the employment less any expenses deducted; or
- b. in the case of employment as a child minder, one-third of the earnings of that employment.

## **23.0 Minimum Income Floor**

- 23.1 Where no start up period (as defined within 23.2) applies to the applicant and the income from self-employment of the applicant or partner is less than an amount determined by the national living wage per hour multiplied by 35 hours per week (the Minimum Income Floor), the income used by the authority in the calculation of their award will be substituted to that appropriate amount. This amount shall not be less than 35 x the national living wage, or where higher the number of hours declared by the applicant multiplied by the national living wage. From that, the authority will deduct only an estimate for tax, national insurance and half a pension contribution (where a pension contribution is being made).
- 23.2 The authority shall determine an appropriate start up period for the employment activity being conducted by the claimant or partner. This will normally be one year from the date of claim, or one year from the date of commencement of the employment activity, whichever is sooner. During this period no Minimum Income Floor shall be applied. The start-up period ends where the person is no longer in gainful self-employment.
- 23.3 Where a claimant or partner holds a position in a company that is analogous to that of a sole owner or partner in the business of that company, he shall be treated as if he were such sole owner or partner and in such a case be subject to the Minimum Income Floor where appropriate.
- 23.4 Ordinarily, no start-up period may be applied in relation to a claimant where a start-up period has previously been applied, whether in relation to a current or previous award of a Council Tax Reduction. The authority may allow a subsequent employment to qualify for a start-up period based on the previous history of the claimant and an assessment of such evidence that would support a decision to allow for a subsequent start up period.
- 23.5 In order to establish whether to award a start-up period, or at its discretion a subsequent start up period, the claimant must satisfy the authority that the employment is:
- Genuine and effective. The authority must be satisfied that the employment activity is being conducted.
  - Taking up at least 35 hours per week
  - Being conducted with the intention of increasing the income received to the level that would be conducive with that form of employment.
- 23.6 For the purposes of determining whether a claimant is in gainful self-employment or meets the conditions for a start-up-period, the Council will require the claimant to provide such evidence or information that it reasonably requires to make that decision, the Council may also require the self-employed person to attend an interview for the purpose of establishing whether the employment is gainful or whether the conditions for a start-up period are met.

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 7 June 2021****OSC21/06. RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ANTI-POVERTY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Members received and considered the report of the Head of Service Housing and Community which detailed the recommendations of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group (APT&FG).

The APT&FG was established in January 2020 to investigate the effects of income, health and housing poverty on local people and the local services that support them. The original timetable for the activity of the APT&FG had to be revised due to the impact of COVID-19.

The APT&FG held two events to gather evidence from external partners and internal Council colleagues to meet its objectives. At the first event, partner agencies were asked to summarise the services they offered and provide details of the types of service user that accessed their services. The APT&FG also invited partner agencies to describe the main challenges service users experienced in relation to poverty and where the main gaps in service provision existed.

At the second event, the APT&FG received presentations from the Council's housing needs, revenue and benefits and environmental health services and explored how these might be delivered differently to relieve poverty. There was also a presentation to Members on the Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme delivered by the Council's technical consultant on the 27 April 2021. This summarised the range of CTR schemes nationally and how the Rother scheme compared.

The evidence gathering sessions provided reassuring evidence of the levels of commitment from the professionals present to alleviating the symptoms of poverty. However, the sessions did identify areas for improvement in how the Council and partner services were delivered and it was suggested that a multi-agency Anti-Poverty Strategy may well offer partners a means of achieving improvements in these areas.

The two events underlined to Members that the causes of poverty were complex and driven by a range of interrelated forces across income, health, housing, employment and education. Good working relationships existed between many of these services, notwithstanding the scope for improvement that had been identified.

Challenges relating to the coordination of services and the confusion experienced by service users forced to navigate between an array of statutory, voluntary and community services were also identified and there was some evidence of a duplication of services. In addition, challenges related to the accessibility of services and their promotion were identified. Many solutions were proposed by attendees to the evidence gathering sessions which were outlined in the report before Members. The CTR presentation in April 2021 illustrated that Rother was ahead of many local authority areas in having an income banded



system in operation and that the level of financial support offered was typical. Further work would be undertaken in time for any final decisions in June, to illustrate the impact of increasing the amount of help given.

It was clear from the evidence gathering sessions that the causes of poverty were multiple and complex and its symptoms wide ranging. The effects of poverty were felt by a range of different sectors of the community across different demographic groups and geographic locations. Therefore, it was recommended that strategic objectives should be developed between partner services alongside a Strategy Action Plan, the delivery of which should be led by the Council and Rother Voluntary Action, in partnership through the Local Strategic Partnership.

Councillor Coleman, Chairman of the APT&FG, thanked Members of the Group for their hard work and paid tribute to the officers involved for their support.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted during the discussion:

- developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy was crucial to the leadership role of the Council;
- funding to improve transport services from areas such as Sidley would enable younger residents to travel to youth centres, part-time work and the college during the evenings;
- access to Universal Credit was key to supporting residents;
- the existence of a Hardship Fund gave access to forward payments whilst Universal Credit applications were being processed;
- although the work of the Group was completed for the moment Members were keen for the APT&FG to be revived to review the Strategy once in place;
- the Council's Customer Service Team were very knowledgeable and able to signpost residents to available services;
- the use of Artificial Intelligence was suggested which would enable residents to enter a problem onto the website and an algorithm would provide details of services available to assist;
- concerns were raised about increasing the maximum support currently provided under the CTR scheme, as all preceptors would be impacted, not just the Council. All would need to be consulted with and their views and comments considered by full Council when making any decisions; and
- public donations towards the Hardship Fund would be in addition to current arrangements, but would need to be explored by officers, as no mechanism to collect payments was currently in place.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 7).

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## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2025 (Disabled Facilities Grants)

**Report of:** Head of Service Housing and Community

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Byrne

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To consider the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2021, regarding the Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2025 (Disabled Facilities Grants). The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix 3) should be read in conjunction with this report.

**Decision Type:** Key

**Officer**

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

- 1) the Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2025 be approved and adopted; and
- 2) initially, £200,000 be allocated to the Discretionary Disabled Project Grant from the balance of Disabled Facilities Grant funds held in earmarked reserves.

### Introduction

1. The Council must have an adopted Financial Assistance Policy (FAP) to be able to provide Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) funding through the Better Care Fund (BCF). The proposed FAP can be found at Appendix 1.
2. The Housing Renewal FAP sets out the financial tools available to the Council for providing financial assistance to households and residents in Rother. The Council is required to have such a policy under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.
3. DFG are also included in this policy and are given to vulnerable clients to allow them to remain in their own home and remain independent.
4. It is also proposed that a new Discretionary Disabled Project Grant (DDPG) be introduced as part of the Policy to enable the Council to spend its full complement of BCF allocation and identified needs within the community be met. The use of the Council's annual DFG allocation will remain prioritised to meet the identified needs of individuals through mandatory and discretionary

grant awards; however, the DFG grant is regularly underspent, and the Council can therefore have regard for wider local needs.

5. The DDPG will invite applications from residents of Rother to improve and update disabled facilities for community-based buildings and groups. In addition, the Policy will allow the Council to make improvements to its own community assets, parks and open spaces where a need is identified and facilitate greater access to disabled residents and visitors to the district.
6. The expenditure on DFGs in 2019/20 was £1,186,860, enabling the Council to complete 129 adaptations. To deliver DFGs, the Council receives referrals from East Sussex County Council's (ESCC) occupational therapy team. The capacity of the occupational therapy team is limited and this can affect the number of adaptations delivered each year; this situation is replicated across East Sussex and much of the wider country. However, there does not appear to be unmet demand from qualifying residents for the mandatory grants.
7. As the DFG funding allocated through the BCF is ring-fenced for the purpose of providing disabled adaptations, the Council has a cumulative underspend within its financial reserves of approximately £1.3m. The Council's BCF allocation for 2021/22 is £1,844,806, an increase of approximately £650,000 on last years' allocation.

#### **Discretionary Disabled Project Grant (DDPG)**

8. The increased allocation of central Government DFG funding presents an opportunity to make better use of the discretionary powers granted to the Council by the Regulatory Reform Order and support innovative projects that can improve the lives of our disabled residents.
9. The Council has worked closely in recent years with the countywide Joint Approach to Housing Solutions Officer Group. The Group works in partnership with ESCC and Clinical Commissioning Groups to look at options for using grant money more flexibly. As a result, districts and boroughs in East Sussex are recommending that their financial assistance policies are revised to allow for greater flexibility, through measures such as the new DDPG proposed within the revised Policy. It is proposed that initially £200,000 is allocated to the DDPG from the balance of funds in earmarked reserves. Funds for the DDPG will only be allocated from previous year underspends in order to ensure the full allocation of the current year funding is available to residents for adaptations.
10. The DDPG will be accessed and administered in a very similar way to the Council's existing Community Grants Scheme. A panel of relevant Council officers, ESCC occupational therapist representatives and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homes will be formed to assess applications and award grant allocations. The total value of the grant available through the DDPG will be variable and dependent on demand for mandatory DFGs. Individual grant applications will be limited to £10,000. In exceptional circumstances, the value of individual grant awards may be increased.
11. The grant is intended to support smaller projects that are easily deliverable. The conditions of the DDPG will also be supportive, responsive, and uncomplicated so that the grant is accessible to as wide a range of groups and organisations as possible. However, applicants will need to evidence the extent of the need

for any proposed adaptation as well as illustrate what efforts have been made to secure funds from other sources and the reasons for these applications having been unsuccessful.

12. Further, the Council will not approve any grant unless the appropriate permissions and consents have been obtained. The contractual relationship regarding the works will be between the Applicant and the Contractor and the Applicant will be responsible for ensuring the works subject to the grant are carried out to the required standard. The Council will inspect any works to ensure they have been completed to required statutory standards.
13. A copy of the DDPG application form can be found at Appendix 2. The form includes the DDPG eligibility criteria and the types of adaptations the grant will support as well as the criteria against which applications will be assessed and grants awarded.
14. The types of adaptations for which grant will be awarded include, but are not limited to:
  - Disabled access – including ramping, wheelchair access, external step approaches, communal entrances.
  - Communal stair lifts.
  - Accessible playground/play for children with disabilities.
  - Sanitary facilities for disability and wheelchair users.
  - Toilets.
15. Applicants will be invited to provide responses to the following priorities against which scores will be given and grants awarded:
  - The proposed adaptation is needed and there is evidence that people with disabilities will benefit.
  - The proposed adaptation provides access to facilities or activities that are presently inaccessible to people with disabilities.
  - The proposed adaptation supports communities to promote active lifestyles that benefits physical and mental wellbeing.
  - To ensure the resilience of community and voluntary groups in the future.
  - To improve the safety of people with disabilities.
  - To support the local economy and businesses.

## **Conclusion**

16. It is recommended that the Council adopt the revised FAP. The Council must have an adopted FAP to be able to provide DFG funding through the BCF. DFGs are essential for improving the health and wellbeing of residents who experience disability and mobility impairments. The proposed Policy will allow the Council to continue to support residents by funding adaptations that improve access to their homes through the mandatory DFGs.
17. In addition, the new DDPG will allow the Council to maximise the use of its BCF allocation through more flexible use of the funds. Further, the Policy will allow the Council to harness these funds to make adaptations to its own estate and those public realm locations for which it is responsible. These new measures will provide greater access to public buildings, venues, parks and open spaces

for disabled people, supporting the local economy and improving the health, wellbeing and quality of life for residents and visitors to the district.

### Financial Implications

18. The financial implications are discussed in the main report.

### Legal Implications

19. Legal colleagues have and continue to be consulted prior to the adoption of the Policy proposed.

### Environmental Implications

20. The Housing Needs team endeavours to use local building contractors when undertaking necessary DFG works. The team will continue to review its approach to tendering such works in line with its broader objectives to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030.

### Equalities and Diversity

21. An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed to support the proposed Policy. The Policy proposals will benefit disabled groups and promote an equality of access to essential facilities and recreational activities that promote the health, wellbeing and safety of disabled groups.

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

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Appendices:	1 – Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2025 2 – DDPG Application Form 3 – Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 June 2021
Relevant previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 7 June 2021****OSC21/07. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE POLICY 2021-2025 (DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS)**

Members received the report of the Head of Service Housing and Community which outlined a revised Financial Assistance Policy that set out the tools for providing housing renewal assistance as required by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) England and Wales Order 2002. The Council was required to adopt a Financial Assistance Policy to be able to provide Disabled Facilities Grant funding through the Better Care Fund (BCF). The proposed Financial Assistance Policy was attached at Appendix A to the report. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were also included in the policy and were given to vulnerable clients to allow them to remain in their own home and remain independent.

It was also proposed that a new Discretionary Disabled Project Grant (DDPG) be introduced as part of the Policy to enable the Council to spend its full complement of BCF allocation and identified needs within the community be met. The use of the Council's annual DFG allocation would remain prioritised to meet the identified needs of individuals through mandatory and discretionary grant awards; however, the DFG grant was regularly underspent, and the Council could therefore have regard for wider local needs.

The DDPG would invite applications from residents of Rother to improve and update disabled facilities for community-based buildings and groups. In addition, the Policy would allow the Council to make improvements to its own community assets, parks and open spaces where a need was identified and facilitate greater access to disabled residents and visitors to the district.

The increased allocation of central Government DFG funding presented an opportunity to make better use of the discretionary powers granted to the Council by the Regulatory Reform Order and support innovative projects that could improve the lives of disabled residents.

DFGs were essential for improving the health and wellbeing of residents who experienced disability and mobility impairments. The proposed Policy would allow the Council to continue to support residents by funding adaptations that improved access to their homes through the mandatory DFGs. In addition, the new DDPG would allow the Council to maximise the use of its BCF allocation through more flexible use of the funds and the Policy would allow the Council to harness these funds to make adaptations to its own estate and those public realm locations for which it is responsible.

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were noted in the discussion:

- to avoid any confusion, the application pack sent out for the DDPG should be clear that applications made were to be for the benefit of

- community-based buildings and groups, rather than private residences or individuals; and
- the Councillor named in support of the application to be amended to state the Ward Councillor.

(Councillor Maynard declared a Personal Interest in this matter as an Executive Member of East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 8).





# **Housing Financial Assistance Policy 2021-2025**

## **Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002**

Housing Services  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill on Sea  
East Sussex TN39 3JX  
01424 787000

June 2021

## 1. Background

### Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy

- 1.1 The Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy sets out the financial assistance tools for providing housing renewal assistance. This is a requirement under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) England and Wales Order 2002

### Resources

- 1.2 Financial assistance measures are subject to available limited resources, with the exception of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, financial assistance measures are DISCRETIONARY.
- 1.3 The mandatory disabled facilities grant is subject to a test of resources set by the Government.

### New measures – the need to offer flexible assistance (Better Care Fund)

- 1.4 Rother District Council may develop alternative options to the stated assistance available within this policy.
- 1.5 The Corporate Management Team in consultation with the portfolio holder with responsibility for housing has discretion under this policy to introduce and develop assistance that enables existing and new sources of funding to be targeted at eligible clients. This includes setting bespoke conditions and eligibility criteria.
- 1.6 The key aim of this section is the need to respond quickly to proposals, schemes and funding offered from time to time by other agencies and partner organisations.
- 1.7 From time to time resources may be targeted at specific areas and therefore some assistance measures will be unavailable. Up to date information will be provided on the Council's website or will be available from the Housing Team.

## 2. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

- 2.1 The Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) remains a mandatory grant as prescribed by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. **Applications for this grant will be determined in accordance with current legislation, guidance, and good practice guides.**
- 2.2 The following is a summary of the main criteria the Council will consider when allocating a mandatory grant. The detailed conditions of the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant can be found at Appendix A.
- 2.3 The adaptations to the property must be considered necessary and appropriate for one or more of the following purposes:

- a) Facilitating access to and from the dwelling or building by the disabled occupant.
- b) Making the dwelling or building safe for the disabled occupant.
- c) Access to the principal family room by the disabled occupant.
- d) Access to or providing a bedroom for the disabled occupant.
- e) Access to or providing a room containing a bath or shower for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
- f) Access to or providing a room containing a toilet for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
- g) Access to or providing a room containing a wash hand basin for the disabled occupant or facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such a facility.
- h) Facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled person.
- i) Improving or providing a heating system for the disabled person
- j) Facilitating the use of power, light, or heat by the disabled person by altering same or by providing additional means of control.
- k) Facilitating access and movement around the dwelling to enable the disabled person to provide care for someone

### Maximum

- 2.4 The maximum level of grant available per application is set by statute at £30,000 at present. The amount of grant will include all relevant works, reasonable fees, and VAT. Where the cost of the work is less than the maximum grant limit the grant will be the cost of the works less the assessed contribution. Where the cost of the work exceeds maximum grant limit, the grant will be the maximum grant limit less the assessed contribution.

### Eligibility

- 2.5 Applicants for a Mandatory DFG must be either the owner or a tenant of the property to be adapted and the disabled person must be registered or registerable with the welfare authority.
- 2.6 The disabled person and any partner are means tested to determine the amount of their contribution towards the cost of the works. If the disabled person is a child, the parents are no longer means tested.
- 2.7 An Owner-Occupation Certificate or Certificate of Intended Letting is required as evidence of occupation.
- 2.8 The Council operates a priority scoring system to help manage demand for assistance.

### Property Charges

- 2.9 The Local Authority may place limited charges on adapted properties of owner occupiers, where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000, limited to a maximum charge of £10,000. The charge will be incurred if the property is sold within ten years.

### **3. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant – top-up assistance**

- 3.1 A discretionary payment to provide top-up assistance to a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant where the council has taken the view that the amount of assistance available under mandatory DFG is insufficient to meet the needs of the disabled person and their family.
- 3.2 There is a £30,000.00 limit on top-up assistance.
- 3.3 The eligibility criteria for top-up assistance is the same as the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.

#### Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance (DDFA)

- 3.4 Discretionary Disabled Facilities Assistance (DDFA) will be considered necessary and appropriate when the adaptations will make the dwelling suitable for the accommodation, welfare, or employment of the disabled person with relation to the Better Care Fund.
- 3.5 There is a £30,000 limit on the amount of grant that can be awarded per application. Where the cost of the work is less than the maximum limit of £30,000 the assistance will be the cost of the works less the assessed contribution.
- 3.6 Priority for DDFA shall be given to persons who are in receipt of an income related benefit, i.e.
  - Income Support.
  - Universal credit.
  - Housing Benefit.
  - Working Tax Credit and/or Child Tax Credit (where your annual income for the purposes of the tax credits assessment was below £15,050).
  - Guaranteed Pension Credit.
  - Income Related Employment Support Allowance not contribution-based ESA alone.
  - Income based Jobseeker`s Allowance not contribution based JSA alone.

### **4. Disabled Persons Relocation Assistance (DPRA)**

- 4.1 In situations where major adaptations to a property under a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant are not considered cost effective and where the Applicant would consider relocating to a previously adapted or more adaptable property: a Disabled Persons Relocation Assistance (DPRA) may be appropriate
- 4.2 The maximum DPRA grant that will be awarded is £5,000 and is intended to contribute to the cost moving accommodation, for example, estate agent fees, legal costs, surveyor fees, removal costs
- 4.3 Eligible applicants for a DPRA grant must be the owners of the property, which is not cost effective to adapt, and the disabled person must be registered or registerable with the welfare authority. For each case, a cost benefit analysis will be undertaken taking into account the potential cost of adapting the existing property and of adapting any future property in relation

to the amount of DPRA provided. It is unlikely that any relocation assistance will be payable if the eligible Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt the new property exceeds £20,000.

- 4.4 Further, eligibility will depend on the Applicant meeting the criteria for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant. Priority shall be given to persons who are over 60 and are in receipt of a benefit that would enable them to be eligible for home maintenance assistance.

**Conditions:** 10-year repayment period if paid by grant, if property sold or otherwise disposed of or parted possession with, registered as a land charge. Separate repayment conditions if assistance is paid by means of loan/equity release registered as a land charge.

## 5. Discretionary Disability Project Grant (DDPG)

- 5.1 The Council's Discretionary Project Grant (DDPG) is designed to provide grant funding for community disability projects to eligible voluntary/community groups, parish councils, faith groups, non-for-profit organisations, and individuals.
- 5.2 The grant is designed to fund/assist the above groups to provide or upgrade suitable disability-based schemes that will improve the health and wellbeing outcomes/access for disabled residents in Rother.

### Summary of Scheme

- 5.3 The Council's Discretionary Disability Project Grant (DDPG) scheme is designed to be supportive, responsive, and uncomplicated for organisations delivering community-based activities and services.
- 5.4 The grant is intended to support smaller projects that are easily deliverable. A summary of the DDPG is detailed below:
- Your Local District Councillor will decide whether to support or decline your request for grant funding.
  - You must contact your Local District Councillor to discuss your project and to receive an application form.
  - The proposed project will be discussed by a Council team comprising of the portfolio Council Member for Housing, Rother Equalities Officer, Senior Rother Occupational Therapist, and a Disabled Grant Officer.
  - Each project proposal will be approved or declined by the above panel.
  - The amount of grant funding is dependent on a case by case basis, however, is capped at £10,000
  - Match funding is not required but may be requested by the Council.
  - Applications received will be checked for compliance and scored against the scheme criteria. Applications which do not comply with the criteria will be rejected.
  - Projects must be completed within 12 months of funding being awarded.
  - The grant can be paid in advance or at completion of the project.
  - The Council is not responsible for project managing any scheme. It is the Applicant's responsibility. The Council will, however, inspect completed schemes for compliance and suitability for Disabled Residents. A Notice of Approval of Application will be provided.

- The above grant is discretionary and as such is subject to capital funds being available. For this reason, the provision of this grant may be limited or discontinued at any time.

### Eligible Works

5.5 The following types of work will be eligible for the scheme.

- Disabled access – including ramping, wheelchair access, external step approaches, communal entrances.
- Communal stair lifts
- Accessible playground/play for children with disabilities.
- Sanitary facilities for disability and wheelchair users
- Toilets

### Amount of Grant

5.6 All applications will be considered, depending on available discretionary funds, at the time of application. There will be a cap of £10,000, however, applications over this amount will be considered in exceptional circumstances.

### Conditions

- The Council will not approve any grant unless the appropriate permissions and/or consents have been obtained, e.g. planning permission, listed building consent, building control approval etc.
- Unforeseen/additional funding over and above the original grant amount will not be considered.
- The payment of any grant issued is conditional upon the eligible works being carried out to satisfaction of the Applicant and council. Upon receipt by the Council of an acceptable invoice as well as any certificates required, all payments will be made direct to the nominated person.
- The Council will consider requests for interim payments if they are requested prior to works commencing. This would usually be a request of up to 50% of the total grant issued.
- It is the responsibility of the Applicant to obtain quotes for the works requested – three quotes are required for works over £3,000. The legal contractual relationship regarding the works to be carried out is between the Applicant and the contractor, and not between the Council and the contractor. Where the approved works undertaken must be insured, the contractor must provide a recognised warranty for any works.
- The Council does not undertake or accept responsibility for supervision and the standard of the work. You/ your group/your organisation is responsible for ensuring that the works subject to the grant are carried out and to the required standard.
- Applications will be usually be determined within 60 working days of receipt provided that the application is complete. If information is missing, the Applicant will be contacted and advised as to what is required. However, we may take longer to determine an application, to ensure the best use of our financial resources.

**The Application Form for Community Grant can be found at Appendix B of this Policy.**

## Conditions: Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant

### *General conditions*

1. Applications for assistance shall be made on the appropriate Council application form and be accompanied by all supporting documents as required.
2. The council will not approve any application for assistance if the relevant works have started before the application is approved
3. Sections 38, 40, 41, 42, 43 and 51 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 apply.
4. It is a condition of the Disabled Facilities Grant that the Applicant shall notify the Council immediately if equipment installed with grant assistance is no longer needed. Subsequent to this the council may upon providing 21 days written notice access the dwelling in order to inspect the equipment and, where appropriate, remove it.
5. The payment of any assistance is conditional upon any eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the council and upon receipt by the council of an acceptable invoice for the works carried out and any ancillary charges or services. All payments will be made direct to the contractor or other agency involved in the provision of any assistance. The Council may, in certain circumstances, make payments to applicants in the form of an instrument (cheque) made payable to the contractor.
6. Payment of any assistance is also conditional on the Applicant taking all reasonable steps when appropriate to pursue any relevant insurance claim or legal claim for damages in which the cost of the works to the dwelling to which the assistance relates is part of that claim. The Applicant shall repay to the Council any assistance so far as is appropriate out of the proceeds of that claim.

### *Funding*

7. Budget set on annual basis comprising of specific government allocated funding via Communities and Local Government Department, and a council funded contribution.

### *Property Charges:*

8. The Local Authority may place limited charges on adapted properties of owner occupiers where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000, limited to a maximum charge of £10,000. The charge will be incurred if the property is sold within 10 years.

## **Discretionary Assistance**

### **Eligibility Conditions**

1. Applications for assistance shall be made on the appropriate Council application form and be accompanied by all supporting documents as required.
2. There is a two-year prior residency requirement and the property must be over 10 years old (does not apply to empty homes/disabled adaptation assistance).
3. Any eligible works are to be carried out in accordance with any specification the Council decides to impose.
4. In applying for assistance, the Applicant(s) are to allow the Council to undertake any steps and enquiries (including external organisations) as they see fit to verify the application, including financial.
5. Works that should be covered by buildings or contents insurance are not eligible. The Council require the Applicant to take all reasonable steps to pursue any relevant claim and to repay the assistance, so far as appropriate, out of the proceeds of such a claim. This condition applies where the relevant claim is an insurance claim, or a legal claim against another person, in respect of damage to the premises to which the assistance relates, or a legal claim for damages in which the cost of the works to premises to which the assistance relates is part of the claim.

### **Approval Conditions**

6. The Council will not approve any application for assistance if the relevant works have started before the application is approved.  
  
(Except disabled person relocation assistance: the grant will usually be approved when confirmation of ownership of the `new` property has been received by the Council. A request for payment can be submitted immediately because most of the costs incurred in moving will have already been incurred.)
7. Where a certificate of owner occupation accompanies an application it is a condition that the dwelling is occupied in accordance with the intention stated in the certificate for the period specified from the certified date of completion of the works. This condition will become binding on any person who is for the first time being the owner of the dwelling (may not apply to empty homes/landlord assistance).
8. It is a condition that the Applicant and grant recipient are required to notify the council of any possible breaches of the above certificates and to give the council any information reasonably requested of them by the Council in that connection. The Council may at any time serve notice upon applicants requiring them to provide within 21 days a written statement showing how the conditions are being met.
9. The assistance is repayable during the specified repayment period if the property is sold or otherwise disposed of or parted possession with; or if there



is a breach of the certificate of owner occupation, certificate of intended letting and tenancy referral agreement/nomination agreement. The assistance is registered as a land charge.

10. Clause that applies for charges registered at HM Land Registry

I `In consideration of the Lender in exercise of its powers under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 providing assistance for adaptation or improvement to the Property the Borrower hereby Charges the Property in favour of the Lender to secure repayment of the sum of £xxxxxxx (xxxxxxx pounds) together with simple interest thereon calculated from National Westminster Bank PLC base rate, such interest being payable on redemption of the charge`.

II It is hereby provided that the said charge shall not be enforced unless the Borrower (Mr and Mrs xxx) has sold or otherwise disposed of or parted with possession of or ceased to reside in the Property as the Borrower`s only or principal home.

III After the expiration of the (specified number of years) from the date hereof the said charge shall cease to be enforceable.

The Applicant and grant recipient shall from the certified date of completion throughout the assistance condition period notify the Council of their intention to sell or otherwise dispose of or part possession with the dwelling. Pursuant to this condition the Applicant shall furnish the council with any information reasonably requested by them in connection with such notification.

11. Unless otherwise directed by the Council all eligible works must be carried out by a contractor whose estimate accompanied the application. Where appropriate works undertaken must be insured, the contractor should provide a recognised warranty for any works. It is a condition of any assistance that the eligible works are commenced within six months of the date of the approval. The works should then be completed within a further six months of commencement. These timescales can be extended by the Council in reasonable circumstances upon a written request from the Applicant.

12. The Council may increase (subject to the maximum limit) the estimated amount of assistance if they are satisfied that, owing to circumstances beyond the control of the Applicant, the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out on the basis of the amount of the expenses originally approved (e.g. when a contractor becomes VAT registered prior to the commencement of any works). The Council may also increase the estimated amount of assistance in the event that the eligible works cannot be or could not have been completed without carrying out additional unforeseen works.

13. Joint signatures are required on the application for properties in joint ownership.

14. The Council does not undertake or accept responsibility for supervision and the standard of the work. The Applicant or appointed agent is responsible for ensuring that the works subject to the assistance are carried out and to the required standard.

15. The Applicant is responsible for ensuring that any necessary Building Regulation/Planning Permission/Listed Building consents are obtained prior to work commencing.

### **Payment Conditions**

16. Payment will be made direct to the contractor/agent on behalf of the Applicant unless the Applicant instructs the Council otherwise in writing.
17. The payment of any assistance is conditional upon any eligible works being carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and upon receipt by the Council of an acceptable invoice for the works carried out and any ancillary charges or services. All payments will be made direct to the contractor or other agency involved in the provision of any assistance.
18. [DFG relocation: relocation costs will not be made prior to the move and applicants must be aware that they may have to fund costs before receiving an assistance payment.]
19. It is a condition of assistance that the eligible works are carried out within twelve months from the date of approval of the application. This period may, however, be extended by the Council if they think fit, particularly where they are satisfied that the eligible works cannot be, or could not have been, carried out without carrying out other works which could not have been reasonably foreseen when the application was made.
20. Payment of any assistance is also conditional on the Applicant taking all reasonable steps when appropriate to pursue any relevant insurance claim or legal claim for damages in which the costs of the works to the dwelling to which the assistance relates is part of that claim. The Applicant shall repay to the Council any assistance so far as is appropriate out of the proceeds of that claim.
21. In the event that the eligible works have been carried out by a member of the Applicant's family the Council may consider payment towards only the materials used in carrying out the works.

### **Post Completion Conditions:**

22. In the event of a breach of any of the conditions or fraudulent application the Council may demand repayment from the Applicant of a sum equal to the amount of the assistance paid or, as the case may be, any instalment of the assistance paid.
23. The Applicant shall from the certified date of completion throughout the assistance condition period notify the Council of their intention to sell or otherwise dispose of or part possession with the dwelling. Pursuant to this condition the Applicant shall furnish the Council with any information reasonably requested by them in connection with such notification.
24. Where an applicant has an insurable interest in the property they shall arrange and maintain in effect adequate insurance of the property throughout the condition period. The Applicant shall also take all necessary steps, where they have the duty or power to do so, to ensure the property remains free of

any dangerous risks to their or the dwellings occupier's health and safety. In the event of a breach of this condition the Council may demand whole or partial repayment of any assistance.

## **Information relating to all types of financial assistance**

### **Fees and VAT**

25. In addition to the actual costs of carrying out any works other reasonable charges necessarily incurred in the undertaking of the works are also eligible to be included as part of any assistance. These may include:
- Architects or surveyors' fees.
  - Charges for planning permission or building regulation approval.
  - Charges by any agency services for advising on or assisting with the client's application.
26. The Authority will need to determine which fees are eligible for assistance in the same way it assesses the eligible works. In doing so it will consider the reasonableness of the fees and whether they are properly incurred. The fees will be included up to the maximum amount of assistance available.

### **Request where repayment may not be demanded**

27. The Council may in exceptional circumstances (subject to Cabinet approval) demand a lesser sum. Applications with detailed reasons why repayment should not be demanded must be made in writing.

### **Application Process**

28. The Council will operate a preliminary enquiry system for dealing with applications for housing assistance. This will take the form of an initial enquiry form sent to the potential applicant in addition to the appropriate information. The enquiry form is not a formal application for assistance and is purely a request for service.
29. Upon receipt of the initial enquiry form the Council will assess the Applicant's eligibility for housing assistance and advise them, accordingly, including any contribution towards the cost of the works the client may need to make.
30. Applicants must be over 18 years old.
31. Applications will be accompanied by at least two competitive estimates.
32. The Council will determine which works are eligible.

### **Applications where there is more than one owner**

33. All owners will be required to sign the application form and relevant forms related to conditions, e.g. future occupation, local land charges, land registry charges, etc. Means/income testing will be applied to all owners.

## **Applications outside the Policy**

34. In exceptional circumstances consideration may be given to applications that fall outside the provision of this policy. These applications will be reviewed on a case by case basis and a decision will be made by the Corporate Management Team.

## **Development of the Policy**

This Policy will be subject to periodic reviews. Any amendments will only be necessary in the case of significant change to policy items. The Head of Service for Housing and Communities with the relevant Lead Member will make changes to the policy without the need for formal ratification, where such changes make no significant change to service provision. Any amendments that produce major changes to service provision, those amendments will require approval of the Cabinet before the Policy is changed.

## **Enquires about Assistance**

Enquires about any of the forms of assistance in the policy, and information about how to apply, should be made to Rother District Council, Housing Services Adaptations, Town Hall, Bexhill on Sea, East Sussex, TN39 3JX.

Tel: 01424 787599

Email: [Claire.ellwood@rother.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.ellwood@rother.gov.uk)

## **Appeals about Decisions**

Appeals about how the policy is operated in individual cases, for example where assistance is refused, will be considered by the Housing Manager, or the authorised officer.

### Discretionary Disabled Project Grant (DDPG) Application Form

The DDPG will invite applications from residents of Rother to improve and update disabled facilities for community-based buildings and groups.

The grant is intended to support smaller projects that are easily deliverable. The conditions of the DDPG are designed to be responsive to the needs of community groups and facilitate greater accessibility for disabled people. Applications need to evidence the extent of the need for any proposed adaptation as well as illustrate what efforts have been made to secure funds from other sources and the reasons for these applications having been unsuccessful.

This form is used to ascertain the eligibility for financial assistance. Please complete the form in BLOCK CAPITALS and return to: Claire Ellwood, Disabled Facilities Grants Support Officer, Rother District Council, Town Hall, BEXHILL ON SEA, TN39 3JX

(Tel: 01424 787599 - please call if you need help completing the form).

Please note that financial assistance cannot be given for any works that are started prior to formal approval.

Name of Group/ organisation.....

Name of main contact for this application.....

Address for correspondence.....

..... Post code:

Contact telephone number.....

Email.....

Website.....

What type of group are you? e.g charity, community group, community building

.....

Do you have Vulnerable Adult and/or Child Protection Policies and Procedures in place to protect safety? (please circle) Yes **No**

Do you have Public Liability insurance? (please circle) Yes **No**

Please tell us which area/s of the District will benefit:

Estimate the number of Rother residents who will benefit – NOT including volunteers

Name of Ward Councillor supporting this application.....

Tick the box(es), which best reflect how your project will help to achieve the District Council aims.

<b>Priorities</b>	<b>Please tick</b>
The proposed adaptation is needed and there is evidence that people with disabilities will benefit	
The proposed adaptation provides access to facilities or activities that are presently inaccessible to people with disabilities.	
The proposed adaptation supports communities to promote active lifestyles that benefits physical and mental wellbeing	
To ensure the resilience of community and voluntary groups in the future	
To improve the safety of people with disabilities	
To support the local economy and businesses	

Reason for the Funding Request: Include what you are planning to do and how you feel it will meet the priorities above (Max. 500 words)

Continued.....

How do you know people in your community want this project?

About the grant you are requesting.

Please give a detailed, itemised list about the grant cost you are requesting:

Item or Activity	Cost Item	of	Amount Requested from us
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
	£		£
			£



Your signature/agreement as the main contact on this form- NB your main contact signatory must be separate members of your organisation whom you reasonably expect to be available for the duration of the financial year and take responsibility for providing monitoring information. You must notify the Council of an alternative suitable contact who has agreed to take over the responsibility if either leaves your organisation for any reason.

*I confirm that to the best of my knowledge and belief, all replies given on this application form are true and accurate. I understand that supporting information may be requested at any stage of the application process.*

Signed.....Date.....

**Contract**

(This section MUST be completed by a person duly authorised to do so on behalf of the organisation making this application. They must have read and understood the whole application. This may be for instance your Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, Secretary or Treasurer. They should **not** be the main contact for the application.

**Terms**

1. The grant will be used for the purposes set out in this application only.
2. The Council may use our name and the name of our project in its own publicity materials and we will inform the Council of situations where confidentiality is an issue.
3. The Council shall have no liability to the Organisation for any claims, losses, damages, or expenses it may suffer or incur as a result of its use of the grant.
4. The Council may at its sole discretion withhold or suspend payment of a grant and/or require repayment of all or part of the grant in the following circumstances:
  - a) The Organisation uses the grant for purposes other than those for which they have been awarded.
  - b) The Organisation fails to comply with any of the term and conditions set out in this Agreement.
  - c) The Organisation provides the Council with incorrect or misleading information or completes the application form or supporting documentation dishonestly.
  - d) Any member of the governing body, employee or volunteer of the Organisation has
    - (i) Acted dishonestly or negligently at any time and directly or indirectly to the detriment of the Project; or
    - (ii) Taken actions which, in the reasonable opinion of the Council, bring or are likely to bring the Council's name or reputation into disrepute.

Title	First Name	Last Name
-------	------------	-----------

Occupation
------------

Position in Group
-------------------

Contact address (including postcode)
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Contact Number
----------------

Please enter your email address to confirm you have read the full application and agree to the terms (the Contract signatory must NOT be the Main Applicant)

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**Final Checklist**

<b>Please tick off this checklist to make sure you are sending us everything we need to process your application</b>	<b>Tick Box</b>
All questions are answered fully and correctly	
You have taken and kept a copy of this application form for your reference	
This form has been signed by the two separate signatories required (the Main Contact must NOT sign it twice)	

**Additional Information**

Please use an additional sheet for any additional information you wish to add. (up to a maximum of an A4 sheet) Please ensure you include the question number to which the information relates to.

**Rother District Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Protecting Discretionary Services Strategy
<b>Report of:</b>	Robin Vennard, Assistant Director Resources
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Dixon
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To agree the Council's strategic approach to the transfer to other organisations of community assets that support the delivery of discretionary services to ensure their long-term access by the residents and visitors to Rother is protected.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Officer</b>	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<b>Recommendation to COUNCIL:</b> That the Protecting Discretionary Services Strategy at Appendix A be approved and adopted.

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**Introduction**

1. Members will be aware that following the creation of the Bexhill-on-Sea Parish Council (now known as Bexhill Town Council), Rother is now fully parished. This presents an opportunity to move this Council to a predominately strategic and regulatory role within the district. Part of this move is to consider how and by whom, discretionary services are best provided. A guiding principle will be to ensure that discretionary services are delivered by the most appropriate organisation closest to the community it serves. This also affords the opportunity to minimise the carbon footprint of the services by ensuring supply chains for operational costs are as local as possible.
2. In addition, as with many local authorities, Rother is operating with a financial deficit, where following many years of limited Government grant and substantial cost pressures (particularly with contracted-out services) day-to-day expenditure exceeds our income. This is causing an unsustainable reliance on reserve funding to support the revenue budget. If this situation were to continue unchecked, in the next five years, the Council would likely have to take drastic action to reduce its expenditure, including the cessation of several discretionary services.
3. The Council has embarked on a programme of work to deliver financial stability to the Council. This ambition is described in the Council's Corporate Plan reported elsewhere on this agenda and part of this programme is to seek the transfer of certain community assets to organisations better able to protect them and secure their public use into the future. A simple and straightforward

strategy (set out at Appendix A) to support this programme has been developed which sets out the Council's approach.

## Strategic Objectives

4. The first objective of this strategy is to protect for the future enjoyment and benefit of the residents and visitors to the Rother area the following discretionary services:
  - Parks and Open Spaces
  - Public Conveniences
  - Museum buildings
  - Bus Shelters
  - Christmas special lighting
  - Off-street public parking places which are currently free to use
5. The second objective is to reduce the Council's net spend on discretionary services. The above services account for approximately £1.4m of spend each year, mainly in maintaining the underlying assets in a reasonable and useable condition.

## Deciding which assets to transfer

6. Whilst there is a financial imperative to safeguarding these community assets, there are a number of other factors that will be considered on an asset by asset basis before any decision is made. These include:
  - a) Does the asset have strategic importance?
  - b) As a minimum, can the operational costs be covered by charging users?
  - c) Is there an alternative use for the asset that is more beneficial?
7. A detailed schedule of the assets is currently being compiled to accompany the strategy.

## Delivery options

8. To achieve these objectives, the most efficient and locally empowering option is to transfer the assets to suitable organisations that can raise sufficient funding to ensure continued public access to these services and facilities. There are two main types of organisations considered suitable:
  - a) Parish and Town Councils
  - b) Charitable organisations including Community Interest Companies
9. **Parish and Town Councils** – have the advantage of being statutory bodies with powers to raise a precept to meet the cost of services they provide. Currently Parishes and Towns are outside of the Government's council tax referendum regulations that restrict upper tier authorities. This gives greater freedom to raise sufficient income to invest in and maintain the assets for their long-term use.
10. **Charitable Organisations** – there are numerous examples of where charitable organisations have been established to take responsibility for a public asset, including in Rother. The variation in scale of organisation

involved is considerable from the De La Warr Pavilion Trust to those organisations that operate the transferred allotments. Charitable organisations have greater access to funding bodies for capital investment projects, but the main challenge is ensuring sufficient funding is raised each year for day-to-day commitments. As these organisations cannot raise precepts, then it will likely be a combination of generating donations and carrying on activities for which users of the facilities pay a fee.

### **Protecting the Assets from change of use or disposal**

11. Some of the assets to transfer may have alternative uses that, if disposed of, could generate substantial sums. It is important that the continued community use is protected and the best way to do this is to transfer the assets on a long lease basis. For charitable organisations, this can represent an issue with regard to fund raising activities. It is thought this can be overcome if the lease is of sufficient length to give any funder the confidence that the long-term control of the asset has been effectively transferred.

### **Early Financial Support**

12. As mentioned above, there has been some success in transferring the Council's statutory allotments to other organisations to operate. In addition, three free to use car parks and associated public conveniences have also been transferred to parish councils. As part of this process, it was identified early on that depending on the asset, there may need to be some transitional financial support arrangements to assist with the transfer. The strategy will continue with this principle and will form part of any negotiations with a future owner.

### **Key Stakeholders**

13. The report has highlighted the two key stakeholders with regard to the delivery of this strategy, namely the Parish and Town Councils and existing Community Interest Companies. In addition, it is sensible to engage with Rother Voluntary Action who provide support and guidance to local charitable organisations. This would be particularly relevant if it is seen that new charities are established to help the Council meet its strategic objectives.

### **Communications**

14. There is a danger that this strategy could be seen as merely cost shunting or double taxation with no added benefit to residents and visitors to Rother. However, in the current local government funding regime, there is a real danger to the sustainability of those discretionary services that make Rother a great place to live, work and visit. This will need to be the focus of our communications with the key stakeholders and the residents of Rother. The Council needs their support and commitment to ensure the successful and timely transfer of assets. A communications plan will be developed in conjunction with our specialist communications team.

### **Resourcing**

15. In addition to the early financial support referred to above, it was agreed by Cabinet (Minute CB20/120 refers) to create a small dedicated team to

progress this work. This will need to include both relevant operational staff together with legal and financial support. This represents a great learning opportunity for our staff and therefore secondments will be encouraged.

## Conclusion

16. The Council's desire to transfer assets that support delivery of discretionary services to other organisations should be seen positively to ensure their continued contribution to the quality of the Rother area. Documenting the Council's approach through this strategy ensures there is a high degree of transparency to the actions the Council is taking. Members are asked to support the strategy.

## Environmental

17. Whilst this strategy itself has no direct environmental implications, the services it relates to do. How these assets are maintained and improved can have positive or negative environmental implications depending on both the strategic and operational approaches taken. This will form part of the discussions with any prospective organisation that agrees to assume responsibility for these community assets.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
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e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:robin.vennard@rother.gov.uk">robin.vennard@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix A - Protecting Discretionary Services Strategy 2021 to 2025
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB20/120
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

## PROTECTING DISCRETIONARY SERVICES STRATEGY 2021 TO 2025

### Background

1. The creation of Bexhill Town Council means that the District of Rother is now fully parished. This presents an opportunity for Rother District Council to become a predominately strategic and regulatory body within the district. Part of this move is to consider how and by who, discretionary services are best provided. A guiding principle to this strategy is to ensure that discretionary services are delivered by the most appropriate organisation, one which is closest to the community which the service serves. This also affords the opportunity to minimise the carbon footprint of the services by ensuring supply chains for operational costs are as local as possible.
2. Additionally, Rother District Council is operating with a financial deficit, where following many years of limited Government grant and substantial cost pressures (particularly with contracted-out services) day-to-day expenditure exceeds income. This is causing an unsustainable reliance of reserve funding to support the revenue budget. If this situation were to continue unchecked, in the next five years the Council would likely have to take drastic action to reduce its expenditure, including the cessation of several discretionary services.
3. The Council has embarked on a programme of work to deliver financial stability to the Council. This ambition is described in the Council's Corporate Plan and part of this programme is to seek the transfer of certain community assets to organisations better able to protect the asset and secure the use into the future.

### Objectives

4. The first objective of this strategy is to protect for the future enjoyment and benefit of the residents and visitors to the Rother area the following discretionary services:
  - Parks and Open Spaces
  - Public Conveniences
  - Museum buildings
  - Bus Shelters
  - Christmas special lighting
  - Off-street public parking places which are currently free to use
5. The second objective is to reduce the Council's net spend on discretionary services to ensure it can continue to deliver its statutory services to an acceptable level. The above services account for approximately £1.4m of spend each year, mainly in maintaining the underlying assets in a reasonable and useable condition.

### Who the Council will work with?

6. The Council will work with the Parish and Town Councils within the Rother District and any not for profit organisation that has sufficient financial security

to ensure the long-term viability of the community assets. The Council is happy to work with new organisations including those that need help to be become established.

### **Protecting the Assets from change of use or disposal**

7. Assets will be transferred on a long-term lease basis. Leases will provide sufficient length to give any grant funding body confidence that the long-term control of the asset has been effectively transferred. Freehold disposals are unlikely to be considered.

### **Early Financial Support**

8. The Council will endeavour to transfer assets in good useable condition, but it is recognised that depending on the asset there may need to be some transitional financial support arrangements required to assist with the transfer. Any transitional financial support will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

### **Schedule of Assets**

9. A schedule of the assets for potential transfer is attached to this strategy. The schedule includes details the location (including map), a description of the asset including the existing use and the current direct costs.



## **Schedule of Assets – to be confirmed**

The schedule of community assets that are likely to be devolved / transferred is currently being compiled and will form part of the consultation and subsequent discussions with interested parties.

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## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Performance Report: Fourth Quarter 2020/21
<b>Report of:</b>	Head of Service – Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Dixon
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To consider the recommendations arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 7 June 2021, regarding the Performance Report: Fourth Quarter 2020/21. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix E) should be read in conjunction with this report.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Officer Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That consideration be given to working with other local authorities with an 80% or higher level of protected land, to put forward a case to Central Government for a national abatement formula to calculate housing targets.

### Introduction

1. For the financial year 2020/21, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and Cabinet selected a set of 12 key performance indicators (KPIs). These indicators stand as a barometer of the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and those service areas Members wish to scrutinise over the year, as agreed by Cabinet on 10 February 2020.
2. For the 2020/21 financial year, the focus has been set on four themes:
  - Housing and Homelessness: to monitor the delivery of the Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy adopted in 2019.
  - Waste and Recycling: to monitor the delivery of the waste and recycling contract from July 2019.
  - Asset Income: to monitor the delivery of the Property Investment Strategy adopted in 2018.
  - Other Income: to monitor significant non-tax income as a part of the Council's revenue streams.
3. This report brings before Members a summary of the Council's Performance against the selected themes, giving the position at the end of the fourth financial quarter (1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021) and the whole year. The report

gives Members an opportunity to scrutinise the progress towards the Council's stated aims, outcomes and actions in the Corporate Plan and make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet for future service delivery.

## Overview

4. A summary of the KPI performance is set out in the table below. Performance is compared to the previous quarter result and to the same quarter the previous year.

<b>Housing &amp; Homelessness</b>	Status	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to previous measurement
Affordable Homes Built (gross) Supply target			
Affordable Homes Built (gross) Local Plan target			
Net Additional Homes Provided (Supply Target)			
Net Additional Homes Provided (Local Plan Target)			
Prevention of Homelessness Cases per 1,000 Rother Households			
Number of all Households in Temporary Accommodation			
Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation			
<b>Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	Status	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to previous measurement
Waste Re-used, Composted and Recycled (reported one quarter in arrears)			
Contractor Re-used, Composted and Recycled			
Contractual Missed Bins per 100,000 Collections			
<b>Asset Income</b>	Status	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to previous measurement
Net Income from All Investment Assets			
Investment Asset: Return on Investment %			
<b>Other Income</b>	Status	Compared to same quarter previous year	Compared to previous measurement
Car Park Income			
Garden Waste Income			
Planning Income			

PI Status		Long Term Trends		Short Term Trends	
	Alert		Improving		Improving
	Warning		No Change		No Change
	OK		Getting Worse		Getting Worse
	Unknown				

5. The tables of performance and explanation accompanying each of the four themes can be found at Appendices A, B, C and D.

### Indicators by Exception

6. Members requested to have reported, by exception, any other performance that is doing significantly better or significantly worse than its target set. There are no indicators by exception to report this quarter.

### COVID-19

7. March 2020 saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has adversely affected performance levels in quarter one for all KPIs reported. The KPIs remain the same to provide a baseline for the overall impact of COVID-19 in the current financial year as agreed by the OSC on 14 September 2020.

### Conclusion

8. This report sets our performance against the agreed key performance indicators for the four themes for the year of 2020/21.
9. Members are requested to consider performance against targets or forecasts and pass any additional recommendations for action to Cabinet for consideration.

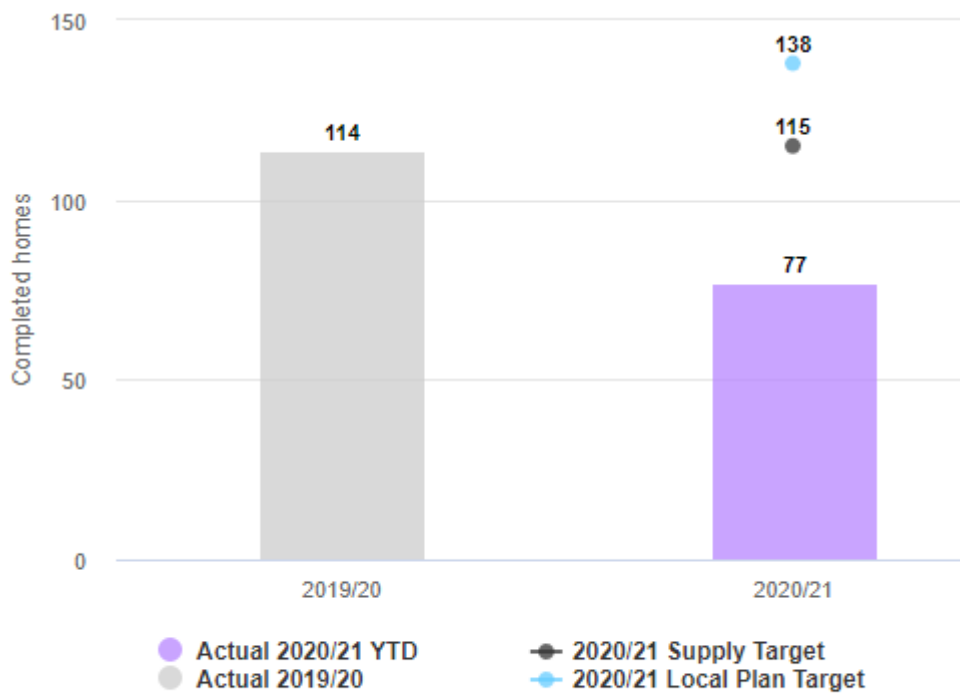
Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Nicola Mitchell
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:nicola.mitchell@rother.gov.uk">nicola.mitchell@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	A – Housing & Homelessness B – Waste & Recycling C – Asset Income D – Other Income E – Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 7 June 2021
Relevant previous Minutes:	CB19/95 OSC20/20
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

## HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

### Affordable Homes Built

1. This measurement is the gross number of new affordable homes that have been completed in the district. By completed we mean that the home has been built and handed over from the developer to the provider for occupation by a tenant or purchaser. The home may not yet be occupied. This measurement monitors the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcome for affordable and decent housing stock, specifically the action to support the development of affordable accommodation.
2. The indicator has two targets: the supply target and the Local Plan Target. The supply target is based on anticipated delivery from planned sites that we knew about at the time of setting the target. The supply target is 115 affordable new homes for 2020/21. The Local Plan target is based on local housing need set out in the Local Plan and is set at 138 new affordable homes by the end of 2020/21.

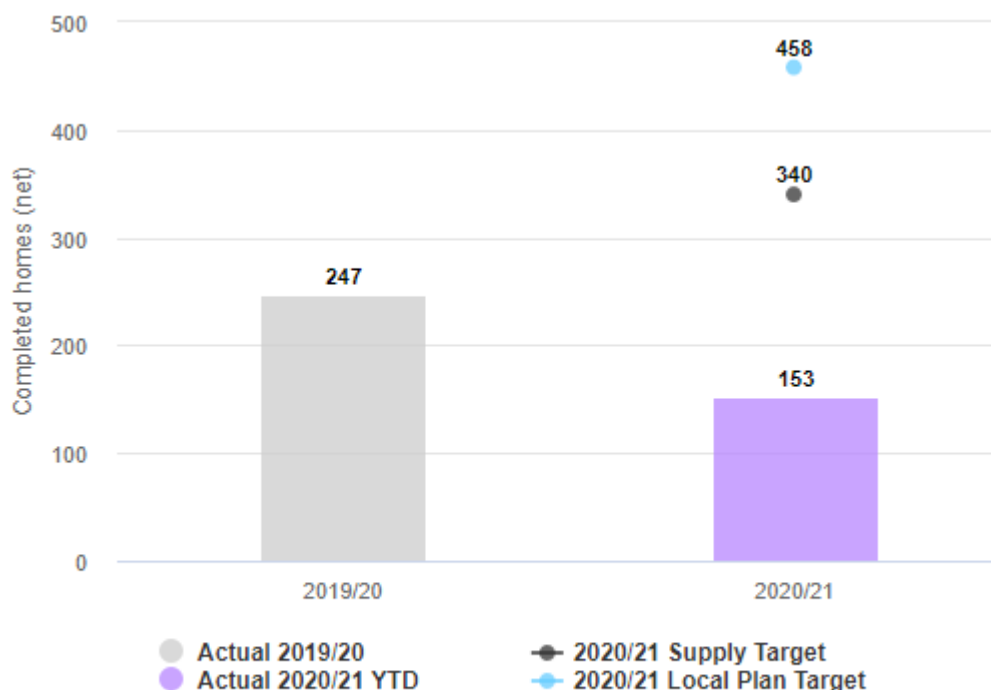


Affordable Homes Built

Polarity: Higher is better

### Additional Homes Provided

3. This measurement counts the number of all new homes in Rother, allowing for demolitions and change of use to give a net gain. This measurement monitors the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes to manage spatial development and the provision of affordable and decent housing stock.
4. This indicator has two targets: the supply target and the Local Plan target. The supply target is based on the projected delivery for the year, as set out in the April 2019 Housing Land Supply and Trajectory report. The supply target is 340 new homes for 2020/21. The Local Plan target is based on the outstanding annual requirement in order to meet the local need of 5,700 homes identified in the Core Strategy. As April 2019, the annual Local Plan target is 458.

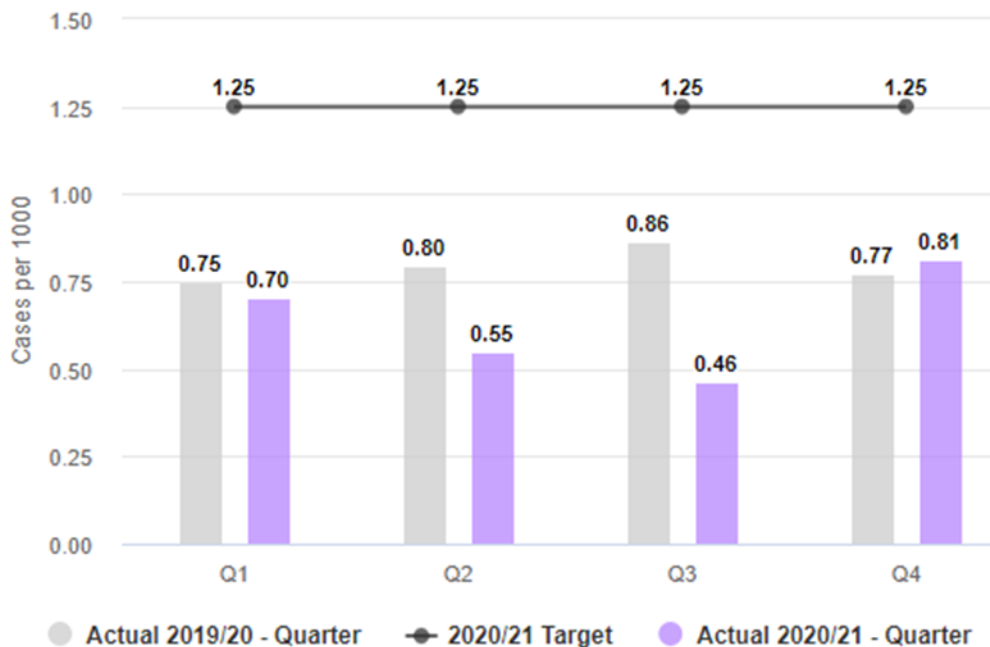


Additional Homes Provided

Polarity: Higher is better

### Prevention of Homelessness Cases per 1,000 Rother Households

5. This measurement shows the number of households the Housing Needs service prevented from becoming homeless through intervention, advice, assistance, and relief. It is expressed as the number of cases in proportion to 1,000 Rother households and can be benchmarked against other district councils in England.
6. The target for 2020/21 is 5 preventions per 1,000 households.



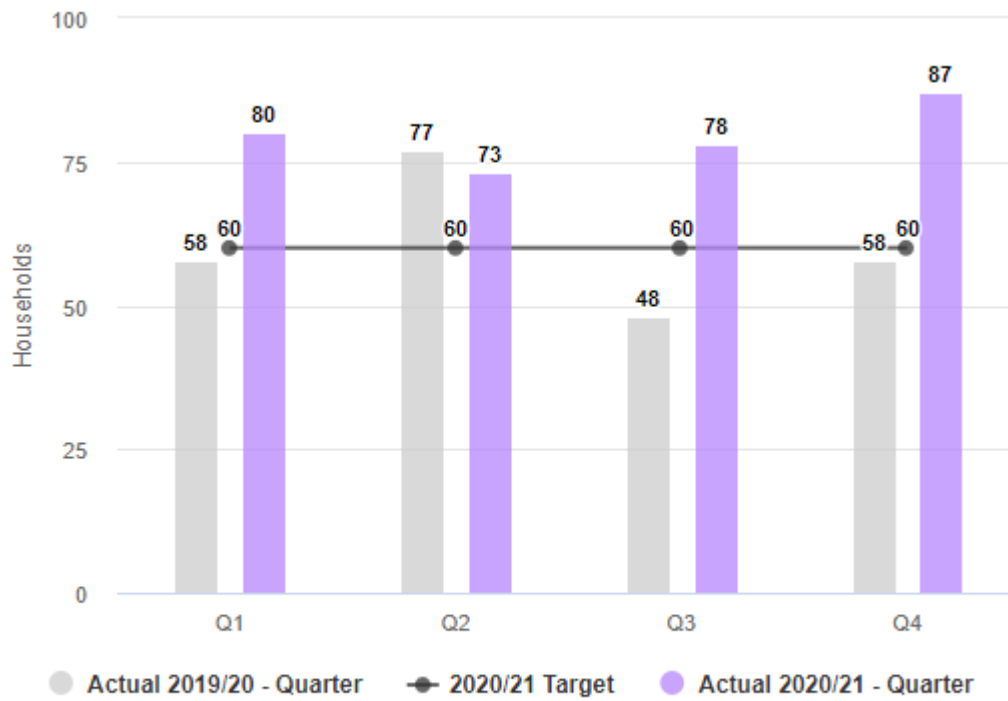
Prevention of Homelessness Cases per 1,000 Rother Households

Polarity: Higher is better



## Number of all Households in Temporary Accommodation

- This measurement is the number of households in Temporary Accommodation on the last day of the month.
- The target for 2020/21 is 60 households.

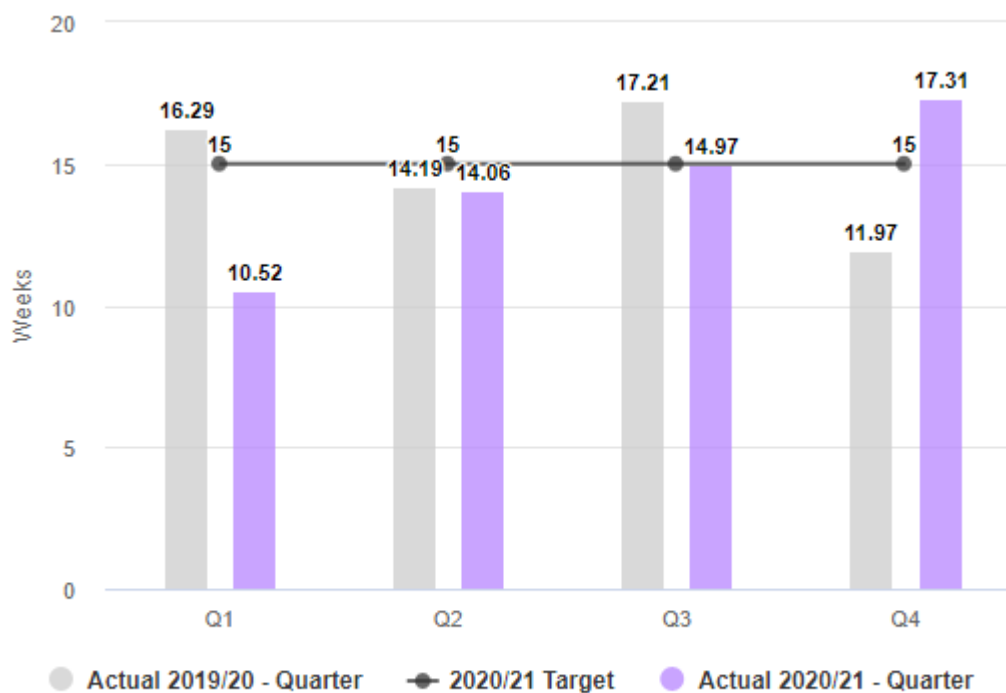


Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation

Polarity: Lower is better

## Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation

9. This measurement is the average number of weeks that households in temporary accommodation have remained in temporary accommodation.
10. The target for 2020/21 is 15 weeks.



## Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation

Polarity: Lower is better

### Housing & Homelessness Summary

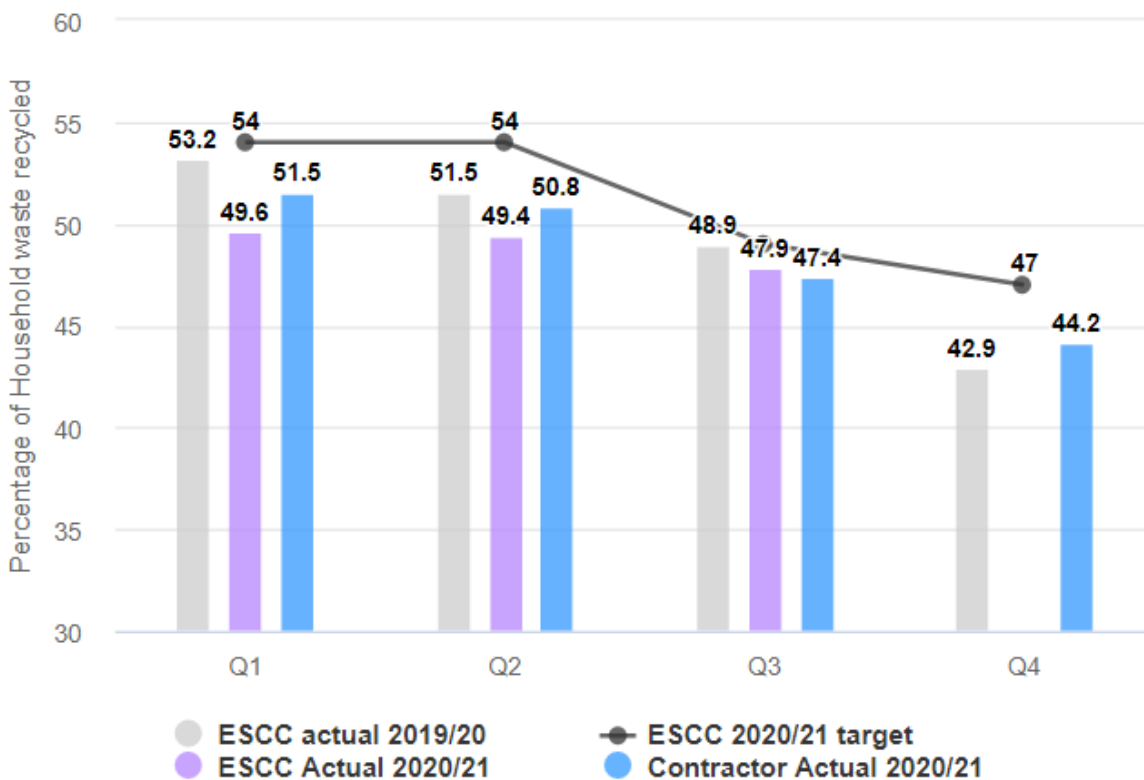
11. The impact of COVID-19 on housing completions across the district continues to be severe and whilst it was hoped figures would pick up in Q4 this has not materialised. There remains a significant lag on delivery; in particular, the district's strategic sites in West & North East Bexhill. Developers have cited shortages of materials as one of the main hurdles to delivery, compounded by post BREXIT market conditions.
12. Like in Q3, it is also worth noting a number of Approved Inspectors have not submitted their completion certificates (so any property at this stage cannot be included in the final figures).
13. By end of March 2021, we received a total of 77 affordable housing completions out of our 115-supply target for 2020/21. This shortfall of delivery is primarily due onsite caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and Government restrictions on construction sites preventing schemes progressing at a normal pace.
14. Of the 77 affordable completions, 33 AH were AR (43%) and 44 SO (57%). This is a higher number of SO than normally expected and over the planning policy level. This is mainly due to phasing of larger schemes, to include the first phase of the Orbit s106 site at Wrestwood Road Bexhill. Affordable rental tenures are expected to complete on this site during 2021.

15. 3 x supported affordable housing dwellings for young people were secured by the YMCA during 2020/21. And one wheelchair dwelling built to M4 (3) standards at Bankyfields, Ticehurst was delivered during October 2020. All other completions were general needs housing.
16. From the total completions received during 2020/2021, Optivo remains the leading register provider delivering over 79% of the Affordable Housing Development Programme in Rother.
17. The prevention of homelessness levels in achieving positive outcomes was improving prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 3.2 in 1,000 households being prevented in 2019/20 compared to 2.3 in 2018/19. The trend has unfortunately been reversed during Q4 2020/21. One of the effects of COVID-19 has been that the availability of private rented accommodation has fallen significantly, leaving councils less able to support households in housing difficulty, to access new accommodation.
18. There is a concern that the present restrictions on evictions could lead to a flood in evictions once the restrictions are lifted. In response we are reviewing our incentive schemes within the Rother Tenant Finder Service.
19. It is unfortunate that we are seeing the same impact on the time people spend in temporary accommodation (TA) as we are proving less able to secure alternative accommodation effectively. We also continue to see a rise in new cases entering TA which can have the effect of tempering the full extent of the increasing time many households are accommodated in TA. We have seen a steady increase in the total number of homeless households accommodated in TA due to COVID-19, from 51 households in February 2020 to 87 households in March 2021.
20. We are continuing to purchase new properties for use as TA to complement the 5 properties we have to date. We are confident of having 20 units by summer 2021 as following the additional £6million investment approved by Cabinet in recent months.

## WASTE & RECYCLING

### Household waste Re-used, Composted and Recycled

1. This measurement is the percentage of collected household waste sent to be re-used, recycled and composted.
2. There are two measurements. The first based on data reported by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) which includes all waste collection streams and is reported one quarter in arrears. The second measurement is provided by our contractor and includes most, but not all waste collection streams; this measurement is not the official result but gives an indication of likely outturn.

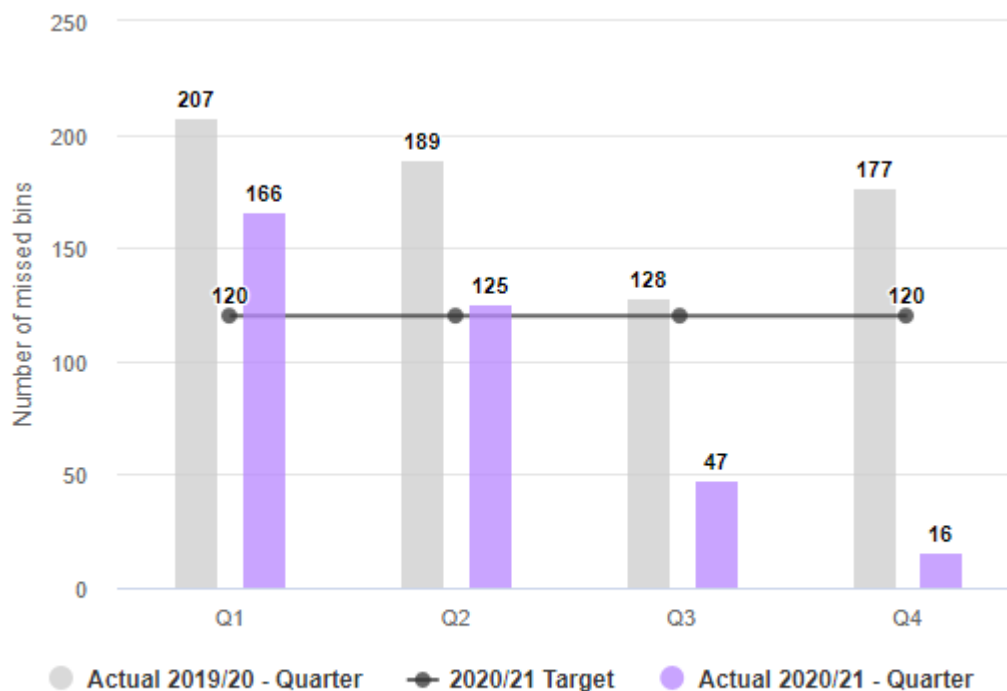


### Waste Re-Used, Composted and Recycled

Polarity: Higher is better

### Missed bins for every 100,000 collections

- This measurement is calculated by dividing the number of missed bins by the total number of collections and multiplying by 100,000 so the data is comparable across all waste collection services.
- The contract target for 2020/21 is no more than 120 missed bins per 100,000 collections.



Missed bins for every 100,000 collections

Polarity: Lower is better

### Waste & Recycling Summary

- The overall number of missed bins for waste collections has continued to steadily reduce in Q4 and the number of 16 per 100,000 remains much improved on the target of 120. Biffa remains confident the level of service of less than 96 missed bin collections (the new agreed Joint Waste & Recycling Committee target) will continue providing that COVID-19 infections remain at a low level locally and Biffa continue to work diligently to mitigate infection risks. To date all services are working well and no issues reported.
- Contractor waste reused, composted, and recycled overall for Q4 has fallen to 44.2%, against ESCC actual last year of 42.9% for the same period. This is the expected drop in percentage due to the seasonal reduction in garden waste. ESCC waste data year to date to December 2020 is 49.05%. The recycling rate is heavily influenced by garden waste volumes, which in turn is subject to seasonal variations, weather patterns and numbers of garden waste subscribers. Following recent promotion and officer focus on increasing the number of garden waste subscribers, we are delighted to report that we now have just under 20,500 customers which means the service is delivered by Biffa at a more cost-effective rate to the Council. In turn this should increase tonnage

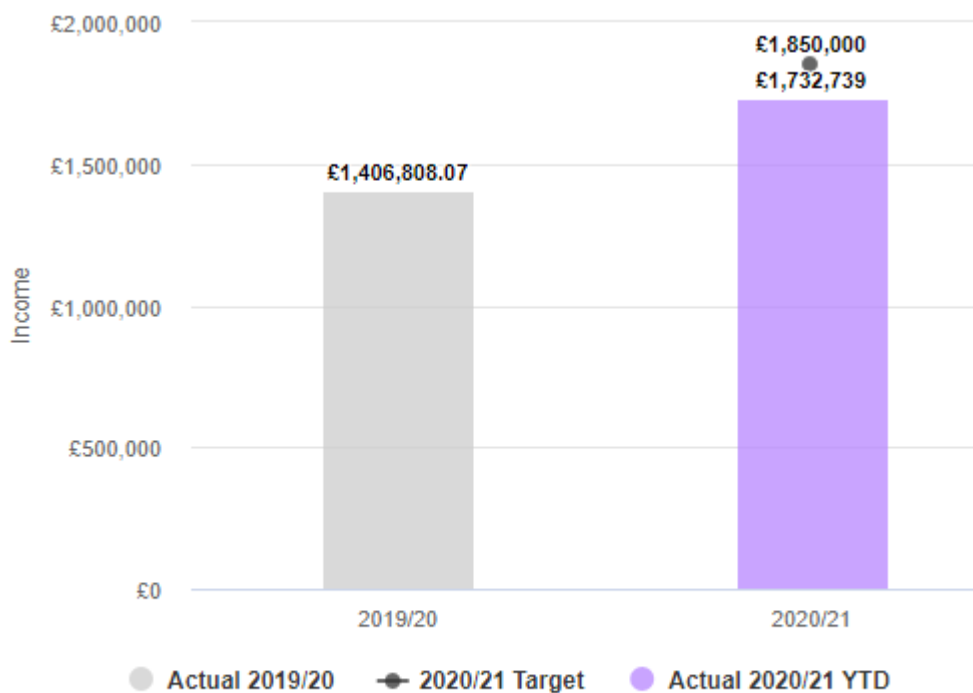
collected and so should support an increase in recycling percentage during the Spring and Autumn in particular.

7. Since COVID-19 restrictions were introduced in March 2020 domestic waste tonnages have remained at significantly high volumes, with continuing high levels of contamination of 'Bring sites' containers and fly tips adding to the increased percentage of refuse and a knock-on reduction in recycling. Delays are still being experienced at ESCC Household Waste & Recycling Sites which may be adding to these volume increases. Officers continue to progress the reduction in the number of bring sites and improve the quality of materials collected at the remaining sites.

## ASSET INCOME

### Net Income from All Investment Assets

1. This measurement is forecast annual net income from investments calculated from gross income less expenditure excluding borrowing and interest payments.
2. The Asset Income total does not include 'community' assets which might also generate an income such as sports facilities, allotments etc.
3. The target for 2020/21 is £1,850,000. This does not include any provision for income from any new property purchases achieved in the year.

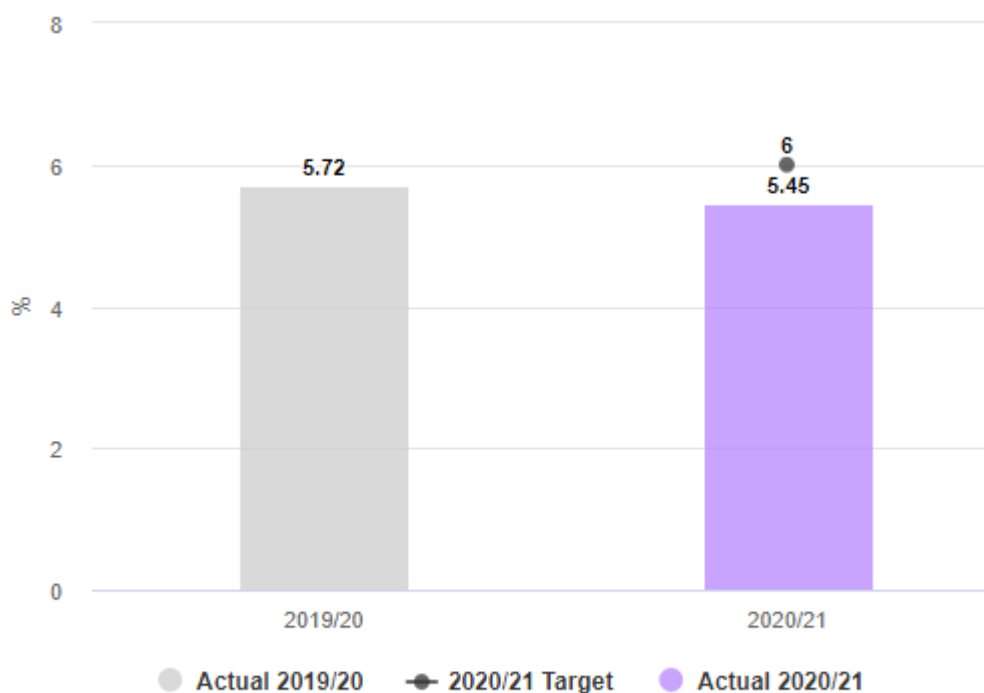


### Net Income from all Investment Assets

Polarity: Higher is better

## Investment Asset: Return on Investment %

- The Council calculates its return on investment based on the valuation of the investment assets, their combined income and combined expenditure.
- The target for 2020/21 is a 6% return on investment.



ROI from all Investment Assets

Polarity: Higher is better

## Asset Income Summary

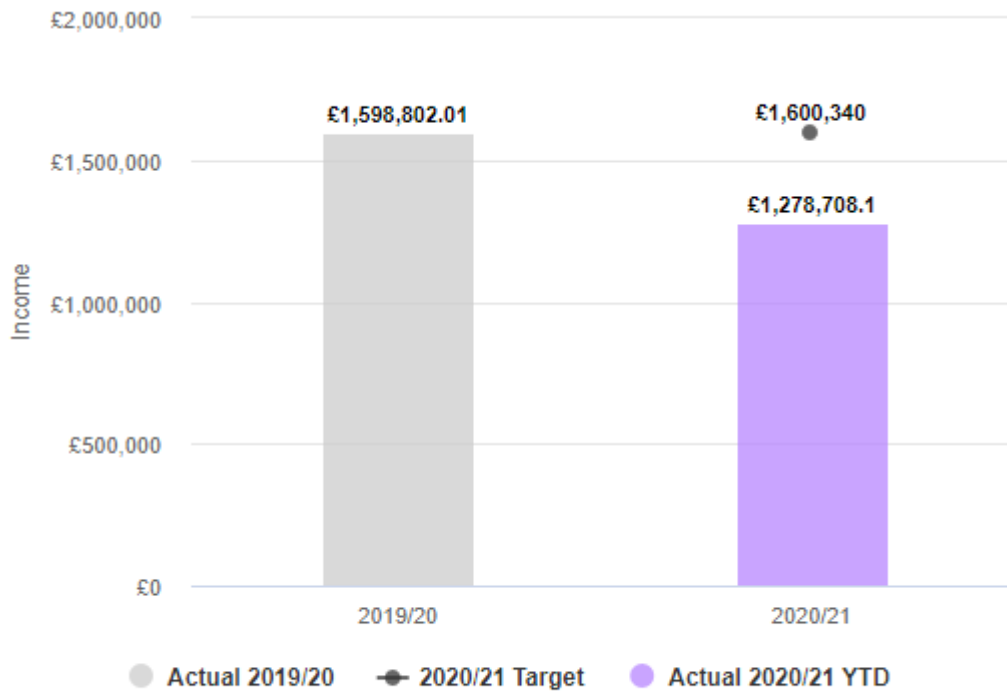
- Given the overall impact of COVID-19 on employers throughout the district, the final outturn for the return-on-investment assets is positive. It was initially anticipated that £120,000 would be lost in rent arrears and the realised position is slightly under this. No additional purchases were made in the last financial year as focus is placed upon the delivery of projects already in the programme.



## OTHER INCOME

### Car Park Income

1. This measurement monitors the income received from RDC owned car parks.
2. The target for 2020/21 is £1,600,000.

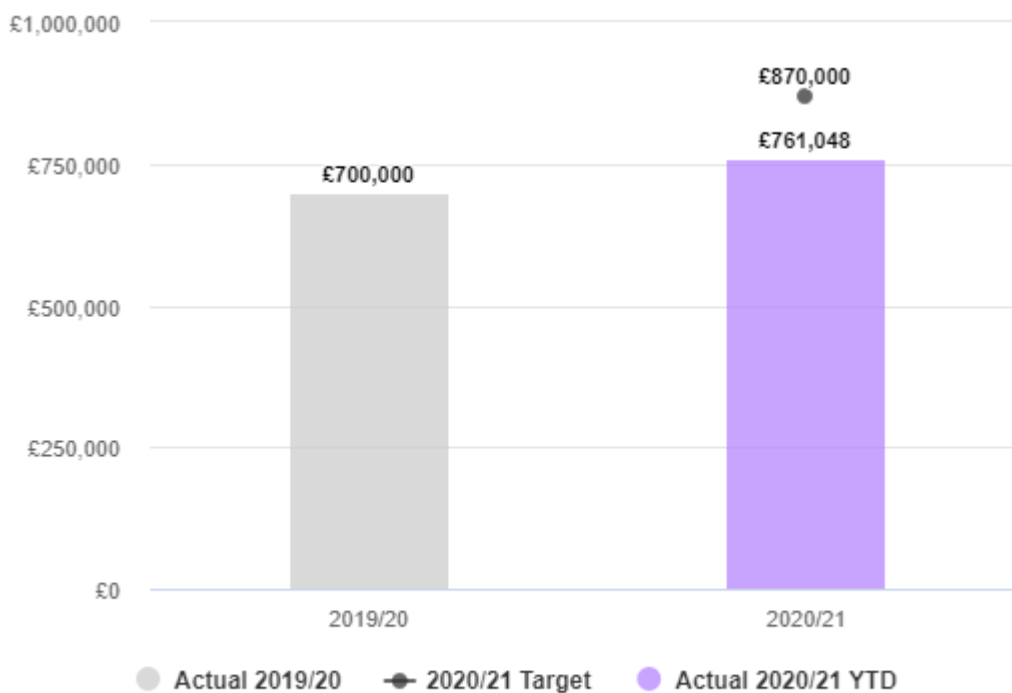


Car Park Income

Polarity: Higher is better

### Garden Waste Income

- 3. This indicator is to measure the impact of increasing garden waste collection charges by £5.
- 4. The Target for 2020/21 is £870,000.

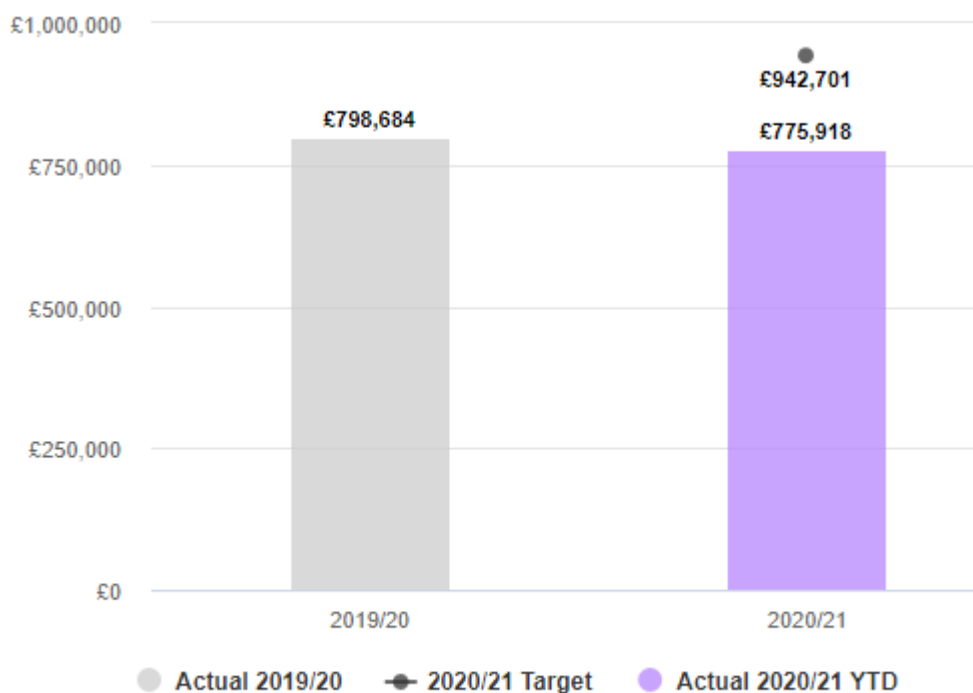


Garden Waste Income

Polarity: Higher is better

## Planning Income

- This measures the income received for planning applications, land charges and pre-planning advice.
- The target for 2020/21 is £940,000.



### Planning Income

Polarity: Higher is better

## Other Income Summary

- The car park budget for 2020/2021 was set prior to COVID-19 outbreak at £1,600,000 and achieved £1,278,708.10, a deficit of £321,000. Most car parks experienced a drop in annual revenue of between 39% to 57% against 2019/2020 due to the COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions on peoples' movement. Three car parks at Camber Sands went against this trend with Camber Central car park achieving an increase in revenue of 21.1%, Camber Western increased by 59.2% and Old Lydd achieving an increase of 58.6%.
- The garden waste service was suspended during the first lockdown in April 2020 to allow the waste collection contractor to focus available resources on statutory refuse and recycling waste collections. Garden waste customers lost 4 weeks of paid service and it was agreed that customers who renewed would be able to renew at the pre-existing rate of £35 per annum instead of the new rate of £40 in compensation. This resulted in an initial loss of revenue of approximately £92,000. Some of this the loss was made up during the course of the year through gaining more garden waste subscribers.

9. Following a successful campaign during December 2020 through to March 2021, officers focused on increasing the number of garden waste subscribers. We are delighted to report that we now have just under 20,500 customers, up from a previous high of approximately 19,600 in July 2020, which not only means increased revenue but that also the service is delivered by our contractor at a more cost-effective rate to the Council.
  
10. Planning income in real terms has held up reasonably well £775,917.33 compared with £798,702.41 last year, which is very positive, taking into consideration all the issues surrounding COVID-19 in the last 12 months. As we look forward there are signs of further recovery as we are receiving higher numbers of planning applications since the turn of the year, which will increase income.

**Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 7 June 2021**OSC21/09. **PERFORMANCE REPORT: FOURTH QUARTER 2020/21**

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Service Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration on the Performance Report of the Fourth Quarter 2020/21. Members were given the opportunity to scrutinise progress towards the Council's stated aims, outcomes and actions in the Corporate Plan and make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet for future service delivery.

Members were led through a summary of the Council's performance against the selected indicators across four key areas (Housing and Homelessness, Waste and Recycling, Asset Income and Other Income), giving the position at the end of the fourth financial quarter (1 January to 31 March 2021) for 2020/21. Performance was compared to the previous four quarters and the previous quarter result.

March 2020 saw the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This had adversely affected performance levels in quarter one for all Key Performance Indicators (KPI) reported. The KPIs remained the same to provide a baseline for the overall impact of COVID-19 in the current financial year as agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14 September 2020.

**Housing and Homelessness:** During quarter four, all seven measures had not met their target (Affordable Homes Built (gross) Supply target, (Affordable Homes Built (gross) Local Plan target, New Homes Built (net) Supply Target, New Homes Built (net) Local Plan Target, Homelessness Prevention Cases per 1,000 homes, Number of all Households in Temporary Accommodation [TA] and Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation).

**Waste and Recycling:** One of the indicators had not met its target (Re-use, Recycling, Composting: Contractor), one was flagged as a warning (Re-use, Recycling, Composting: East Sussex County Council) and one had met its target (Missed Bins per 100,000 Collections).

**Asset Income:** Given the overall impact of COVID-19 on employers throughout the district, the final outturn for the return-on-investment assets was positive. It was initially anticipated that £120,000 would be lost in rent arrears and the realised position was slightly under this. No additional purchases were made in the last financial year as focus was placed upon the delivery of projects already in the programme.

**Other Income:** All three indicators had not met their targets (Car Park Income, Garden Waste Income and Planning Income) due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The car park budget for 2020/2021 was set prior to COVID-19 outbreak at £1,600,000 and achieved £1,278,708.10, a deficit of £321,000. Following a successful campaign during December 2020 through to March 2021 to increase the number of garden waste subscribers, the number had increased to just under 20,500 customers,

up from a previous high of approx.19,600 in July 2020. This not only meant increased revenue, but that the service was delivered by the contractor at a more cost-effective rate to the Council. Planning income in real terms had held up reasonably well at £775,917.33 compared with £798,702.41 the previous year, which was very positive taking into consideration all the issues surrounding COVID-19 in the previous 12 months. Looking forward, there were signs of further recovery as the Council was receiving higher numbers of planning applications since the turn of the year, which would increase income.

Members raised concerns about high housing targets set by Central Government that did not consider the amount of protected land across districts that could not be built on. It was proposed and agreed by Members to request that Cabinet consider working with other local authorities with an 80% or higher level of protected land, to put forward a case to Central Government for a national abatement formula to calculate housing targets.

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic had adversely affected performance levels in quarter one for all KPIs reported. The Committee had previously agreed that the KPIs should remain the same to provide a baseline for the overall impact of COVID-19 in the current financial year.

(Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda Item 10).

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Corporate Programme 2014-2021 update and close-out

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

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Oliver

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To provide an update on the progress and outcomes of the Corporate Programme of priority projects delivered to support achievement of the Corporate Plan 2014-2021.

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

### Officer

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

- 1) progress and outcomes of the Corporate Programme 2014-2021 be noted; and
- 2) Corporate Programme 2014-2021 be formally closed out in readiness for the new Corporate Programme 2020-2027.

### Reasons for

**Recommendations:** To close out the programme of priority projects attached to the previous Corporate Plan 2014-2021.

## Introduction

1. This report provides an update on the progress and outcomes of the Corporate Programme of priority projects delivered to support achievement of the Corporate Plan 2014-2021.

## The Programme

2. The Corporate Plan 2014-2021 included a Corporate Programme made up of 29 priority projects to support achievement of the vision, aims and broad outcomes. Each project sat within one of the Corporate Plan's core aims, as set out below

### Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council

1. Member Development
2. Better Connected (phase 1 & 2)
3. Workforce Development Plan
4. Asset Management Plan
5. Service Resetting Plan (Rother 2020)

### Sustainable Economic Prosperity

1. NE Bexhill Master Plan Delivery (BX2)
2. NE Bexhill Master Plan Delivery (BX3)
3. Blackfriars, Battle
4. Camber Regeneration
5. Bexhill Town Centre Strategy
6. Development of Key Employment Sites
7. Economic Development - Rye Area
8. Superfast Broadband Rollout
9. Barnhorn Road Development
10. Skills Development
11. Community Infrastructure Levy

### Stronger, Safer Communities

1. Development of the old Bexhill High School Site
2. Active Rother Programme
3. Private Sector Housing Renewal
4. Housing Development Programme (phase 1 & 2)
5. Empty Homes Back into Use
6. Council Tax Reduction Scheme
7. Welfare Reform Rollout
8. Walking & Cycling Strategy

### A Quality Physical Environment

1. Improving Recycling Rates in Rother
2. Fuel Poverty
3. Collective Energy Switching
4. Coastal Environments
5. Combe Valley Countryside Park

3. Monitoring on progress and risk management issues were reported to the Strategic Management Team in their role as Programme Board on a quarterly basis and by exception, if required.

## **Delivery and Performance**

4. A detailed summary of delivery and performance of the Programme, broken down by individual projects is attached at Appendix A. 15 projects have been wholly completed to date, with close-out reports signed off by Programme Board; these are:
  1. Member Development
  2. Rother 2020 (formerly 'Service Resetting Phase 3')
  3. North East Bexhill Phase 1 (BX2): facilitating development
  4. North East Bexhill Phase 2 (BX3): facilitating development
  5. Superfast Broadband Rollout (supporting East Sussex County Council)
  6. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)
  7. Active Rother Programme (Getting Rother Active Project)
  8. Setting up of Information Service for Bringing Empty Homes into Use
  9. Council Tax Reduction Scheme
  10. Welfare Reform Rollout
  11. Walking and Cycling Strategy (supporting East Sussex County Council)
  12. Improving Recycling Rates in Rother
  13. Collective Energy Switching



- 14. Fuel Poverty
- 15. Combe Valley Countryside Park

- 5. Two projects completed a 'phase 1', but Programme Board requested second phases to be scoped and delivered to harness opportunities and address issues, both also completed:
  - 1. Better Connected Phase 2 (both phases 1 and 2 complete)
  - 2. Housing Development Programme Phase 2 (both phases 1 and 2 complete)
- 6. A further four projects were due for completion in 2020, however external factors meant these were put on hold, therefore still 'in progress':
  - 1. Workforce Development Plan
  - 2. Bexhill Town Centre Strategy
  - 3. Coastal Environments
  - 4. Private Sector Housing Renewal
- 7. Throughout the project planning phases, eight projects were identified as longer term, set for completion by 2021 or beyond. Some of these will not be taken any further, whilst others are proposed for inclusion in the new Corporate Programme. This includes:
  - 1. RDC Asset Management Plan
  - 2. Blackfriars, Battle
  - 3. Barnhorn Road (Barnhorn Green Health and Employment Scheme)
  - 4. Development of Key Employment Sites
  - 5. Promoting Economic Development in the Rye Area
  - 6. Development of Former Bexhill High School Site (on hold)
  - 7. Skills Development
  - 8. Camber Regeneration

### **Resources and staffing**

- 8. The Corporate Programme uses both revenue and capital resources of the Council.
- 9. Existing council officers took on Project Management responsibility alongside day-to-day duties in which to deliver most of these projects. A Development Projects Manager was employed in 2018 to take forward housing and asset development schemes. A Major Projects Manager was employed in October 2019 to take forward commercial development schemes. Most recently, a Housing Development Manager was appointed to lead the programme of schemes to be delivered by the local housing company, Alliance Homes (Rother) Limited.
- 10. External consultancy has been used to support project planning and delivery where inhouse technical expertise does not exist, including but not limited to employer's agent services, design, surveys, specific legal advice and planning application preparation and submission and other specific professional advice and input on the breadth of projects across the Programme.
- 11. Attached at Appendix B is a summary of the estimated total cost of the programme of identified projects and actual spend to 31/03/2021.

12. It should be noted that not all projects had full funding in place, e.g. the new Bexhill Leisure Centre development, Blackfriars, Housing Development Programme, Private Sector Housing Renewal and Coastal Environments. Projects where funding was to be identified were progressed to a stage where further Member approval would be required before the Council is financially committed to delivering the project. Given the financial climate for public funding and its impact on the Council's financial position, it was sensible to have this flexibility before substantial financial commitments are made

## Conclusion

13. The Corporate Programme has proved a successful method of delivering strategic progress against the Core Aims set out within the Council's Corporate Plan 2014-2021 and much has been achieved since the Plan's adoption. The next step for the Programme is to ensure projects that have been planned in detail can be taken through to delivery as part of a new Corporate Plan vision. The new Programme will be closely monitored and risk assessed to ensure continued successful delivery.
14. Whilst the global COVID-19 pandemic and associated restrictions have required refocus of resources and has impacted the delivery of some event-based initiatives, the large development projects have been able to progress, albeit slightly delayed due to challenges in new ways of working.
15. Cabinet is recommended:
- 1) that the progress and outcomes of the Corporate Programme 2014-2021 be noted; and
  - 2) the Corporate Programme 2014-2021 be formally closed out in readiness for the new Corporate Programme 2020-2027.

## Environmental and Finance

16. Specific aspects are detailed in each of the projects.

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
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:ben.hook@rother.gov.uk">ben.hook@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	A: Project status and outcomes report B: Programme valuation and spend to 31/03/2020
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB14/13 C14/41
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	Corporate Plan 2014-2021

**ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL CORPORATE PROGRAMME 2014-21  
PROGRESS UPDATE AND CLOSE-OUT 2021**

[www.rother.gov.uk/corporateplan](http://www.rother.gov.uk/corporateplan)

### Summary

CORE AIM	TOTAL PROJECTS IN CORE AIM	PROJECTS IN PROGRESS	PROJECTS COMPLETED
An Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council	5	1	4
Sustainable Economic Prosperity	11	7	4
Stronger, Safer Communities	8	2	6
A Quality Physical Environment	5	1	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>18</b>

### AIM 1: An Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council

PROJECT NAME	DUE DATE	UPDATE
<b>CA1.01: Member Development</b> Continuing current programme, focusing on delivering technology options to improve communication	31-Mar-2016	<p><b>Project completed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South East Employers Charter Award for Member Development achieved December 2015.</li> <li>• Technology requirements identified, equipment purchased and distributed.</li> <li>• 4-year training programme created and implemented.</li> </ul>
<b>CA1.02: Better Connected</b> Develop, deliver and implement a strategy that allows our customers to deal with us effectively and efficiently on-line	<p>Phase 1: 31-Sep-2018</p> <p>Phase 2: 31-Mar-2020</p>	<p><b>Project completed</b></p> <p><b>Phase 1: integration, channel shift and communications:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and Deliver the Essential Maintenance Plan (EPM).</li> <li>• Deliver existing website improvements.</li> <li>• Deliver Member Technology Solutions.</li> <li>• Deliver ICT Systems Integration.</li> <li>• New telephony system installed and implemented.</li> </ul> <p><b>Phase 2: Website Development Programme:</b> Delivery of a new design-led online platform with end-to-end integration, delivering an improved customer experience, improved functionality, and a</p>

		<p>significantly improved service offer, saving £15,000 per year in contract fees. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New website platform and Intranet (including sub-sites).</li> <li>• New online corporate standard.</li> <li>• New web content management group.</li> <li>• New web content management procedures and training.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>CA1.03: Workforce Development Plan 2014-19</b> Setting out a clear programme of staff development which supports delivery of the Corporate Plan</p>	31-Dec-2019	<p><b>Project in progress</b> The Workforce Development Plan is currently in progress. Following the restructure between March and June 2018, and the temporary senior restructure in 2020/21, this project will be replaced in the new Programme to deal with the longer-term restructure aligned with the organisational need.</p>
<p><b>CA1.04: RDC Asset Management Plan</b> Focus on delivering an asset programme which ensures the greatest return, whether financial or social</p>	31-Dec-2021	<p><b>Project in progress</b> Table of recommendations for actions on investment properties and devolved/non-devolved assets was completed. Several assets were sold to community groups such as woodlands and tracks to manage and maintain within the community. A capital receipt in excess of £250,000 was achieved in 2016 from auctioned assets surplus to requirements. Recommendations to the Property Investment Group made as opportunities arise. This included taking forward three identified sites on the Beeching Road Estate: Beeching Road Creative Studios (Local Growth Fund grant allocated), Wainwright Road demolition of old factory and new medical centre development (temporary COVID-19 testing site), and early plans for 35 Beeching Road longer term use (in progress).</p>
<p><b>CA1.05: Rother 2020 (was Service Resetting Plan)</b> Programme of service and structure reviews to ensure the Council is prepared for future economic challenges</p>	31-Mar-2020	<p><b>Completed</b> £1.8m of savings/income were identified in the December 2017 and December 2018 budget reviews and built into the 2018/19 and 2019/20 budgets. This was achieved through the delivery of a programme of work streams: Increase Income; Lean Business Process Reviews; Demand Management; Prioritisation of Services, and; Organisational Form and Culture.</p>

		<p><b>Increase Income:</b> included better investment of reserves, property investment opportunities, solar panels and fees and charges.</p> <p><b>Lean Business Process Reviews and Demand Management:</b> These programmes looked at business demand and processes and provide solutions for making efficiencies. The Lean Implementation Programme was driven forward to ensure identified efficiencies were implemented within service areas. This included the Document Image Processing system, updates to the garden waste payment process and other improvements to digital technology and service processes.</p> <p><b>Prioritisation of Services (PoS):</b> identification of priority services required and how to deliver them set as part of 2018 mini-restructure.</p> <p><b>Organisational Form &amp; Culture:</b> Opportunities for review of partnership working, such as combined working on a new finance system with Hastings Borough Council, the formation of the new East Sussex Building Control Service hosted by Wealden District Council, and most recently the transfer of Joint Waste Team to Wealden District Council and the Sussex Training Consortium management transferred to Adur and Worthing Council.</p>
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## AIM 2: Sustainable Economic Prosperity

PROJECT NAME	DUE DATE	UPDATE
<p><b>CA2.01: North East Bexhill Master plan Delivery (BX2)</b> Ensure appropriate, sustainable development of residential, community, retail and employment sites. Relates to Local Plan site: BX2</p>	31-Dec-2018	<p>Project completed: this project was to work with developers to bring the allocated site within the Local Plan (BX2) forward, achieving planning permission and mobilising works on site. The outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gateway Street planning permission granted, road constructed and in use.</li> <li>• Northern employment area granted outline planning permission (15,000sqm) and first building occupied (Glovers House).</li> <li>• Additional northern employment area granted outline planning permission (7,000sqm) and first building under construction (High Weald House).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barratt Homes development planning permission (108 dwellings) granted and nearing completion. Two additional wheelchair units granted August 2017.</li> <li>• Bovis Homes development outline planning permission granted (1,050 dwellings, 7,000sqm employment floor space, primary school, open space and commercial uses) commenced.</li> <li>• Marstons pub and hotel on northern employment area. Planning permission granted, development close to commencing.</li> <li>• North East Access road is opened March 2019 – connecting this part of Bexhill to Ninfield Road.</li> </ul> <p>It is expected that the delivery of these sites will be considered for inclusion within the next Corporate Plan/Programme to ensure the strategic objectives are being met.</p>
<p><b>CA2.02: North East Bexhill Master plan Delivery (BX3)</b> Ensure appropriate, sustainable development of residential, community, retail and employment sites. Relates to Local Plan site: BX3</p>	30-Mar-2019	<p><b>Project completed:</b> this project was to work with developers to bring the allocated site within the Local Plan (BX3) forward, achieving planning permission. The outputs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permission granted for the erection of 139 residential units (including 30% affordable), together with associated car parking, cycle storage, open space, landscaping and provision of new vehicular access from Watergate: RR/2017/2441/P.</li> <li>• Outline planning issued for a Business park for up to 33,500sqm (net internal area) of employment floor space (within Use Classes B1 and B2) with roads and ancillary infrastructure and services: RR/2017/2181/P.</li> </ul> <p>It is expected that the delivery of these sites will be considered for inclusion within the next Corporate Plan/Programme to ensure the strategic objectives are being met.</p>
<p><b>CA2.03: Blackfriars, Battle</b> Work with adjacent landowners to facilitate the development of housing</p>	31-Mar-2021	<p><b>Project in progress</b> This will see the delivery of 200 homes via the new local housing company Alliance Homes (Rother) Limited, 30% of which will be affordable. Homes England Housing Infrastructure Fund award of £8.7m Planning Application has been approved. Land assembly nearing completion (CPO to be enforced as appropriate)</p>

		Nominated for an 'Inside Housing' national award. Road construction contractor appointed – to be mobilised Spring 2021 Housing development contractor to be appointed by Alliance Homes (Rother) Limited to start late Summer 2021.
<b>CA2.04: Camber Regeneration</b> Redevelopment of key sites in Camber, in line with the adopted Masterplan	31-Mar-2021	<b>Project in progress</b> The Camber Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) sets out the overarching Vision for the village and provides guidance for future development. A viability/options report has been drafted for Strategic Management Team to discuss income and costs from East Sussex County Council regarding various land holdings.
<b>CA2.05: Bexhill Town Centre Strategy Programme</b> Delivery of the adopted Town Centre Strategy	30-Jun-2021	<b>Project in progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works to Sackville Roundabout commenced early in 2017.</li> <li>• Replacement trees in the town centre and maintenance works to existing trees due to start in Spring 2017.</li> <li>• Summer of Events rail poster campaign in 2016 was successful.</li> <li>• Best for Business Conference held at the DLWP in October 2016.</li> <li>• Improved highways signage for Wainwright Road car park underway with East Sussex County Council.</li> <li>• Cabinet 4.11.19 agreed new Terms of Reference.</li> <li>• Two resident representatives were selected for a years' term following an application and interview process – this was put on hold due to COVID-19.</li> <li>• The steering group decided that the town centre strategy was not the best use of money post COVID-19 and needed to wait to see lay of land (town centre retail). Cabinet report for rest of Section 106 money to be devolved to town centre steering group to support local projects (Feb 2021).</li> </ul>
<b>CA2.06: Development of Key Employment Sites</b> Enabling development of key employment sites	31-Mar-2021	<b>Project in progress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The list of key RDC owned sites were prioritised. This does not extend to all available target sites in Rother, e.g. Barnhorn Green; Glovers site 3, Mount View Street. These were individually assessed for viability using the prom-forma delivery strategy (approved at Cabinet March 2019).</li> </ul>



		<p>Funding allocated (£1.25m) to bring forward the West Trading Estate (Beeching Road and Wainwright Road).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Development and Site Allocation (DaSA) examination took place in May 2019. This project continues to review allocated sites in the DaSA and relevant Neighbourhood Plans to assess the potential for RDC involvement and discuss with planners.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CA2.07: Promoting Economic Development in the Rye Area</b> Stimulate economic growth in Rye and the surrounding area by joining up existing and planned initiatives and cross-border partnership working with neighbouring councils</p>	<p>31-Mar-2021</p>	<p><b>Project in progress</b> This was a programme of projects being delivered either directly by RDC or by partnership organisations. The eight projects identified for delivery and partnership monitoring are set out below, each with its broad objective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Rye Neighbourhood Plan:</b> No hearing was required by the Examiner. Referendum held 27 June with a positive result. Went to Cabinet and Full Council on 8 July to be 'made'</li> <li><b>Rye Harbour Development &amp; Site Allocations:</b> The Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan was adopted by full Council on 16 December 2019.</li> <li><b>Rock Channel East Development:</b> Rye Partnership signed off the Feasibility study and opened pre-app discussions regarding redevelopment of the residential units at the Fisheries site.</li> <li><b>Tilling Green Housing:</b> The site is allocated in the draft Rye Neighbourhood Plan for up to 20 residential units and a community centre.</li> <li><b>High Speed Rail:</b> SE franchise bidder announcement extended to April 20. The competition for the next SE Franchise was terminated. Direct award contract awarded to incumbent Govia.</li> <li><b>Rother Owned Land:</b> Proposals are being worked up for Cyprus Place Depot. This site is allocated for residential development in the draft Rye NP.</li> <li><b>Dungeness Complex Sustainable Access Strategy:</b> The Development and Site Allocations (DaSA) Local Plan was adopted by Full Council on 16 December 2019: incorporate into the policies.</li> <li><b>Tourist Information Provision: PROJECT COMPLETED:</b> contract successfully let from April 2018 to March 2021.</li> </ul>



<p><b>CA2.08: Superfast Broadband Rollout</b> Work with ESCC to release information on areas with superfast broadband installed in the press and on the website / social media</p>	31-Mar-2021	<p><b>Project completed</b> This project was led by ESCC (and is ongoing), but RDC's element delivered four main <b>outputs</b>:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A presentation by ESCC to OSC.</li> <li>2. A website page directing residents to the ESCC e-Sussex pages.</li> <li>3. Annual articles in the Members' Bulletin (handed over to service delivery).</li> <li>4. A communications plan in place with ESCC Communications team for using social media for SFBB updates (handed over to service delivery).</li> </ol> <p>The <b>outcomes</b> will be measured and reported by ESCC e-Sussex team on their website and will be included in the Members' Bulletin articles - see 1 March 2018 issue as an example.</p>
<p><b>CA2.09: Barnhorn Road Development</b> Creating units providing increased employment space</p>	31-Mar-2020	<p><b>Project in progress</b> The main housing development is underway with several units occupied. RDC has purchased the land allocated for employment and is currently working on the planning application for a GP surgery and employment units. It is expected to cost in the region of £10m. A Growing Places Fund loan of £1.75m has been secured which has been set at 2% below interest. The remainder will be funded through Public Working Loans Board (PWLB) borrowing, offset by rent from tenants, to provide an income stream for the council whilst delivering much needed improved healthcare and business growth. This programme for delivery is delayed due to key partners, being the local GPs and the Clinical Commissioning Group, having higher priorities throughout 2020/21 due to Covid-19 response requirements.</p>
<p><b>CA2.10: RCPA2.10 Skills Development</b> Facilitate discussions between education establishments and business</p>	31-Mar-2021	<p><b>Project in progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Employment and Skills Plan:</b> Bovis Homes Section 106 Skills and Development Plans: contract signed, skills plan to be delivered. Local Employment skills plan launch 24 July 2019 at RDC Town Hall.</li> <li>• <b>Supporting Individuals into training or employment:</b> Creative Incubator space in Bexhill: Local Growth Fund bid for Beeching Road development successful (ref: CA1.04). This has enabled the conversion of poor-quality light industrial units to provide a creative hub to facilitate the growth of creative industries – phase two works out for tender (April 2021).</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Jobs &amp; Apprenticeships Fair</b> took place on 5 April 2019. COVID-19 meant the 2020 event could not take place. Since the inception of this annual event, there have been 210 exhibitors, 1,800 attendees, and 160 opportunities created.</li> <li>• <b>RDC Apprentices</b> – Since 2014, the Council has supported 16 apprentices, with seven currently employed and undertaking qualifications (2021).</li> </ul>
<b>CA2.11: Community Infrastructure Levy</b> To develop, deliver and administer a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) charging schedule	30-Jun-2016	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIL external examination carried out August to September 2015.</li> <li>• CIL adopted by Full Council December 2015.</li> <li>• CIL implemented April 2016.</li> </ul>

### AIM 3: Stronger Safer Communities

PROJECT NAME	DUE DATE	UPDATE
<b>CA3.01: Development of old Bexhill High school site</b> To provide a landmark leisure destination; to deliver comprehensive development plan for the site as per Local Plan Policy BX9	31-Mar-2020	<b>Project in progress</b> An outline planning application was given delegated authority for approval subject to completion of a Section 106 agreement. The Land Swap agreement with East Sussex County Council is due to be completed summer 2021. Due to COVID-19 and the uncertainty in leisure provision in the future, a decision was taken by Cabinet to put the leisure centre element on hold until there is more certainty on the leisure industry and local demand. Cabinet agreed that the residential development should still progress as part of the planned acceleration of housing delivery. Officers are working with appointed architects to prepare and submit a reserved matters application for up to 52 new homes.

<p><b>CA3.02: Active Rother Programme</b> Encourage greater physical activity and promote healthier lifestyles</p>	31-Mar-2018	<p><b>Project completed</b> The Getting Rother Active project delivered an extensive activity programme, with 3,100 actual participants attending regular activities leading to a total throughput of over 11,000. Several training programmes for activity leaders and volunteers were also delivered as well as one-off events such as the annual summer 'Be Active' days. The project exceeded the targets set by Sport England, the main funder.</p> <p>The University of Brighton has finished the external evaluation of the project highlighting many successes alongside the learning that has come from the project. This reinforces that the Council can apply, manage and successfully deliver a project which can benefit the lives of local residents. The next period will include the publishing of an updated Active Rother strategy, delivered through service operations. This will form the basis of how the Council moves forward with partners to encourage more active and healthy lifestyles for residents.</p>
<p><b>CA3.03: Private Sector Housing Renewal</b> Tackle issues in the private rented housing market in line with regeneration principles and to pilot a new approach to raise standards in the private rented sector</p>	31-Mar-2021	<p><b>Project in progress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Environmental Health department is a registered member of NAPIT (the National Association of Professional Inspectors and Testers); this serves as a contact point for RDC and assists Private Sector Housing officers in dealing with electrical hazards.</li> <li>• There is a current focus on dealing with Empty Properties.</li> <li>• 'Project Discovery' has been instrumental in locating licensable housing/HMOs with a focus made on hotel and restaurant staff houses. This is an ongoing service-based project as new HMOs are constantly being created.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CA3.04: Housing Development Programme</b> Enable the delivery of affordable homes across the district to meet housing needs</p>	31-Mar-2020	<p><b>Project completed</b> <b>Phase 1 completed:</b> this delivered 392 affordable homes across the district: including: two Extra care schemes for older people; three Local Rural housing needs developments, known as 'rural exception sites'; a specialist supported housing scheme for residents with mental health needs; three sheltered housing schemes and; two older persons housing schemes.</p>

		<b>Phase 2 completed:</b> Six projects were scoped as a result of the actions proposed by the Housing Task and Finish Group. Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeper strategy adopted and implemented. Alliance Homes (Rother) Limited set up as a local housing company to accelerate the delivery of homes in the district.
<b>CA3.05: Bringing Rother's Empty Homes Back Into Use</b> Setting up an information, advice and assistance service for empty home owners	31-Mar-2016	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Website live for information on how to deal with empty homes: <a href="https://www.rother.gov.uk/empty-residential-properties">https://www.rother.gov.uk/empty-residential-properties</a></li> <li>Online form for reporting empty homes live on website page.</li> <li>Outcomes to be monitored through the Council's service delivery.</li> </ul>
<b>CA3.06: Council Tax Reduction Scheme</b> Lead on county-wide Council Tax Reduction Scheme to include full scheme rules and full consultation	29-Apr-2016	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New scheme drafted and consultation carried out.</li> <li>Scheme in force April 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>CA3.07: Welfare Reform Rollout</b> Manage the impact of the welfare reform roll-out and manage the impact on staffing following introduction of Universal Credit	30-Jul-2017	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Council Tax Reduction Scheme project delivered (ref. CA3.06).</li> <li>Schemes, funding and initial projects delivered to manage the impact of Welfare Reform. ESCC lead: information sharing with delivery partners.</li> <li>Rollout of Universal Credit in Eastern part of Rother (reporting to Hastings Job Centre+) completed December 2016. Rest of Rother went live July 2017.</li> </ul>
<b>CA3.08: Walking and Cycling Strategy</b> Support the development, delivery and implementation of a Walking and Cycling Strategy for Rother.	31-Dec-2018	<b>Project completed</b> This project was initially focussed on RDC's role in supporting ESCC in the development of a County-wide Walking and Cycling Strategy. However, tangible actions have been delivered across the district to promote walking and cycling, which exceeded initial project expectations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>242 organised Health Walks, led by 25 trained leaders across locations in Rother throughout 2018, contributing nearly 700 volunteer hours.</li> <li>Working with East Sussex and Hastings councils, Sustrans and Developers in setting out plans for an integrated, safe Cycle Network.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The annual 1066 Cycling Festival attracts around 350 people each year, helping these partners to promote cycling participation and use of the network.</li> </ul>
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#### AIM 4: A Quality Physical Environment

PROJECT NAME	DUE DATE	UPDATE
<b>CA4.01: Improving Recycling Rates in Rother</b> Management of recycling contract to improve recycling rates across Rother	31-Mar-2018	<b>Project completed</b> Rother led on the East Sussex Joint Waste Partnership and has improved recycling rates in the District. In 2018/19 we reused, recycled or composted over 47% of household waste, which is a 2% increase since 2014. We're currently the 2nd highest collection authority for doorstep recycling in East Sussex.
<b>CA4.02: Fuel Poverty</b> Work with partners to advise residents regarding range of options available	31-Mar-2017	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Officers in customer services and private sector housing have been trained to identify households living in fuel poverty and be able to direct households to sources of advice and funding.</li> <li>The East Sussex Energy Partnership (ESEP) has set up a website 'warmeastsussex', which provides information on home energy efficiency and grants available to the fuel poor. This website acts as a resource to all visiting Officers. Officers have been advised to use the site, so they can advise their clients. The website will be maintained by the ESEP Co-ordinator.</li> <li>The Council continues to participate with the work of the ESEP. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on fuel poverty and the work of ESEP.</li> <li>Outcomes are reported to HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act), and the online report from RDC can be found here: <a href="http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/2425/Fuel-poverty">http://www.rother.gov.uk/article/2425/Fuel-poverty</a></li> <li>Front line staff training will continue through the provision of an on-line course, attendance at half day courses provided by the East Sussex Energy Partnership and training will provided to Customer Services</li> </ul>

		Assistants at their weekly training sessions. The Council will continue to be an active member of the ESEP and refer residents to the Winter Home Check service, which allows residents to benefit from any available grant funding.
<b>CA4.03: Collective Energy Switching</b> Facilitate and signpost residents to switch energy supplier and achieve savings	31-Mar-2016	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 170 residents registered on the database, with 101 of those switching</li> <li>• Estimated average savings for those 101 households are in the region of £280 per year</li> </ul>
<b>CA4.04: Coastal Environments</b> Continue improvements to coastal environment	31-Mar-2021	<b>Project in progress</b> Heritage Lottery Fund applications for a 'whole project' approach to conservation and improvement of the public realm promenade were unsuccessful despite multiple attempts. Officers have been working in collaboration with Bexhill Heritage to conserve and restore the seafront shelters An ESCC highway project to achieve replacement of the street lighting like-for-like in keeping with the ornamental scheme. All 30 lanterns have been replaced. Ongoing seafront public realm management is to be taken forward as business as usual as not highlighted as a priority in the new draft Corporate Plan.
<b>CA4.05: Combe Valley Countryside Park</b> Secure the future management and success of the park	31-Mar-2016	<b>Project completed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Interest Company (CIC) established for management of the park.</li> <li>• Funding secured from NE Bexhill developer contributions in the region of £100,000 per year over 10 years.</li> <li>• Visitor centre opened May 2016.</li> </ul>

## Corporate Programme 2014-2021: estimated value and spend to 31 March 2021

PROJECTS	Project Status	Project valuations and funding					Actual Spend to 31/03/2021 (rounded up to nearest £1k)
		Estimated Project value (rounded up to nearest £1k)	RDC committed Funding or RDC internal borrowing (rounded down to nearest £1k)	Allocated from PIP/PIS £35m borrowing (rounded down to nearest £1k)	External funding received (rounded down to nearest £1k)	External funding expected (rounded down to nearest £1k)	
<b>Efficient, Flexible and Effective Council</b>							
Member Development	Completed	22,000	(22,000)				22,000
Better Connected programme:	Completed						
Better Connected: Phase 1: Telephony & integration		475,000	(475,000)				475,000
Better Connected: Phase 2: Website		23,000	(23,000)				23,000
Workforce Development	In progress						
RDC Asset Management Plan	In progress	1,455,000	(25,000)	(290,000)	(960,000)		460,333
ROTHER 20/20 (Service Resetting)	Completed	277,000	(277,000)				n/a
R2020 property investment: Terminus Rd		899,000		(899,000)			899,000
R2020 property investment: Glovers House		7,960,000		(7,960,000)			7,960,000
R2020 property investment: 18-40 Beeching Rd		881,000		(881,000)			881,000
R2020 property investment: 16 Beeching Rd		881,000		(881,000)			881,000
R2020 property investment: 1-7 Wainwright Rd		1,000		(1,000)			1,000
R2020 property investment: Jempsons Battle		3,311,000		(3,311,000)			3,311,000
R2020 solar panels		46,000	(39,000)		(7,000)		46,000
<b>Sustainable Economic Prosperity</b>							
North East Bexhill Masterplan Delivery (BX2)	Completed						
North East Bexhill Masterplan Delivery (BX3)	Completed						
Blackfriars, Battle	In progress	70,198,000	(1,200,000)			(8,727,000)	957,427
Camber Regeneration	In progress						
Bexhill Town Centre Strategy Delivery: s106 funds	In progress	100,000			(100,000)		65,000
Development of Key Employment Sites	In progress	30,000	(30,000)				30,000
Promoting Economic Development in the Rye Area	In progress						
Superfast Broadband Rollout	Completed						
Barnhorn Road Development	In progress	10,638,000		(10,638,000)			693,756
Skills Development	In progress	80,000			(80,000)		8,000
Community Infrastructure Levy	Completed	23,000	(23,000)				23,000
<b>Stronger, Safer Communities</b>							
Destination Leisure: Bexhill	On hold	15,105,000	(1,693,000)		(3,538,000)		111,000
King Offa Residential: Bexhill	In progress	11,420,000	(420,000)				20,724
Active Rother Programme	Completed	300,000	(91,000)		(210,000)		300,000
Private Sector Housing Renewal	In progress	69,000	(69,000)				69,000
Housing Development Programme	Completed	9,000	(9,000)				9,000
HDP Phase 1: Council Led Housing Development project		250,000	(250,000)				34,188
HDP Phase 2: Housing strategy and implementation of LHC							
Bringing Rother's Empty Homes Back into Use	Completed						
Council Tax Reduction Scheme	Completed						
Welfare Reform Rollout	Completed						
Walking and Cycling Strategy	Completed						
<b>A Quality Physical Environment</b>							
Improving Recycling Rates in Rother	Completed						
Fuel Poverty	Completed	1,000	(1,000)				1,000
Collective Energy Switching	Completed	1,000	(1,000)				1,000
Coastal Environments (Fairlight Berm £1.5m/East Parade £1m)	In progress	2,500,000	(68,000)		(1,500,000)	(932,000)	1,517,000
Combe Valley Countryside Park	Completed	20,000	(20,000)				20,000
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>126,975,000</b>	<b>(4,736,000)</b>	<b>(24,861,000)</b>	<b>(6,395,000)</b>	<b>(9,659,000)</b>	<b>18,819,428</b>



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## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Corporate Plan Consultation Response and Corporate Programme 2020 - 2027

**Report of:** Ben Hook – Head of Service, Acquisitions Transformation, and Regeneration

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Vine-Hall

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To update Members on the outcome of the consultation for the draft Corporate Plan 2020-2027 and to present the draft Corporate Programme 2020-2027.

**Decision Type:** Key

### Officer

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

- 1) draft Corporate Plan (at Appendix A) be adopted, subject to any amendments requested by Cabinet as a result of the consultation; and
- 2) draft Corporate Programme (at Appendix C) be adopted.

### AND

It be **RESOLVED:** That subject to the approval of full Council, a Corporate Programme Board of Members and senior officers, to be appointed by the Leader of the Council, be established to monitor the delivery of the Corporate Programme 2020-2027.

### Corporate Plan Consultation

1. Rother District Council approved a public consultation exercise on its draft Corporate Plan (Appendix A) at the Cabinet meeting on [11 January 2021](#) (Minute CB20/87 refers). The consultation started on 3 February (website went live on 1 February) and closed on 17 March 2021, which is a six-week duration.
2. This consultation was promoted in MyAlerts (w/c 8 February and 1 March) and in multiple social media posts on our Twitter and Facebook accounts and in a media release. Invitations to take part were emailed to a wide selection of 127 business organisations, voluntary organisations, schools, colleges, public bodies, leisure and interest groups and organisations across Rother. This included all the town and parish councils in Rother. In addition, 400 residents in the Rother Citizens Panel received an invitation email to take part.

3. A total of 133 responses were received. We received responses from 113 residents and 3 visitors to Rother. Due to this low response level it makes the margin of error higher or it is a bit less likely to be a true representation of views compared to receiving more responses. Four internal services responded: Neighbourhood Services, Planning Policy, Customer Services and Environment Strategy. We had responses from 13 local and regional organisations, which are listed below:

- Rye Conservation Society
- Bexhill Chamber of Commerce and Tourism
- Sussex NHS Commissioners
- Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum
- Young Person's Housing, East Sussex County Council
- Rother Greenways
- Rother Environmental Group
- Bexhill Heritage
- Battle Town Council
- Brede Parish Council
- Peasmarsh Parish Council
- Sedlescombe Parish Council
- 1066 Cycle Club

### Summary of Results from 133 Responses

4. All objectives had majority support. Several suggestions were made for additional objectives and additional actions.
- a. **Climate emergency** – all organisations responding on this objective and 84% of the public agreed this should be an objective. All the proposed actions had majority support.
  - b. **Financial stability** – all responding organisations agreed with this objective and its actions. The public supported the objective by a majority and most actions had majority support. The exception was raising business rates income received and comments suggest this was because it was interpreted as raising the business rates from existing businesses as opposed to increasing income through having more local businesses.
  - c. **Affordable housing supply** – all organisations agreed with this objective and the majority agreed with all the actions. 78% of the public agreed with the objective and there was majority agreement for all of the action plan. Some terms were confusing for the public.
  - d. **Housing list reduction** – all organisations agreed with having this objective and there was majority agreement from organisations for all the actions. From the public, 77% agreed there should be this objective and majority agreement with all of the action plan. Some terms or references were confusing for the public.

- e. **5-year housing supply** – the majority of organisations agreed with having this objective and the majority agreed with the action plan. From the public, 59% agreed this should be an objective. The majority of the public agreed with the action plan. The exception was bringing forward rural exception sites where agreement and disagreement was even and about one in five people didn't know either way. Some of the language for this objective was confusing for the public.
  - f. **An empowered organisation** – the majority of organisations disagreed that this objective should be included but the majority agreed with the proposed actions. For the public, 61% agreed with having this objective and the majority agreed with the action plan.
  - g. **A fairer society** – All responding organisations agreed that the council should adopt this objective. The majority of organisations agreed with proposed actions. For the public, 74% agreed with having this objective and the majority agreed with the action plan.
  - h. **Development of Rother's economy** – The majority of responding organisations agreed with having this objective and with the action plan. This was the second highest supported objective from the public at 91%. The majority of the public agreed, at similar levels, with the proposed actions.
  - i. **An open council** – All the responding organisations agreed that the council should have this objective. The majority of organisations supported all the actions in the action plan. This was the most supported objective by the public with 92% agreeing this objective should be in the Corporate Plan. The majority also agreed with the actions.
  - j. **Bexhill Town Council** – All the responding organisations agreed with the objectives and the majority agreed with each of the actions. However, for the public only 48% agreed, 28% disagreed and 25% didn't know or were not sure, so there is not clear support. Many respondents pointed out that all but one of the actions would be delivered by mid-2021 and questioned its inclusion in a plan that runs up to 2027.
5. A more detailed analysis of all responses is provided in the consultation officer's report at Appendix B

## Amendments

6. Based on the responses through the consultation process there are no officer recommended amendments to the Corporate Plan. That being said Cabinet may take a view on certain aspects that need amending or revising, based on the consultation responses, prior to presentation to Full Council.

## **Corporate Programme**

7. The draft Corporate Programme has been developed throughout the Corporate Plan consultation period with Corporate Management Team (CMT) and council officers.
8. The draft Corporate Plan was analysed for actions and milestones that were assessed as being appropriate for delivery as corporate priority projects. 23 projects have been identified and these are attached as a list in appendix C. The remaining actions, milestones and targets set out in the Corporate Plan will be delivered and monitored through service plans and performance reporting.
9. CMT allocated officers across the council to take the lead as managers for the identified projects. Programme Office has been working with the lead officers to develop scopes for each of these.
10. The scopes will be presented to a newly formed Programme Board to review and assess if the projects will meet the vision and priorities of the new Corporate Plan. This Programme Board will initially consist of the Chief Executive, the s.151 Officer and 3 Members as appointed by the Leader of the Council, however this may be subject to change as necessary for the effective monitoring of the programme. The key aspects of the scopes to be considered by Programme Board are as follows:
  - a. Project manager, project executive and project champion
  - b. Objective (aim), outputs (deliverables) and outcomes (measurable difference)
  - c. Key milestones
  - d. Estimated budget
  - e. High risks
11. Once scopes have been approved, the key aspects will be monitored centrally by Programme Office using a bespoke programme management system that has been created by the Digital Transformation Team. Programme Office provides a support service to project managers to ensure effective and efficient progression.
12. Programme Office will prepare a quarterly report to Programme Board presenting progress of projects, including key achievements, budget monitoring, and high and emerging risks and issues. Where key changes are required, this will be managed through a change control process to be agreed by Programme Board. Any new opportunities for projects that will support the achievement of the Corporate Plan vision and priorities will be presented as they arise.
13. An annual report on progress of the Corporate Programme will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee.

## **Conclusion**

14. The Corporate Plan provides the strategic direction for the Council and will shape the work programmes and service plans of officers throughout this time

period. The Corporate Programme articulates those projects that are critical for the delivery of the aims and objectives set out in the Plan.

15. The Corporate Plan has now been through the public consultation process and is ready for recommendation to Council, subject to any amendments requested by Cabinet.

### Financial Implications

16. The Corporate Plan will set the strategic direction of the Council for the immediate future. This will influence spending decisions and budget setting. It should also be noted that additional funds may be required to deliver the projects as set out in the Corporate Programme. These funds will be requested as necessary on a project by project basis.

### Alignment to the Environment Strategy

17. Both the Corporate Plan and Corporate Programme positively add to the ambitions in the Environment Strategy. Delivery of those projects and targets stated will critical in meeting the 2030 net carbon zero declaration.

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
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

Proper Officer:	Ben Hook
Report Contact Officer:	Joanne Wright/Cheryl Poole
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:joanne.wright@rother.gov.uk">joanne.wright@rother.gov.uk</a> / <a href="mailto:cheryl.poole@rother.gov.uk">cheryl.poole@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	A: Draft Corporate Plan B:
Relevant Previous Minutes:	cb20/87
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	

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[www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

Rother District Council  
Corporate Plan 2020 - 2027

[www.rother.gov.uk](http://www.rother.gov.uk)

Financial stability

Prosperity and economic development

## OUR VISION

To put residents at the heart of all we do

Increasing the supply of affordable homes across the District

Delivering more effective services

Protecting the natural environment and tackling climate change

Empowering our people and strengthening our processes and resources



# PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

## **CLIMATE EMERGENCY**

To establish and deliver a plan to ensure Rother District Council is carbon neutral by 2030.

## **FINANCIAL STABILITY**

To rectify the financial deficit and bring the Council to a secure financial footing by the end of 2025/26.

## **INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOMES THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT**

To deliver 400 affordable rent homes by end 2023.

## **HOUSING LIST REDUCTION**

To reduce the Rother Housing list from 1,600 (as at December 2019) to 1,200 by the end of 2023.

## **HOUSING**

To bring Rother above a 5-year land supply by the end of 2023.

## **EMPOWERED ORGANISATION**

To create an organisational structure that allows for a clearer, more effective resident focused organisation by the end of 2023.

## **A FAIRER SOCIETY**

To build a fairer society by promoting acceptance and equality in the District, developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy to improve existing support services and identifying new ways of working in collaboration with the voluntary sector to reduce poverty and hardship within the District.

## **DEVELOPMENT OF ROTHER'S ECONOMY**

To lift the average indexed wage in the Rother District from the bottom of the national league table by the end of 2023.

## **AN OPEN COUNCIL**

To improve access to Council meetings, ensuring increased transparency, meaningful consultation and better visibility by the end of 2023.

## **A TOWN COUNCIL FOR BEXHILL-ON-SEA**

To form a Parish (Town) Council for Bexhill with effect from 1 April 2021 with the first elections in May 2021.

# CLIMATE EMERGENCY

To establish and deliver a plan to ensure Rother District Council is carbon neutral by 2030.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
By ensuring that the new Local Plan (2019-39) includes policies that demand higher bio-diversity net gain measures from developments than required by the National Planning Policy Framework, subject to evidence gathering and allowances within the regulations.	Evidence gathering 2020-22.  Investigate the extent to which the Local Plan can demand additional environmental measures in developments.  Progression through Local Plan.	Regulation 18 consultation - Autumn 2021, Regulation 19 consultation Autumn/Winter 2022, Submission to PINS Spring 2023, Adoption Winter 2023.
By focusing a proportion of the Rother Community Grants and Community Infrastructure Levy on infrastructure projects which reduce carbon emissions.		
Increase the proportion of waste that is recycled by Rother residents.	Proportion of recycling is increased to 53%.	31/12/23
By actively managing our green spaces to maximise carbon reduction effectiveness.	Develop an Asset Management Plan for green assets.	31/12/21
By ensuring carbon reduction clauses are included in all new Council contracts.	Each new contract as it arises.	31/12/23
By installing Electric Vehicle charging points to be installed in appropriate Rother District Council car parks.	Installation of Electric Vehicle Charging into Rother District Council Car Parks to begin where viable.	31/12/21

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
By developing a plan to ensure all Rother District Council assets are carbon neutral or have carbon offsets scheduled equally over the period 2021-2030.	Proposals for dealing with Town Hall, Bexhill.	31/12/2024
	Develop an Asset Management Plan and improvement programme for entire estate.	31/12/22
By Incentivising Parish and Town Councils to adopt climate emergency policies.	Establish list of the Parish and Town Councils Climate policies.	31/03/21
	Make the adoption of such a policy a requirement for accessing environment related funding or grants.	31/03/22

# FINANCIAL STABILITY

To rectify the financial deficit and bring the Council to a secure financial footing by the end of 2025/26.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
Continue to bring forward secure property investments which generate current net income.	Extra income £73,000 Extra income £1,716,000 Extra income £2,995,000 Extra income £3,353,000 Extra income £3,449,000	31/03/22 21/03/23 31/03/24 31/03/25 31/03/25
Monetising and maximising financial return on income from Rother assets wherever possible.	Rent reviews Surplus assets disposal Strategic redevelopment	2025
	Identify secondary income opportunities from assets (e.g. energy storage/production).	2022
Devolve discretionary assets and services to Parish and Town Councils and other bodies where possible.	Devolve non charged-for Car Parks to Parish and Town Councils.	31/03/22
	Devolve control of Parks and Gardens to Parish and Town Councils.	31/03/22
	Devolve control of public conveniences to Parish and Town Councils.	31/03/22
	Savings of £1,350,000	31/03/25

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
	Additional income generation through increased or new fees for discretionary services: £107,000 £202,000	31/03/22 31/03/23
Increase the amount of business rates generated and collected locally.	Proactively attract and retain high value businesses in the Rother District through new developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barnhorn Green</li> <li>• Beeching Road/Wainwright Road</li> <li>• Bexhill Enterprise Park</li> </ul> Other developments throughout the District where possible.	2023 2024 2023
Reorganise the Council's corporate structure to reduce cost delivering and greater efficiency.	Removing incorrect discounts/exemptions.  Bringing unrated businesses into NNDR (Business Rates Baseline).	31/03/24  31/03/23
	Savings of £78,000 staffing structure.	31/03/22

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
	Savings of £180,000 council transformation through delivery of lean/demand recommendations.	31/3/22
Investigating shared services to improve resilience.	Identify potential partners where shared service viable and report to Cabinet.	31/12/21
	Prioritise Services to be delivered as shared service and develop delivery programme.	31/03/22
Bring forward a programme of innovative plans to generate income enabling costs to be offset and improvements in service delivery.	Create Member/Officer work group to identify and develop proposals.	31/03/21
	Prioritise proposals and develop delivery programme.	30/09/21

# INCREASE THE SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT

To deliver 400 affordable rent homes by end 2023

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
By ensuring that schemes being progressed by Registered Providers and private developers are delivered within expected timescales.	85 new affordable homes delivered.	31/03/21
	106 new affordable homes delivered.	31/03/22
	118 new affordable homes delivered.	31/03/23
Work with landowners and Registered Providers to begin delivery on stalled sites with planning permission.	Begin development on two stalled sites to deliver at least 30 Affordable Rent homes.	31/12/23
Direct development of Affordable Rent homes through the Alliance Homes (Rother) delivery vehicle.	61 affordable rent homes delivered.	31/12/23

# HOUSING LIST REDUCTION

To reduce the Rother Housing list from 1600 (as at December 2019) to 1200 by end 2023.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
Increase supported housing options to meet identified temporary accommodation needs.	20 new units of supported temporary accommodation delivered.	31/03/22
	30 further new units of supported temporary accommodation delivered.	31/03/23
Increase the number of adaptations made to the homes of disabled people and support them to sustain their accommodation through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)*.	150 DFGs completed annually.	31/03/22
Support those at risk of homelessness to sustain their accommodation through the provision of Discretionary Housing Benefit*.	Provide help to at least 200 households annually.	31/12/23
Direct development of new homes through the Alliance Homes (Rother) delivery vehicle to increase the supply of housing in all tenure types across the District.	253 Homes completed.	31/12/23
Prevent and relieve homelessness by improving access to the private rented sector through the Rother Tenant Finder Scheme (RTF).	The RTF Scheme to achieve 100 private rented sector tenancies per annum.	31/03/23
Support the most vulnerable households with multiple and complex support needs to access accommodation through multi-agency service delivery.	Through continued investment in the East Sussex Rough Sleeping Initiative relieve or prevent 30 people from rough sleeping annually.	31/03/21



ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
	Grow and sustain the Bexhill Safe Space in collaboration with local support groups.	31/03/21
Deliver effective social housing allocations through the implementation of a revised Housing Allocations Policy for Rother and by adjusting the Rother Local Plan to prioritise the type of affordable housing delivered for those in Band A.	New Social Housing Allocations Policy implemented.	30/10/21

\* Some targets will indirectly contribute towards a reduction in the housing list through increasing overall supply and homelessness prevention measures.

# HOUSING

To bring Rother above a 5-year land supply by end 2023.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
<p>Deliver a new Local Plan 2019-2039 with policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed up the overall planning process.</li> <li>• Incentivise delivery of smaller sites.</li> </ul> <p>Create an environment of certainty for developers.</p>	<p>Complete evidence gathering.</p> <p>Draft plan complete</p> <p>Pre submission plan published &amp; consultation</p> <p>Submission of Plan</p> <p>Examination of Plan</p> <p>Adoption of Plan</p> <p>Implement findings of Planning Review</p>	<p>30/11/21</p> <p>28/2/22</p> <p>30/09/22</p> <p>30/11/22</p> <p>31/7/23</p> <p>30/11/23</p> <p>31/5/21</p>
<p>By achieving planning permission on Council-owned land and land owned or purchased through Alliance Homes (Rother).</p>	<p>253 Homes completed.</p>	<p>31/12/23</p>
<p>By working with the Sussex Community Housing Hub and Registered Providers to bring forward applications on rural exception sites.</p>	<p>As these arise</p>	

By attracting higher indexed wage business employment (supported by DES and the Local Regeneration Company) to new employment sites and incentivising businesses with higher indexed wages (than our current position) to both Bexhill and Rural areas which will support further housing demand. In addition to ensure the Rother Local Plan reflects a housing mix which supports the needs of incoming businesses.

Form plan to promote Rother to businesses outside the District

31/7/21

# EMPOWERED ORGANISATION

To create an organisational structure that allows for a clearer more effective, resident focused organisation by end 2023.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
<p>To review and amend the organisational structure to ensure services are delivered in an efficient and resident focused manner:</p> <p>Our aim is to reduce the number of complaints through improved self-help and the digitalisation of services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we will empower officers to make decision at the right level;</li> <li>• we will design out demand on the organisation; and</li> <li>• we will conduct an annual perception survey to identify areas in need of improvement.</li> </ul>	<p>To install a temporary management structure to reflect short-term priorities and immediate capacity issues.</p>	<p>31/01/21</p>
	<p>Conduct review of organisational structure and present recommendations for consultation.</p>	<p>31/01/22</p>
	<p>Implement new organisational structure.</p>	<p>31/06/22</p>

## A FAIRER SOCIETY

To build a fairer society by promoting acceptance and equality in the District, developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy to improve existing support services and identifying new ways of working in collaboration with the voluntary sector to reduce poverty and hardship within the District.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
For the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the District.	Recommendations for a new Anti-Poverty Strategy made for Council's consideration.	01/12/21
Improve employment access and readiness among vulnerable homeless groups.	40 homeless people supported into employment and employment readiness training annually through the Live, Work, Thrive Project.	31/03/22
Improve levels of physical activity amongst residents experiencing socio-economic deprivation and poor health outcomes.	New leisure contract delivers demonstrable improvement in levels of activity amongst residents experiencing deprivation.	31/03/21

# DEVELOPMENT OF ROTHER'S ECONOMY

To lift the average indexed wage in Rother District from the bottom of the national league table by end 2023.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
By delivering on key actions within the Rother Economic Recovery Plan.	500 additional rural homes with access to ultrafast (1GB) broadband infrastructure.	31/12/23
	15 new sustainable tourism events across Bexhill, Battle, and Rye (five per year).	31/12/23
Completion of Council-Led Commercial Developments increasing employment levels in the District.	15,000sqm of new commercial space across: Barnhorn Green, Bexhill Beeching Road, Bexhill Bexhill Enterprise Park	31/12/23
Development of new space to encourage growth of the creative sector in the District.	Phase 1 of the Bexhill Studios project to be completed and operating.	30/07/21
	Phase 2 of the Bexhill Studios project to secure funding.	30/12/23

# OPEN COUNCIL

To improve access to Council meetings, open the council to the public ensuring increased transparency, meaningful consultation and better visibility by end 2023.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
To live-stream all formal public Council meetings held in the Council Chamber to accessible platforms.	To get Cabinet approval agreeing costs/budget.	31/01/21
	To enter necessary contracts/commission installation and assess the viability of streaming directly to social media platforms.	31/09/21
	To commence live streaming of all formal public Council meetings.	31/01/22
By developing a customer service strategy, we will ensure customers are at the heart of what we do by improving accessibility to all Council Services and customer service standards across the organisation.	Customer Service Strategy developed and adopted.	31/12/21
Ensure an equality of access to all Council services to meet the diverse needs of our residents.	Strategy fully implemented	31/03/22
To modernise the way the Council operates by updating the Constitution.	Establish a Constitution Review Steering Group.	31/01/21
	Identify key areas for change.	31/03/21

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
	Consultation with all Members/Overview and Scrutiny Committee.	30/07/21
	Cabinet consider and recommends changes to Council.	31/09/21
	Full Council approval.	31/12/21
	New Constitution implemented.	31/01/22
Listening and responding to the needs and experiences of our residents.	Council survey of the needs and experiences of residents completed annually.	31/03/21



# A TOWN COUNCIL FOR BEXHILL-ON-SEA

To form a Parish (Town) Council for Bexhill with effect from 1 April 2021 and first elections in May 2021.

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
Draft the Community Governance Order (CGO) to enact the final recommendations of the Community Governance Review of Bexhill-on-Sea and establish a Parish (Town) Council.	Council approval of CGO.	31/12/20
Appoint an interim administrator to take all necessary steps to set up the initial governance structure for the Council and all other necessary administrative tasks prior to the election of the Parish (Town) Council, including the promotion of the election including the holding of events and briefing prospective candidates.	Interim Administrator appointed.	07/02/21
	Publicise the up and coming elections.	28/02/21
Work with the new Parish (Town) Council to identify and agree which assets and services will be transferred from Rother District Council to the Parish (Town) Council.	Establish a formal process for consulting with the new Parish (Town) Council on the transfer of services.	31/09/21
	Identify and agree which services will transfer from April 2022.	31/12/21
The Community Governance Review Steering Group to work with the interim administrator to make arrangements for the appointment of a permanent Parish (Town) Council clerk following the elections in May 2021.	Advertise position widely in February with closing date end of March.	31/03/21
	Shortlist drawn up ready for the new Parish (Town) Council.	30/04/21
	Interviews conducted by new Parish (Town) Council.	31/05/21

ACTIONS TO ACHIEVE OUR AIMS	MILESTONES	BY WHEN
Conduct the election of the new Parish (Town) Council in accordance with electoral legislation.	Publicise the up and coming election.	28/02/21
	Give formal notice of the election.	29/03/21
	Publish list of persons nominated.	09/04/21
	Conduct the election.	06/05/21

## **Glossary of Terms – TO BE COMPILED**

Bexhill Studios Project

CGO

DFGs

Live, Work, Thrive Project

NNDR

PINS

Regulation 18

Regulation 19

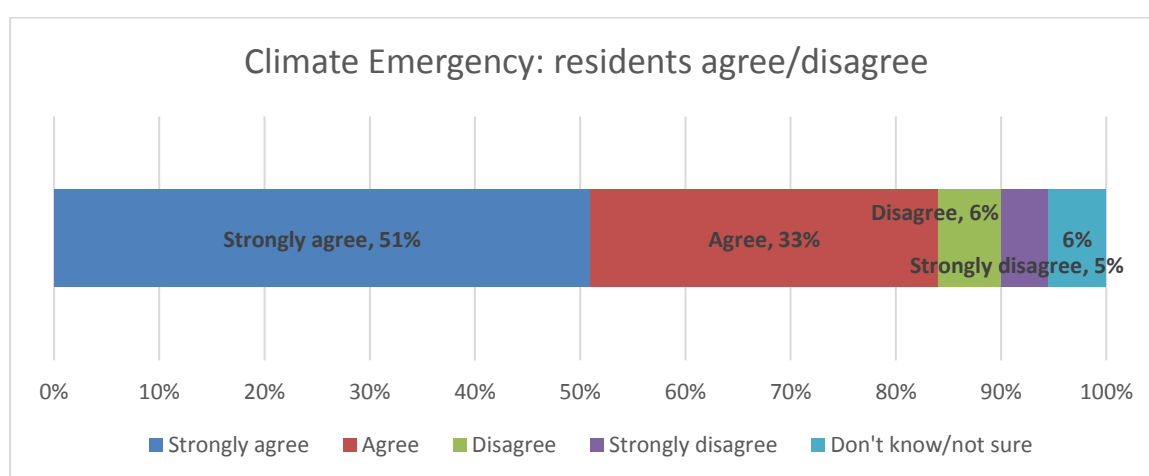
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# CONSULTATION RESULTS ANALYSIS

## Objective 1: Climate Emergency

1. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the first objective for the climate emergency. Nine local organisations answered this question and eight agreed strongly with the objective and one agreed. It should be noted that organisations did not have to comment on all objectives if they felt it was not relevant to their organisation or they had nothing to add.
2. For residents, 51% strongly agreed and 33% agreed, giving us a total of 84% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective on climate emergency. Only 13% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



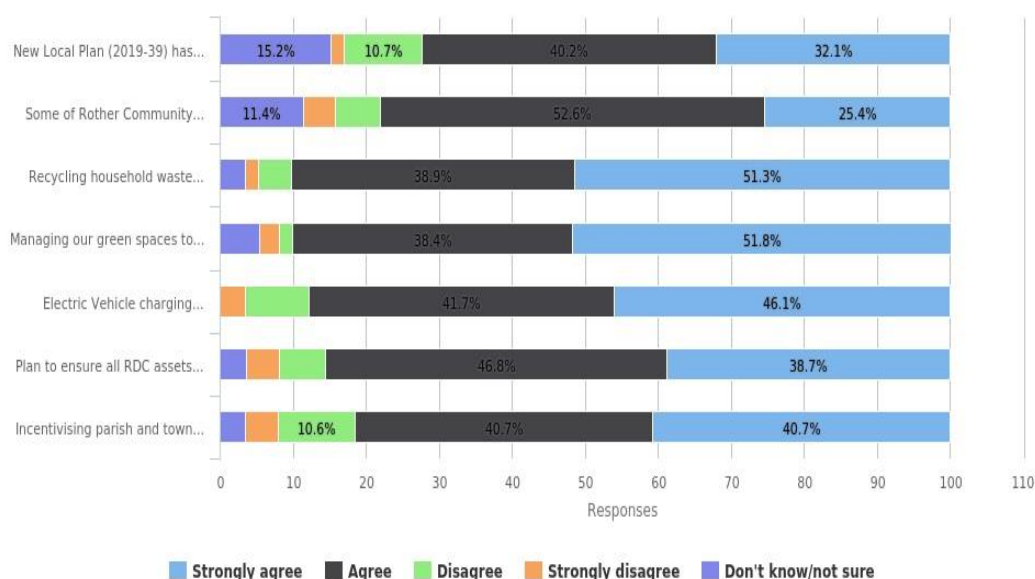
Answer	% of respondents
<b>Strongly agree</b>	51%
<b>Agree</b>	33%
<b>Disagree</b>	6%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	5%
<b>Don't know/not sure</b>	6%
<b>Total number of responses</b>	110

3. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference, as follows.
  - a) Women were more likely to strongly agree, 61%, and total agreement was from 92% of women respondents.
  - b) Bexhill residents were a little less likely to strongly agree (compared to all responses) at 45% of Bexhill respondents. However, Bexhill residents were more likely to select agree at 38% so overall responses are similar to all responses.

## Action plan for the climate emergency objective

4. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the climate emergency objective.
5. Local organisations said:
  - a) **New Local Plan** has higher biodiversity requirements: Three organisations strongly agreed and seven agreed that this action would help tackle the climate emergency.
  - b) **Rother Community Grants and CIL** going to carbon reduction projects: Five local organisations strongly agreed and seven agreed that this action would help.
  - c) **Recycling increased to 53% of household waste**: Five local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed and one organisation disagreed that this action would help.
  - d) **Managing green assets for carbon reduction**: Five local organisations agreed strongly and five agreed that this action would help. RDC's own Parks Development service commented:
  - e) **Electric vehicle charging points in council car parks**: Six local organisations strongly agree and four agreed that this action would help.
  - f) **RDC assets all carbon neutral**: Five local organisations strongly agree and four agree that this action would help.
  - g) **Incentivising town and parish councils to have climate emergency policies**: Six local organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help.
6. Residents said:
  - a) **New Local Plan** has higher biodiversity requirements: 72% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help tackle the climate emergency.
  - b) **Rother Community Grants and CIL** going to carbon reduction projects: 78% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
  - c) **Recycling increased to 53% of household waste**: 90% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
  - d) **Managing green assets for carbon reduction**: 90% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
  - e) **Electric vehicle charging points in council car parks**: 88% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
  - f) **RDC assets all carbon neutral**: 86% of residents either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Women were a bit more likely to support this action at 93% of women respondents. Working age (18-64) respondents were slightly less likely to support this action at 80%, although still a high majority agreement that this action will deliver. Bexhill residents were slightly less likely to agree/strongly agree at 80%, which is still a strong majority agreement.
  - g) **Incentivising town and parish councils to have climate emergency policies**: 82% agree or strongly agree that this action would help. Women were more likely to agree with this action at 90%.
7. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. Areas where residents were least sure and said they didn't know if it would help were the higher requirement

biodiversity policies in the Local Plan and making part of community grants and CIL funding for infrastructure carbon reduction projects. The most popular actions were electric vehicle charging points in council car parks and managing green assets for carbon reduction.



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>New Local Plan (2019-39) has higher bio-diversity policies</b>	32%	40%	11%	2%	15%	<b>112 100%</b>
<b>Rother Community Grants and Community Infrastructure Levy</b>	25%	53%	6%	4%	11%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Recycling household waste increased to 53%</b>	51%	39%	4%	2%	4%	<b>113 100%</b>
<b>Green spaces maximise carbon reduction effectiveness</b>	52%	38%	2%	3%	5%	<b>112 100%</b>
<b>Electric Vehicle charging points in car parks</b>	46%	42%	9%	4%	0%	<b>115 100%</b>
<b>RDC assets are carbon neutral or offsets</b>	39%	47%	6%	5%	4%	<b>111 100%</b>
<b>Incentivising parish and town councils to adopt climate emergency policies</b>	41%	41%	11%	4%	4%	<b>113 100%</b>

## Other matters to take into account for climate emergency

8. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **Environment Strategy Manager (RDC) – a full copy of the letter is available to Members:** I welcome that one of the priority objectives is specified as Climate Emergency; although the term Climate and Nature Emergency is more apt.

Bearing in mind that aim to ensure the Rother District Council (Council) is carbon neutral by 2030 and other environmental objectives are already articulated within the Rother Environment Strategy; as well as any future asset management strategy or a plan for the Council's entire estate. The Corporate Plan, as an overarching strategic document, is to set out and support the notion that environmental matters permeate all activities of the Council and the wider Rother district; not merely duplicating wording found in other Council's strategic documents.

Subsequently, within the Corporate Plan, Climate and Nature Emergency is not a single standalone objective; but a cross-cutting objective that permeates activities of all the other objectives e.g.: Housing (ensuring it meets not only quantity but also quality of housing in terms of energy and water efficiency and access to green spaces provision etc.); A Fairer Society (ensuring that deprived areas have equal access to quality of green spaces which can be accessed using sustainable/ active travel etc.); and Development of the Rother's economy (which is already articulated as green economy within the Rother District Economic Recovery Action Plan, The East Sussex Economy Recovery Plan as well as in the Rother Environment Strategy).

Such unique encompassing and lateral characteristic of the Climate and Nature Emergency objective must be recognised and expressed within the Corporate Plan document accordingly, if the Council is to meet its Climate and Nature Emergency commitments. This understanding of horizontal and boundless nature of the environmental issues is critical for setting out clearly and embedding a Climate and Nature Emergency centric approach to decision making across the whole organisation and all its functions.

Subsequently, another critical role of the Council to be articulated within the Corporate Plan is as an Environmental Steward committed to responsible use of natural resources, protection of ecosystems, and, where applicable, ensuring a baseline of compliance with environmental requirements.

The Environmental Steward role is about taking a full and balanced account of the interests of society, future generations, and the natural environment while accepting significant answerability to society for these actions. This is in recognition that we must take care not to degrade the natural resources that we do use, and whenever possible, restore and rehabilitate resources to their natural conditions.

The Bexhill i-tree study and a tree planting strategy, initiated last month under the Rother Environment Strategy, is an example of the environmental stewardship approach the Council is undertaking: it will calculate the value of these green assets and the annual benefits they provide; as well as a baseline for measuring how well we are doing in the future, caring for the Bexhill treescape.

In summary, the Council can be an exemplar local authority and its inspiring vision and leadership articulated within a corporate plan are to reflect this. Incorporating observations outlined in this letter into the draft Corporate Plan will cement the position of the Council as forward leading on both local communities and Climate and Nature Emergency fronts.



- b) **Parks Developments Service (RDC):** The climate emergency is part of the government's Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill and it's not solely about carbon neutrality. It covers restoring and regenerating habitats by implementing measures to protect and enhance the variety, abundance and health of biodiversity in both rural and urban/human-modified ecosystems, but the word 'biodiversity' isn't mentioned in any of the corporate plan's proposed actions.

The action relating to actively managing our green spaces to maximise carbon reduction effectiveness should also include something about supporting and/or creating biodiversity in council-owned assets. Also, rather than working in isolation, this would be more effective if we were working collectively and taking a holistic approach with other land owners and organisations with environmental objectives.

Could the summary line under 'Climate Emergency' incorporate something about the responsible management of the built and natural environment.

- c) **Active Rother:** Measures to encourage walking and cycling as part of an approach to develop greater travel choice are important to the health and wellbeing of local people. I would therefore support plans to encourage local people to be more active and use sustainable forms of transport.

RDC have put in place work from home arrangements for staff, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, there is learning from this approach, which can contribute to improved health and wellbeing for local people such as air quality improvements.

I would support the inclusion of action to protect, conserve and enhance outdoor spaces that promote positive physical and mental well-being for the public.

- d) **Rye Conservation Society:** We support the Council's Green policies, particularly electric charging points in Rother car parks which we do think could encourage take up of electric vehicles and be useful for 'Green' tourists!

- e) **Rother Greenways:** Rural areas such as Rother are very badly served by national policies such as the Government's Gear Change policy for walking and cycling and ESCC's Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure plans, both of which are geared almost exclusively towards urban areas. This means that the majority of residents will not be able to benefit from healthier, less polluting environments. Therefore, I am strongly in favour of RDC taking on board the conversion of many of our Bridleways into traffic-free Greenways for the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and the disabled. In addition, RDC has the ability to set up a district-wide system to implement Quiet Lanes in rural villages which will encourage traffic to slow down and promote healthier Active Travel.

In addition to EV charging points in car parks, RDC should be looking at making space for bike shelters, bike lockers, e-bike sharing schemes and similar.

- f) **Bexhill Heritage:** Making it a requirement that officers and members take a longer view of the impact of their decision-making.

If we are serious about responding to the climate emergency, we must consider the impact of decisions on the lives of future generations. Officers and members should adopt a 'legacy mindset' i.e. what are our grandchildren likely to think of the decisions they made in 2021?

As a start, members and officers may like to set aside a small sum for training local decision-makers in how to encourage such a 'legacy mindset' and promote 'intergenerational justice'.

- g) **Battle Town Council:** Recycling should be increased by a greater percentage.

Recycling should be genuine reuse of these materials and not incinerated or landfilled.

Further education and improved technology to ensure greater compliance.

- h) **1066 Cycle Club:** The District Council should use funds to provide walking and cycling infrastructure. Routes should be segregated.

Reducing speed limits (20mph zones) in towns, villages and other residential areas.

- i) **Rother Environmental Group:** The first action should be subject also to no dramatic change in planning legislation or to CIL.

Show leadership within the local area, demonstrating that action to mitigate climate change is both necessary and urgent.

Couple initiatives with awareness raising to emphasise their reason and importance to local residents.

Also discuss adaptation measures, to prepare for unavoidable impacts of climate change - prioritising nature based solutions.

Initiatives need to be consistent and prioritise green jobs/businesses, with full consideration as to how to deliver a just transition, so that existing inequalities are addressed as part of the solution.

Each of the projects, should as far as possible have a positive effect on the environment. Some should exclusively benefit the environment.

The recycling target is very unambitious and by currently including garden waste gives the current rate appearing higher than it actually is.

Advocate with ESCC for a review of the incinerator's contract which is currently.

- j) **East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group:** Measures to encourage walking and cycling as part of an approach to develop greater travel choice are important to the health and wellbeing of local people. We would

therefore support plans to encourage local people to be more active and use sustainable forms of transport. It would be helpful to take into account local NHS facilities such as GP practices, community health facilities and the local hospitals when considering these travel choice options and to work with the CCG, the rural Rother and Bexhill Primary Care Networks and East Sussex Hospital NHS Trust in their development.

We recognise that along with the CCG, RDC have put in place work from home arrangements for staff, in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, there is learning from this approach, which can contribute to improved health and wellbeing for local people such as air quality improvements. We would welcome the opportunity to share our learning to inform our future plans.

We would support the inclusion of action to protect, conserve and enhance outdoor spaces that promote positive physical and mental wellbeing for the public.

- k) **Hastings Transport Forum:** The main point I would want to make about the draft Rother Corporate Plan is the lack of references to transport and connectivity and to sustainable public transport services and active travel in terms of cycling & walking infrastructure.

Transport is a key issue for town and rural communities, where the situation is considerably more difficult and very relevant to environmental & health concerns and carbon reduction by reducing car usage.

The existence of the Hastings & Rother Transport Action Group, which is currently working on a strategic plan, should be mentioned as a good example of cross boundary work.

While East Sussex County Council is the local transport authority, Rother DC has a vital role to play in setting planning policy that should focus on building in sustainable & active travel infrastructure and options for all except the smallest development site planning applications and including, for example, walking & cycling route networks and other considerations into its Local Plan.

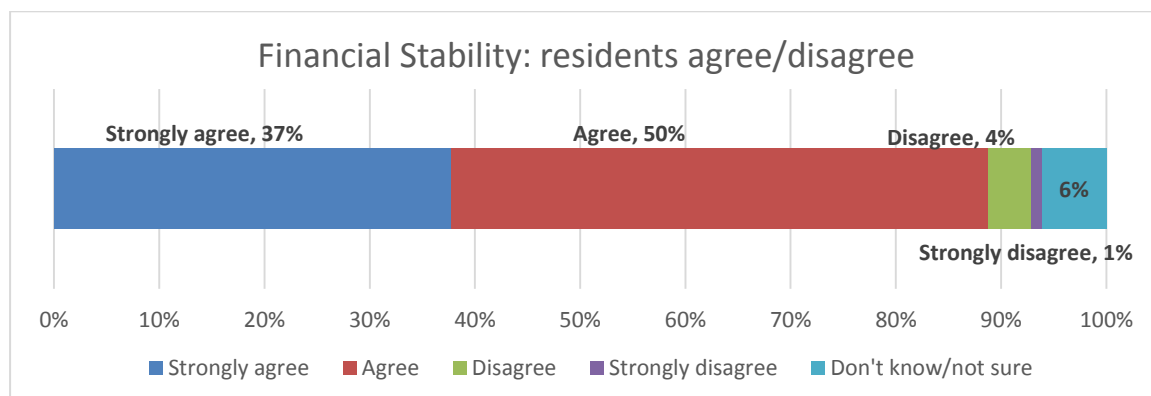
9. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:

- a) **Add** - reduce council offices by working from home and hot desking, etc. habitat diversity and biodiversity, including improving or restoring habitats, green corridors, verge management. Litter reduction. Reducing water use. Incentivising residents to improve their homes, reduce their own carbon footprint: insulation schemes, home electric vehicle charging points, reduce use of certain fuels, including burning material. Incentivising use of public transport by staff. Improvements to public transport and encouraging sustainable transport (electric vehicles, cycling, etc.). Contractors and suppliers should meet carbon neutral standards. Not developing housing on green spaces. An education programme.
- b) Electric vehicle charging points – people shouldn't have to pay parking charges if there only to charge their vehicle. Add other provision at other

- locations with recommended locations covering private car parks (e.g. supermarkets, schools) and various on-street locations.
- c) **Recycling rates:** Add food waste collection. Recycling target should be higher (63%, 83%) and is not ambitious. More emphasis on repair and re-use instead of recycling.
  - d) Would like to see implementation costs.
  - e) Opposition to the inclusion of the objective, climate change, etc. because it is not a real issue, does not affect Rother, is up to central Government to address.

## Objective 2: Financial Stability

- 10. We asked how much respondents agreed or disagreed with having the second objective for financial stability.
- 11. All responding organisations agreed with the Council having this objective. Four local organisations strongly agreed with this objective and four agreed with having this objective. The remaining responding organisations made no response on most of the internal facing or organisational objectives.
- 12. For residents, 87% either agreed strongly or agreed with the Council adopting an objective for financial stability. Only 5% of respondents disagreed. The chart and table below shows who the public responded to this question. Due to the small response rate we can only give a breakdown for Bexhill, where 89% of respondents agreed.

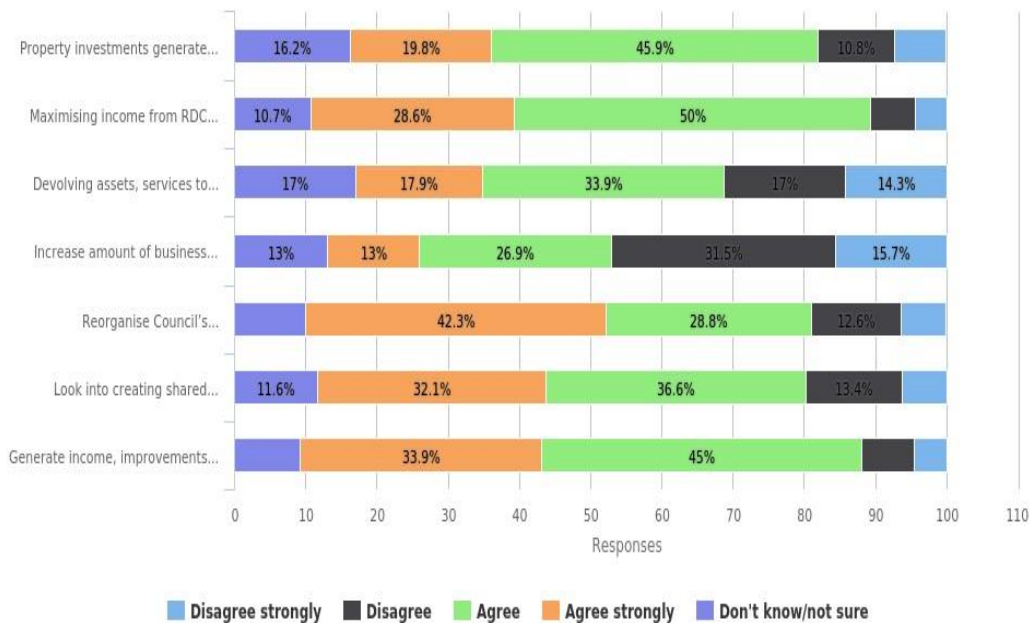


Answer	%
<b>Strongly agree</b>	37%
<b>Agree</b>	50%
<b>Disagree</b>	4%
<b>Strongly disagree</b>	1%
<b>Don't know/not sure</b>	6%
<b>Total responses (no.)</b>	101

- 13. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference.
  - a) Women are more likely to select 'agree' at 60% but a little less likely to select strongly agree (31%). There is still majority support, of course.
  - b) Working age respondents (18-64) are less likely to select strongly support at 32% but combined agreement is still 86%.

## Action Plan for Financial Stability

14. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that the actions in the action plan would help to deliver the financial stability objective.
15. Local organisations said:
- a) **Property investment income £3.44m by 2025** – One organisation agreed strongly, five agreed and two did not know or were not sure if this action would help deliver the objective.
  - b) **Maximising income from RDC assets** – One agreed strongly and seven local organisations agreed this action would help deliver the objective.
  - c) **Devolving assets to town and parish councils, etc.** – Two agreed strongly (Bexhill Heritage, Rother Environmental Group), five local organisations agreed and two disagreed (Battle Town Council and Rye Conservation Society).
  - d) **Increase amount of business rates generated** – one local organisation agrees strongly, four agree and two did not know or were not sure if this action would help deliver the objective.
  - e) **Reorganise council's structure for cost efficiencies** – two organisations agreed strongly, four agreed and two didn't know or were not sure.
  - f) **Sharing services with other organisations** – two local organisations agreed strongly and six agreed that this action would help deliver the objective.
  - g) **Generate income** – three local organisations agreed strongly, four agreed and one organisation did not know if this action would help deliver the objective.
16. Residents responded as follows:
- a) **Property investment income £3.44m by 2025** – 62% agreed or strongly agreed that raising income would help deliver the objective. Men were more likely to agree & strongly agree with this action at 71%. Bexhill residents were overall more in agreement with this action at 76%.
  - b) **Maximising income from RDC assets** – 79% agreed or strongly agreed.
  - c) **Devolving assets to town and parish councils, etc.** – 52% agreed or strongly agreed. Women are a little more likely to agree at 57%. However, working age residents were less likely to support this action. Only 41% of 18 to 63 year olds agreed or strongly agreed and 31% disagreed or strongly disagreed and the remaining 15% didn't know.
  - d) **Increase amount of business rates generated** – 40% agreed but 48% disagreed. Bexhill residents were less in agreement with this action with only 34% agreeing and 52% disagreeing.
  - e) **Reorganise council's structure for cost efficiencies** – 71% agreed or strongly agreed.
  - f) **Sharing services with other organisations** – 69% agreed or strongly agreed. Bexhill residents were slightly less in agreement at 63%, although still a majority.
  - g) **Generate income** – 79% agreed or strongly agreed.



Answer	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Property investments generate net extra income of £3.449m by 2025</b>	20%	46%	11%	7%	16%	<b>111</b>
<b>Maximising income from RDC assets</b>	29%	50%	6%	5%	11%	<b>112</b>
<b>Devolving assets, services to parish, town councils, etc.</b>	18%	34%	17%	14%	17%	<b>112</b>
<b>Increase amount of business rates generated.</b>	13%	27%	32%	16%	13%	<b>108</b>
<b>Reorganise Council's structure: reduce cost, greater efficiency.</b>	42%	29%	13%	6%	10%	<b>111</b>
<b>Look into creating shared services with other orgs.</b>	32%	37%	13%	6%	12%	<b>112</b>
<b>Generate income, improvements in service delivery</b>	34%	45%	7%	5%	9%	<b>109</b>

## Other matters to take into account for financial stability

17. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **Rye Conservation Society** We note the Council's aspiration to devolve some services such as public toilets to the parish council, but do not know if this is realistic. In Rye at least the toilets are used mostly by day trippers and visitors, many of whom are elderly coach trippers and are an essential

- service. We are not convinced that the cost of providing these services should fall on the towns people alone.
- b) If devolving the services is a means of saving money, then we see no benefit to Rye and the other parishes unless there is some way they can derive income from them.
  - c) **Bexhill Heritage** We recommend also that assets be devolved, where appropriate, to local charities and community organisations such as Bexhill Heritage.
  - d) Such a strategy is effective with regard to financial stability but also enhances community cohesion.
  - e) **Battle Town Council** Insufficient detail provided to allow for a reasoned response for some of the categories; where a response of 'don't know' is used.
  - f) **1066 Cycle Club** RDC should divest funds from fossil fuels.
  - g) **Rother Environmental Group** It is not clear to us what the implications of the measures listed may be.

e.g. There are essential services that we would not like to be reduced/value engineered, and we would not agree with business rates being increased to the detriment of local businesses who are already struggling - We do not want to see more chain shops in Rye, as its unique character comes from the unique local businesses.

However, we would like to see more 'useful' shops on the high street, aimed at locals not tourists, i.e. grocers, repair cafe, and any prioritising businesses supporting zero waste, low carbon sustainable lifestyles - again to emphasise a consistent message.

When putting a number of targets, it would be better to put them in the order in which they happen.

Any opportunity of energy generation investment should be pursued vigorously in conjunction with local stakeholders. Perhaps work with Energise South.

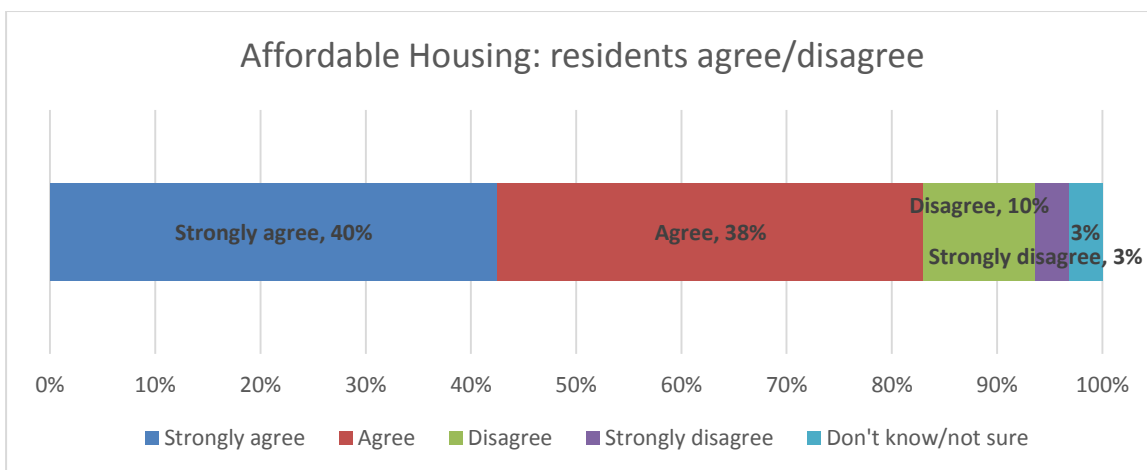
18. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A brief summary of main points is as follows in note form, without duplications and not including references to other actions only other organisations can take.
- a) **Business rates:** Don't increase. Not right time. Sounds like will force out small, independents. Should be more incentives for small, independent and starts ups. Reduce business rates. Consider town centre support post Covid-19. Too many empty shops and businesses now. Business is regional and national, surely more of a hope than a quantifiable target. Regenerate by decreasing shop rates, lowering parking charges to increase use of town centres. Attracting new businesses would be a favourite.
  - b) **Buy local**, use local businesses, increase partnerships with private sector,
  - c) **Income generation** is top priority. Don't rely on council tax. Property investment by councils hasn't had a good reputation. Monitor property development for environmental impact. Use town hall for weddings. Use car parks for events, markets on quiet days. How will it be maximised and why isn't it now? No new grandiose schemes. Property investment

- strategy is flawed, offices will be affected by more working from home, diversify.
- d) **Add:** Reduce fraudulent benefit claims. Not enough detail, lacks clarity. New targets, as these will be achieved by the time the document is adopted. More detail needed on funding.
  - e) **Devolving:** Only devolve assets if this benefits residents. Passing costs/services to parishes: Is counter to action of partnership provision of services. Some parishes may welcome. Some parishes not modern, efficient, democratically accountable (not elected). Should not be with increased costs to parishes. Don't use contractors do more in-house. Get rid of Rye Town Council, waste of money. Serious concerns about devolving to parish councils, only moving to parish balance sheet, so no benefit to residents, charges residents more, RDC keep/take responsibility and delivery.
  - f) **Making efficiencies and re-organising:** Is a top priority. Put more emphasis on this. Shouldn't be at the expense of delivering strategic objectives. Can end up being more expensive. Should learn from good examples in other local authorities. Current level of services should remain even if a deficit. Put more emphasis on this. A lot of work needs to be done to build confidence within the organisation. Value knowledge and experience to build up staff confidence. Do not agree with plans for Town Hall, costs don't add up, just convert side buildings to housing and reduce office space combined with working from home. Restructured several times in recent years, what is the benefit? Previous experience of restructuring is staff need to be consulted, large chunks of workload get overlooked, affects new systems/processes, creates gaps, etc. Sort out Planning department. Improving service delivery is not going to increase income until improving services gets it to higher than an acceptable service level. Increase frontline workers, reduce management, reduce councillors allowances,
  - g) **Sharing services:** Sounds good. Less accountability. Can be poorer working conditions. Benefits to share staff, services and ideas. Can work well but dependent on many factors and takes time. Although good previous track record do not underestimate amount of work/time involved to get this right. Equals staff cuts, inferior service delivery, efficiency and effectiveness at greater cost,
  - h) **Private sector service delivery:** COVID-19 has shown failures of private sector such as exploiting workers, wasteful track and trace.

### Objective 3: Increase Supply of Affordable Housing

- 19. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the third objective for increasing the supply of affordable housing (to deliver 400 affordable rent homes by the end of 2023). Ten local organisations answered this question and all of them agreed with the objective. Seven agreed strongly and three agreed the council should include affordable housing as an objective.
- 20. For the public, 40% strongly agreed and 38% agreed, giving us a total of 78% agreeing that the Council should have an objective on affordable housing. Only 13% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.





Answer	%
Strongly agree	40%
Agree	38%
Disagree	10%
Strongly disagree	3%
Don't know/not sure	3%
<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	<b>101</b>

21. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference. Bexhill residents are less likely to agree and strongly agree with this objective. In total, 71% of Bexhill residents agree and strongly agree, which is still majority support. This is divided into 30% strongly agree and 41% agree. They are also a bit more likely to disagree at 15%.

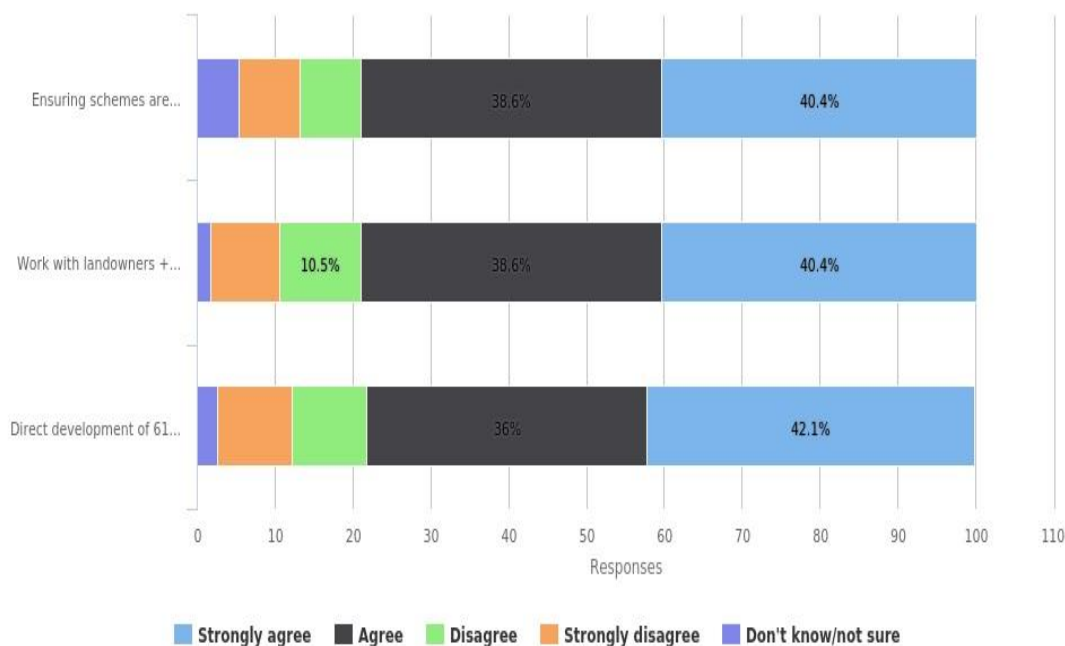
**Action plan for affordable housing objective**

22. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the affordable housing objective.
23. Local organisations that responded unanimously supported this objective:
- a) **Ensuring schemes progressed by developers:** five organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help tackle affordable housing.
  - b) **Delivery on two stalled sites:** Five local organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help.
  - c) **Direct development of affordable rent homes:** Six local organisations strongly agreed, five agreed that this action would help deliver affordable housing.
  - d) Residents gave the following responses:
  - e) **Ensuring schemes progressed by developers:** 79% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help deliver affordable housing. Working age (18-64) respondents are a little less likely to agree with this action at 71% selecting agree/agree strongly. Bexhill residents are a little less likely to agree/disagree at 74%, although still majority agreement.
  - f) **Delivery on two stalled sites:** 79% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.

g) **Direct development of affordable rent homes:** 78% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Working age respondents are a little less likely to agree with this action at 71% (although still majority agreement). Bexhill residents are a little less likely to agree with this action at 72%.

24. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. In particular, it demonstrates how more than three quarters of respondents agreed or strongly with each action.

**Agree or disagree that the following actions will help deliver the objective to increase supply of affordable housing?**



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Ensuring schemes are progressed by developers (85 in 2021, 106 in 2022, 118 in 2023)</b>	40%	39%	8%	8%	5%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Work with landowners + Registered Providers to begin delivery on 2 stalled sites (30 affordable rent homes)</b>	40%	39%	11%	9%	2%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Direct development of 61 affordable rent homes by our company: Alliance Homes (Rother)</b>	42%	36%	10%	10%	3%	<b>114 100%</b>

**Other matters to take into account on affordable housing**

25. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **Rye Conservation Society** We recognise that there is likely to be increasing pressure in favour of housing development, but are concerned that much current development around Rye at least is not geared towards local people but in practice results in ever more second homes and buy to let or Air BNB properties. The impact of climate change on low lying areas is also worrying. In short there is strong feeling in Rye that local people are being priced out of housing as very little new housing is 'affordable' , at least since the completion of the Valley Park development.
- b) **Bexhill Heritage Rural** We strongly support strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing but such strategies should be implemented with the following in mind: 1. Schemes should be considered with the longer-term needs of future generations in mind as well as the need for additional housing in the short term. (See our response to Objective 1 - climate emergency.) 2. Ensure that strategies to increase affordable housing respect the town's heritage assets. We strongly support schemes in which heritage assets are converted for residential use and so preserved for future generations.
- c) **Battle Town Council** In support of as much affordable housing to be built as possible. These should be suited to those requiring homes in the Rother area.
- d) **1066 Cycle Club** Homes should have facilities/space to store bicycles. Public transport links (local bus routes) should be provided. Services and infrastructure should be put in place (doctors, schools, community centres, etc)
- e) **Rother Environmental Group** Affordable housing also needs to prioritise net zero houses, to mitigate fuel poverty and show leadership.eg Passivhaus style, solar panels on all roofs.  
There are some great examples now:  
<https://architizer.com/blog/inspiration/stories/goldsmith-street-stirling-prize/>  
<http://www.mikhailriches.com/project/goldsmith-street/>  
or the number of examples listed here:  
<https://amp-theguardian-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/amp.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2021/mar/06/eco-homes-become-hot-property-in-uks-zero-carbon-paradigm-shift>  
More rigorous enquiry into viability assessment.  
Encourage the creation of community land trusts.
- f) **Sedlescombe Parish Council** The plan to achieve 400 affordable houses by 2023 is in itself admirable although perhaps the target should be set higher as these targets are rarely achieved and it would allow for slippage.
- Build more affordable housing but strategic thought should be given to the mixing of communities which can otherwise provide problems in social housing. Conversely integration with owner/occupiers has its own problems not least the friction between the different tenures and it would seem that tenants who have some stake in their housing are less likely to cause this friction. This stake may be a longer strictly regulated tenancy to make the affordable housing less 'identifiable'.

Building by Housing Association must provide reasonable homes at a reasonable price. The tendency is to over-spec the house because the 'government' is providing the finance leading to over-charging for the work. Case: small estate of new houses by a national builder offered to Housing Association who refused the purchase on the basis of specification. The expectation of the nation for housing supply is an ever changing one. By the middle of the 20th century house builders were concerned that equilibrium in the market was being reached. By the 21st century expectations and demands had considerably altered. The demands of single families, expansion of university education, children leaving home prior to marriage and immigration into the country. First generation immigrants were willing to accept higher density accommodation to provide a close-knit social community. Rightly their children now wish to have accommodation in line with the rest of the population. The abandonment of the 'council house' building and its replacement by Housing Associations, whilst a good idea at the time, failed because the proceeds received from these sales were not re-invested in new housing. In Hastings and Rother, at the time of the transfer of local authority housing to the Housing Association, the base rents were set taking into account that this area was deprived so the rental values had always lagged behind more prosperous areas whilst other costs, repairs, renewals etc., remained by and large the same in most areas. The rent levels were always a problem in the local area.

It is difficult to involve the individual in the decision making on affordable houses in the local community as nimbyism is rife. My solution to the problem is to build affordable homes at a reasonable price and to try to integrate them into the local community. The tenancies granted not by a points auction but to those with the ability to integrate and contribute to the community. A long-term family association with the area should be a strong factor and perhaps consideration should be given to involving Parish Councils in the nomination process. Local knowledge is a powerful tool in some of these things. The community might be happier when their representatives, i.e. the Parish Council, are helping with these decisions.

26. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:

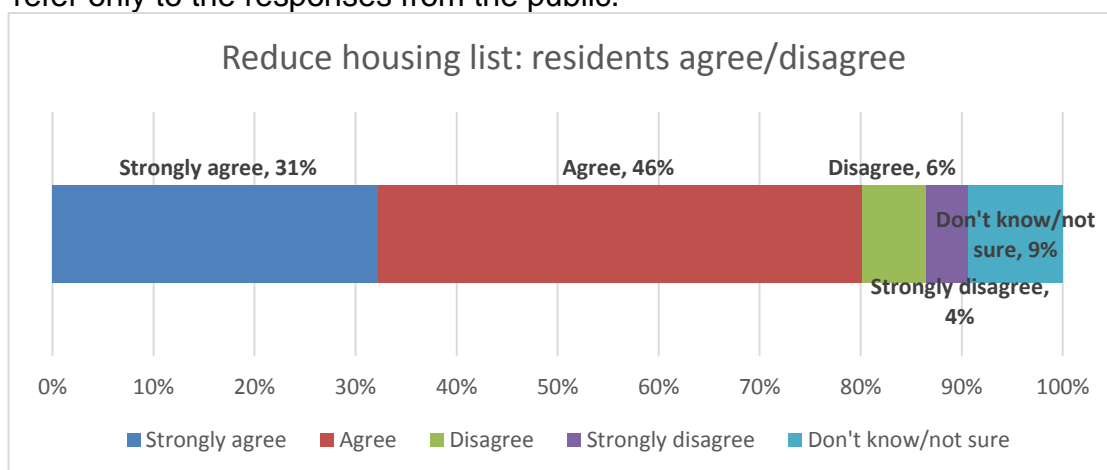
- a) **Add** - Prioritising local families/residents for social housing. Stop spread of misinformation by nimby groups. Stop nimby groups blocking development. Targets are too low. Target should be 25% higher. 400 is not enough. Work in partnership with: parish councils, AIRS. New developments should have enough dedicated parking, should not make parking problems worse. Support employability programmes for social housing tenants. Accommodation above shops. Filling empty homes. Be more progressive, innovative to get more home ownership by those struggling to get on housing ladder. Building to lifetime homes standards, make sure some are wheelchair accessible. Add self-build schemes. More about environment and climate emergency, biodiversity in relation to housing/developments. Community gardens or allotments for all developments over 12 homes. Have actions that reduces need for affordable housing such as employment. Build on brownfield sites. Prioritise locals first. Ways to get private landlords to accept housing

benefit tenants. Increase sheltered housing. Increase accommodation for frontline key workers.

- b) **Disagreement** - Government models are wrong and too much provision made for South East England and should be in North East England. Don't support large developments in villages, no employment, no infrastructure, longer journeys, not environmentally friendly. Don't have a housing company, you have no experience. Don't build on green space. No need for green sites to be delivered if filled all empty, derelict, abandoned property or sites. Discourage second home ownership.
- c) **Direct development by housing company** - Any housing built by the council should: prioritise brownfield building, stay in council control, not sold off, build more, will council consider being letting manager for private sector, supportive of shared ownership schemes, buy existing accommodation and affordable rent.
- d) **Ensuring schemes progressed by developers** – be stricter enforcing building of affordable housing by developers, be more pro-active, stronger messages. Don't approve any planning application without affordable provision. Don't allow developers to change plans to more expensive homes. Stop leasehold as part of any development. Do legal minimum and then increase involvement of housing company to take over. Use any means possible to progress stalled sites. Increase target.

## Objective 4: Housing List Reduction

- 27. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the council adopting an objective to reduce the housing list from 1600 to 1200 by 2023. Nine local organisations answered this question and three agreed strongly with the objective and six agreed.
- 28. For residents, 31% strongly agreed and 46% agreed, giving us a total of 77% agreeing that the Council should have an objective on reducing the housing list. Only 10% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed and 9% did not know or were not sure of their answer. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	31%
Agree	46%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	4%
Don't know/not sure	9%

<b>Total</b>	100%
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29. There are no statistically significant difference in any sub-set of respondents.

### **Action plan to reduce the housing list**

30. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the objective to reducing the housing list by 500 households.

31. Local organisations said:

- a) **Increase supported housing options for temporary accommodation:** three local organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help reduce the housing list. ESCC Young People Housing & Accommodation Team strongly disagreed.
- b) **Increase home adaptations for disabled residents:** three local organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help reduce the housing list. ESCC Young People Housing & Accommodation Team strongly disagreed.
- c) **Provision of Discretionary Housing Benefit:** three local organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help reduce the housing list. ESCC Young People Housing & Accommodation Team strongly disagreed.
- d) **New homes through Alliance Homes (Rother):** three local organisations agreed strongly and six agreed that this action would help. ESCC Housing and Accommodation for Young People strongly disagreed.
- e) **Rother Tenant Finder Scheme:** three local organisations strongly agree and five agreed that this action would help. ESCC Housing and Accommodation for Young People strongly disagreed.
- f) **Multi-complex needs through multi-agency support:** four local organisations strongly agree and four agree that this action would help. ESCC Housing and Accommodation for Young People strongly disagreed.
- g) **Revised Housing Allocations Policy delivery and Local Plan focus on Council Tax Band A properties:** three local organisations strongly agreed and four agreed that this action would help. ESCC Housing and Accommodation for Young People strongly disagreed. Battle Town Council did not know if it would help.

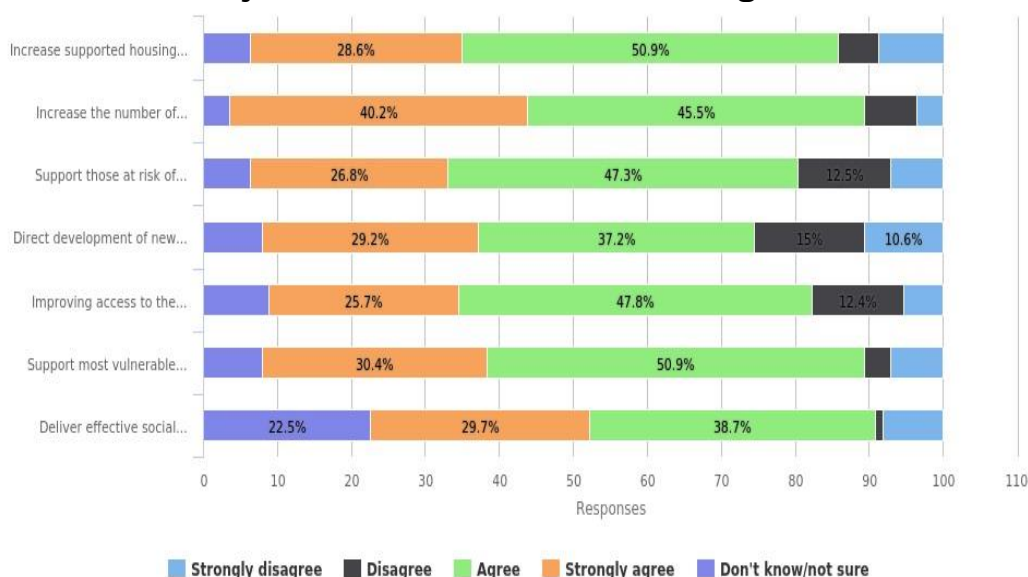
32. Residents responses for agreement or disagreement with having this objective were:

- a) **Increase supported housing options for temporary accommodation:** 79% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help reduce the housing list.
- b) **Increase home adaptations for disabled residents:** 86% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
- c) **Provision of Discretionary Housing Benefit:** 74% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Women were more likely to strongly agree and agree with this action as 80% of women respondents gave these answers.

- d) **New homes through Alliance Homes (Rother):** 66% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Bexhill residents are a little less likely to agree and strongly agree at 61%.
- e) **Rother Tenant Finder Scheme:** 74% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
- f) **Multi-complex needs through multi-agency support:** 81% of residents either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
- g) **Revised Housing Allocations Policy delivery and Local Plan focus on Council Tax Band A properties:** 69% agree or strongly agree that this action would help. Women were slightly more likely to agree/strongly agree at 74%.

33. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. It shows that the most popular actions were disabled facilities grants and addressing households with multi-complex needs through multi-agency support. The least supported action, although still majority support, was about the housing allocations policy and the Local Plan.

### How much do you agree or disagree that these actions will help deliver the objective to reduce the housing list?



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Increase supported housing options to meet identified temporary accommodation needs for homeless.</b>	29%	51%	5%	9%	6%	<b>112</b>
<b>Increase the number of adaptations made to the homes of disabled people and support them to sustain their accommodation through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)*.</b>	40%	46%	7%	4%	4%	<b>112</b>
<b>Support those at risk of homelessness to sustain their</b>	27%	47%	13%	7%	6%	<b>112</b>

accommodation through the provision of Discretionary Housing Benefit.						
Direct development of new homes through the Alliance Homes (Rother) delivery vehicle to increase the supply of housing in all tenure types across the District.	29%	37%	15%	11%	8%	113
Improving access to the private rented sector through the Rother Tenant Finder scheme	26%	48%	12%	5%	9%	113
Support most vulnerable households with multiple, complex support needs to access accommodation through multi-agency service delivery.	30%	51%	4%	7%	8%	112
Deliver effective social housing allocations through a revised Housing Allocations Policy for Rother. The Rother Local Plan to prioritise affordable housing for those in Band A Council Tax properties.	30%	39%	1%	8%	23%	111

## Other matters to take into account for reducing the housing list

34. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **Bexhill Heritage** We strongly support strategies to reduce the housing list but such strategies should be implemented with the following in mind:
1. Schemes should be considered with the longer-term needs of future generations in mind as well as the need for additional accommodation in the short term. (See our response to Objective 1 - climate emergency.)
  2. Ensure that strategies to reduce the housing list respect the town's heritage assets. We strongly support schemes in which heritage assets are converted for residential use and so preserved for future generations.
- b) **Battle Town Council** A more ambitious target for the rough sleeping objective is required.

We strongly support a change in the housing allocation policy to ensure that people living in unsuitable accommodation eg families in one room are moved at the earliest possible time to suitable accommodation.

- c) **1066 Cycle Club** RDC should ensure there is the necessary support for people in their housing.
- d) **Rother Environmental Group** We understand Rother has a high proportion of secondary residences which are empty for a large proportion



of the year, these should be taxed appropriately to compensate for the loss of housing to the local economy and consequent increase in house prices/rent, which takes level above the affordable range of many local people.

When revising the allocation policy take into account family and community connections i.e where people are currently living.

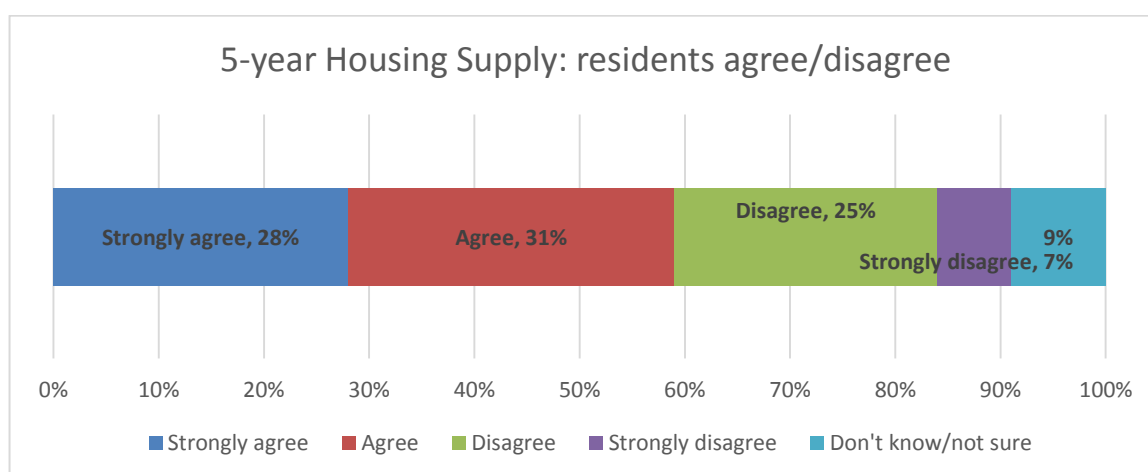
- e) **East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group** Good health depends on having homes that are safe and free from physical hazards. In contrast, poor quality and inadequate housing contributes to health problems such as chronic diseases and injuries and can have harmful effects on childhood development. The CCG therefore supports the proposed actions to support those at risk of homelessness to sustain their accommodation, to relieve homelessness by improving access to the private rented sector, to support the most vulnerable households with multiple and complex support needs to access accommodation through multi-agency service delivery.

35. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:

- a) **Add** - addressing empty properties, filling large empty buildings, adapting commercial properties. Self-build projects. Build more affordable/social housing. Stop developers building expensive houses. Prioritise families with children, local residents or workers. Add projects beyond 2023. Address issues of landlords, renters rights, affordable rent. Add filling empty homes. More action to tackle the causes. Need a community hub for housing, life skills and employment support.
- b) **Clarify:** What if reduction met temporarily or situation improves? What about increased unemployment from Covid? What is a housing list?
- c) **Disagreement:** Not necessary because homeless people have choices. New homes are not needed and stress environment and resources/infrastructure. Target drives wrong behaviour of building houses which are not good for environment. Problems of housing a person with mental illness in a rural village. Don't build on AONB. Plenty of empty properties. You can achieve this by simply changing the criteria to join the housing list, don't agree with reducing housing list because used as evidence of housing need with developers to get affordable housing or need for affordable housing in rural areas. Double edged sword, don't agree with wording, re-word: is priority to take positive action to help people into suitable housing or reduce a database, should be about people not a list. Will affect developers' viability arguments. National problem. Too many people want to live in Rother, enough is enough.
- d) **Disabled Facilities grants** – disagree with giving disabled people public money when can get other funding through government.
- e) **Tenant Finder Scheme** – not much impact yet. Big local issue of private landlords taking housing benefit tenants. Heard support stops after tenant moves in. Sometimes issues with tenants that private landlords needs support with. Estate agents say payments from council are very slow.

## Objective 5: Housing Supply

36. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the fifth objective to bring Rother above the 5-year housing supply requirement by the end of 2023. Nine local organisations answered this question and three agreed strongly with the objective and four agreed. One organisation disagreed, Battle Town Council, and one organisation did not know, 1066 Cycle Club.
37. For residents, 28% strongly agreed and 31% agreed, giving us a total of 59% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective on housing supply. However, 32% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



### How much do you agree or disagree with having an objective to bring Rother above the five-year housing supply?

Answer	%
Strongly agree	28%
Agree	31%
Disagree	25%
Strongly disagree	7%
Don't know/not sure	9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>110</b>

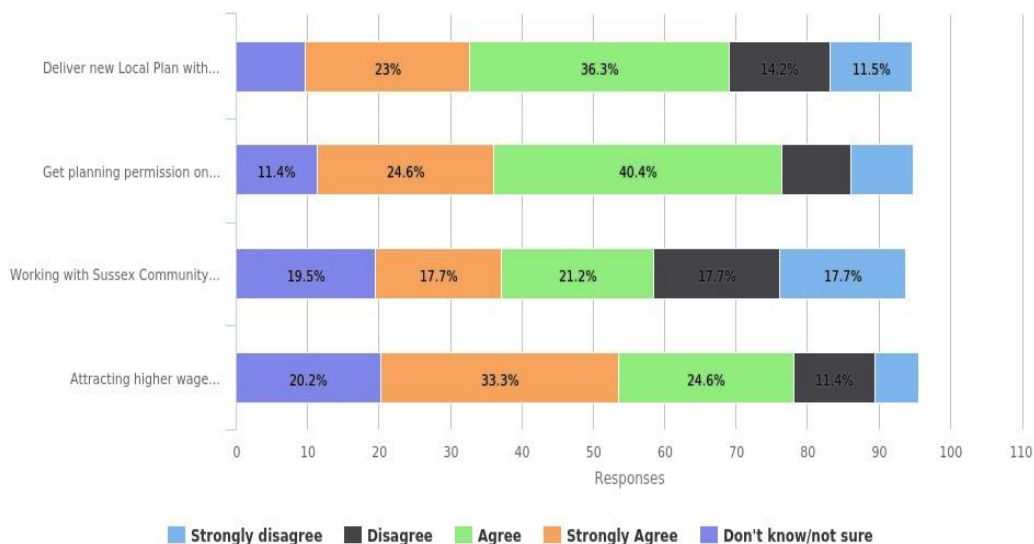
38. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference, as follows.
- Men were a little more likely to agree strongly (36%) and less likely to agree (25%).
  - Women were less likely to select agree strongly (17%) and more likely to select agree at 38%.

### Action plan for Housing Supply

39. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the 5-year housing supply.

40. Local organisations' responses in summary were:
- a) **New Local Plan has policies to speed planning permission, incentivise small sites, etc.:** one organisation strongly agreed (Bexhill Heritage) four agreed that this action would help tackle delivery of the housing supply. However, one organisation disagreed (Rother Environmental Group) and one strongly disagreed (East Sussex County Council: Young Person's Housing & Accommodation) and one organisation didn't know.
  - b) **Getting planning permission [for housing] on council-owned land** Three local organisations strongly agreed and five agreed that this action would help. One organisation strongly disagreed (as above).
  - c) **Bring forward rural exception sites:** One local organisation strongly agreed (Bexhill Heritage), five agreed. One organisation strongly disagreed (ESCC). Three local organisations did not know or were not sure if they agreed or disagreed if this action would help deliver more than a 5-year supply. They were Battle Town Council, Peasmarsh Parish Council and 1066 Cycle Club.
  - d) **Supporting higher housing demand: higher wage employers to new employment sites, Local Plan policies:** Two local organisations agreed strongly and seven agreed that this action would help. One organisation strongly disagreed (ESCC: Young Person's Housing & Accommodation).
41. Residents said:
- a) **Local Plan policies to speed permission, incentivise small sites:** 62% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help housing supply. Men were less likely to agree at 55%.
  - b) **Getting planning permission on council-owned land:** 69% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Men were less likely to agree at 63%. Working age (18-64) respondents were less likely to agree/strongly agree at 62%.
  - c) **Bring forward rural exception sites:** 42% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. However, 38% disagree or strongly disagree. A further 21% did not know if this action would help or not. Women were less likely to agree with this action, only 36% of women respondents agreed/strongly agreed. Working age respondents were a bit less likely to agree/strongly agree at 36%.
  - d) **Supporting higher housing demand:** 61% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help raise supply over the 5-year housing supply threshold. Men were less likely to agree at 55%.
42. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. It shows that getting planning approval for housing developments on council-owned sites has the most supported action and working with local partners to bring forward rural exception sites has the least support. Resident were more likely to say they didn't know if it would help with rural exception sites and measures to stimulate housing demand.

**How much do you agree or disagree that the following actions will help delivery the housing supply objective?**



Answer	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Deliver new Local Plan with policies to speed up planning process, incentivise smaller sites, etc.</b>	24%	38%	15%	12%	10%	<b>113 100%</b>
<b>Get planning permission on Council-owned land and land owned or purchased through Alliance Homes (Rother).</b>	26%	43%	10%	9%	12%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Working with Sussex Community Housing Hub and Registered Providers to bring forward applications on rural exception sites.</b>	19%	23%	19%	19%	21%	<b>113 100%</b>
<b>Attracting higher wage business to new employment sites and incentivising businesses with higher wages to Bexhill and rural areas, which will support further housing demand. Ensure Local Plan reflects housing mix which supports needs of incoming businesses.</b>	35%	26%	12%	6%	21%	<b>114 100%</b>

### Other matters to take into account for housing supply

43. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective on exceeding the 5 year housing supply or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **East Sussex County Council: Young People Housing & Accommodation** Work with a private landlord to access TA for homeless households with direct tenancies to the occupiers and RDC (+Homeworks?) providing tenancy support to ensure the household gains

the necessary skills to manage the tenancy. If, after an appropriate period, the private landlord and RDC are satisfied the tenant has assimilated the necessary skills, there are no rent arrears and no ASB then consideration can be given to converting the tenancy to periodic for permanent occupation, on the basis that the landlord commits to limiting the rent to LHA + 10 or 20%?

- b) **Rye Conservation Society** If the business does not come and the houses are not built what then? All areas of the country seem to be in a competition on the one hand to attract investment and on the other hand places like Rye could easily be badly impacted by inappropriate housing or economic developments. As the Conservation Society we seek to preserve the unique character of Rye but are not against useful new development such as the Rye Hill social and medical centre, the Hub.

We have of course recently helped produce the Rye Neighbourhood Plan and would hope that you will work with the Rye Neighbourhood planning group, notably Col. Kimber, and Rye Town Council to ensure that the RNP policies are fully taken into account when drawing up this Corporate Plan. After all the RNP took many man hours to produce and was subject to a successful local referendum.

- c) **Rother Greenways** All new housing developments should be in alignment with Climate Emergency policies. This would include better access to public transport, safe walking and cycling routes to key trip attractors such as schools, shops and transport interchanges. In addition, we need to reduce the number of assumed car parking spaces in new developments and instead supplement these with EV charging, e-bike sheds, and so forth. All new housing developments should be carbon-neutral in their construction and have integrated renewable energy systems.
- d) **Bexhill Heritage** We strongly support strategies to increase housing supply but such strategies should be implemented with the following in mind:

Schemes should be considered with the longer-term needs of future generations in mind as well as the need for additional housing in the short term. (See our response to Objective 1 - climate emergency.) 2. Ensure that strategies to increase housing supply respect the town's heritage assets and their setting. We strongly support schemes in which heritage assets are converted for residential use and so preserved for future generations.

- e) **Battle Town Council** We are unsure what the implications of progressing rural exceptions sites would be.

No details of proposals to improve speed of planning process.

- f) **1066 Cycle Club** The planning process needs to be more efficient, not just speeded up.
- g) **Rother Environmental Group** Make the planning process efficient without sacrificing public consultation.

Small sites do not need incentivising.

Encourage community land trusts as community sites are better for small villages.

Encourage owners of permanently unlive in houses to allow them to let out to rent, including upper floors in town centres.

Promote the rent a room scheme.

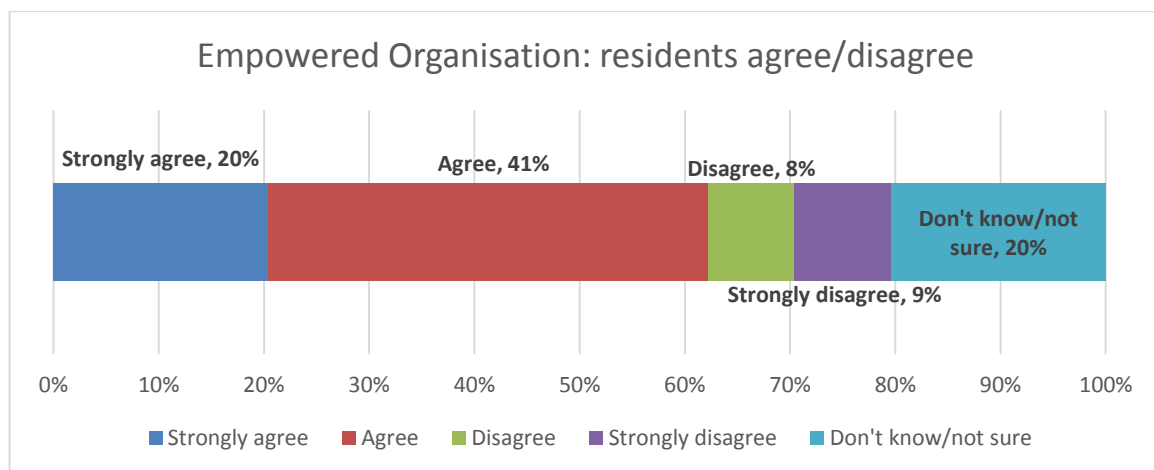
44. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:
- a) **Speeding up planning process:** not sure will deliver quality, review resources in planning, address councillors making decisions against officers advice thereby adding significant costs in appeals and lost income for infrastructure improvements.
  - b) **Incentivising small sites:** more likely to spread housing need through existing communities. Remove planning rules about only over 6 units count towards local targets. Support larger developments in villages. As long as residents agree.
  - c) **Rother housing company** – council should not make a profit. Should be made fully transparent on decisions and accounts. Not the role of a council.
  - d) **Rural exception sites** – take 5 years get more efficient planning and partnership,
  - e) **Attracting higher wage businesses** – risk of driving out low wage businesses like farming, better to encourage local businesses to grow or start, support those struggling from pandemic, jobs are key here, especially jobs in all parts of the district, need the infrastructure improved to be attractive,
  - f) **Add** - tie into environmental initiatives, focus on brownfield sites, improving infrastructure like local roads around housing developments, better use of current available sites, address quality of housing, requirements for green housing and ties to transport/cycling, redevelopment and renovation schemes, minimum accepted room size (re. quality of housing), ensuring plans include play areas and facilities for young people.
  - g) **Disagree** – strongly oppose development in rural Rother, object to building on AONB, just meet the requirement don't exceed it, can't keep building more, stop population growth instead, things like jobs and infrastructure are more important than providing more homes than we need, the only housing shortage here is affordable/social, could lead to hasty decisions, could lead to more costs for council,
  - h) **Clarify** – what is a rural exception site, PINS, regulation 18, what is the baseline and where do you want to be, any plan to control current population,

## Objective 6: An Empowered Organisation

45. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the fifth objective for an empowered organisation, to create an organisational structure that allows for a clearer, more effective, resident focused organisation by the end of

2023. Only seven local organisations answered this question and one agreed strongly with the objective and two agreed. Three organisations strongly disagreed with the council having this objective. One organisation said that it didn't know or was not sure if this objective should be included. One additional organisation added comments when they had not answered the survey questions on agreement/disagreement but their comments suggest they did not agree with the objective or its action plan.

46. For residents, 20% strongly agreed and 41% agreed, giving us a total of 61% of the public agreeing the council should have an objective for an empowered organisation. Only 17% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, quite a large 20% did not know or were not sure if this objective should be included. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	20%
Agree	41%
Disagree	8%
Strongly disagree	9%
Don't know/not sure	20%
<b>Total No. Answered</b>	<b>103</b>

47. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference. Bexhill residents varied from the overall results because 15% disagreed with this objective and only 11% didn't know or were not sure.

### Action plan for empowered organisation objective

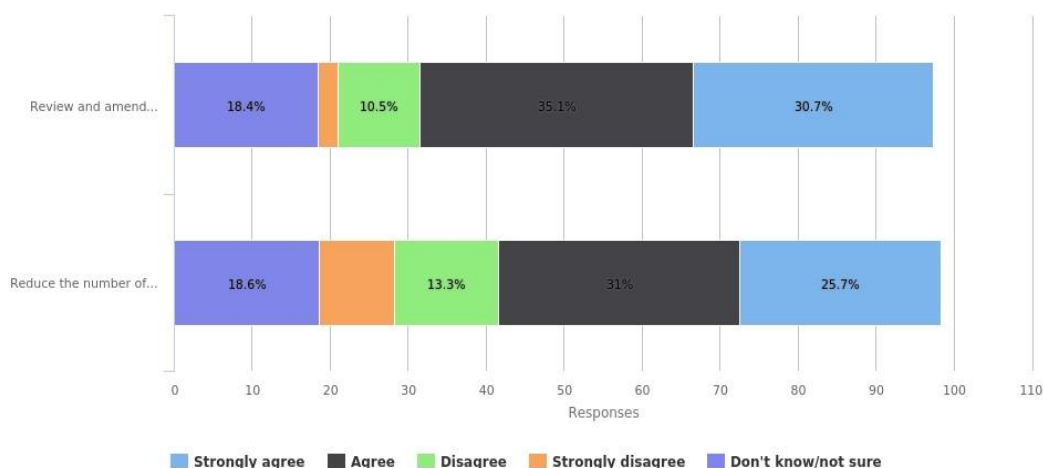
48. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the empowered organisation objective.
49. Local organisation responses in summary were:
- a) **Review and amend organisational structure:** three organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help deliver an empowered organisation and one organisation did not know.

- b) **Reduce complaints through self-help and digitalisation:** two local organisations strongly agreed and two agreed that this action would help. Two organisations strongly disagreed and one did not know.

50. Residents said:

- a) **Review and amend organisational structure:** 68% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help deliver an empowered organisation.  
 b) **Reduce complaints through self-help and digitalisation:** 58% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Working age residents were much less likely to agree/strongly agree at 49% but 30% disagreed and 21% didn't know if this action would help deliver the objective.

51. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. It is notable that for the actions there were 18% and 19% of residents (respectively) who didn't know if these actions would help deliver an empowered organisation.



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Review and amend organisational structure</b>	31.6%	36.1%	10.8%	2.7%	18.9%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Reduce the number of complaints through improved self-help and the digitalisation of services</b>	26.1%	31.5%	13.5%	9.9%	18.9%	<b>113 100%</b>

### Other matters to take into account for an empowered organisation

52. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. This gives an opportunity to comment on the objective and its actions as well as to suggest additions or amendments. One additional organisation added comments when they had not answered the survey questions on agreement/disagreement. Organisations said:

- a) **Bexhill Heritage** We agree that this objective is fundamental. There is nothing more important than seeking to support and engage potentially



resourceful local groups, organisations and households in projects and programmes of community development.

We suggest that the title of this objective be changed from 'Empowered Organisation' to 'Empowered Community' in order to reflect the council's commitment to community cohesion through community action. [Bexhill Heritage answered strongly disagree on the objective but strongly agree on both actions.]

- b) **Battle Town Council** Rural Lack of clarity on the objective makes it difficult to respond.

There is an assumption that everybody has use of and an ability to use computers. Often the people that require assistance do not have private access to IT. [BTC answered don't know on whether the council should have this objective and don't know on re-organisation and strongly disagree on reducing the number of complaints.]

- c) **1066 Cycle Club** People prefer contact with an actual person, not an algorithmic, automated solution. Reduce the number of complaints by having a more effective service. [1066 Cycle Club answered strongly agree with the objective, agree with re-organisation but strongly disagree with reducing the number of complaints.]
- d) **Rother Environmental Group** We did not fill in the form part of this section because it is smoke and mirrors.

How do you propose to design out demand e.g. not answering the telephone?

The council should be resident focused anyway.

We would have assumed that officers are already taking decisions at the right level.

53. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:

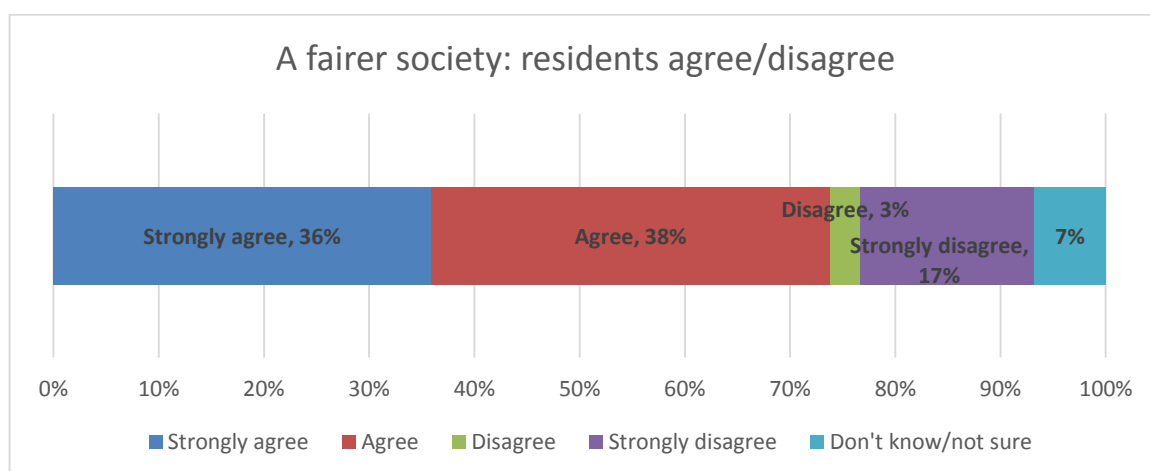
- a) **Organisational structure** - Add more local jobs. Be more responsive and adaptive. Do not spend thousands on re-organising. Delegating more to those working at full capacity will not work. Not needed. Already re-organised several times and lost a third of jobs. Let the staff just get on with their jobs. Structure should be focussed on residents, businesses, visitors and best use of resources. More addressing diversity, BAME and gender representation. Corporate still dominated by men.
- b) **Self-help and digitalisation** - Add clearer communication, reduce jargon on planning process, add making planning processes simpler, more customer friendly, self-help and digitisation can't make any difference to complaints about the council. Instead have target to on being effective, changing procedures. Add improve response times. Don't agree with increased digitalisation. Those not computer literate. Not everyone has IT equipment. Poor can't afford broadband. Telephone still required. Need to speak to real people not recorded messages, sometimes need to speak to

someone and should be easy to do so. Requires much better rural broadband speeds to be effective. All contact methods should be equally prioritised: discriminates. Digitalisation is the route to customer frustration. Address that customer services staff need to be backed up by staff from other services being equally helpful, informative and responsive to customers. Not everyone can self help and that is why we have the public sector and a public service ethos. Complaints are good for organisational development and learning and should value time taken by resident to complain.

- c) **Add** – The key way to empower is to hear what people say, councillors should listen. Put in method so only have to tell story once. Increase accountability and transparency.
- d) **Clarify** – don't see how reducing complaints empowers officers or equates to a staff restructure. How does self-help and digitisation reduce complaints to the council? What does design out demand mean? How many complaints were there to begin with? What is an acceptable number of complaints? Who do you want to empower – residents or staff or both?

## Objective 7: A fairer society

- 54. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the council adopting an objective of a fairer society - to build a fairer society by promoting acceptance and equality in the district, developing an anti-poverty strategy to improve existing support services and identifying new ways of working in collaboration with the voluntary sector to reduce poverty and hardship within the district. Ten local organisations answered this question and seven agreed strongly with the objective and three agreed.
- 55. For residents, 36% strongly agreed and 38% agreed, giving us a total of 74% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective for a fairer society. However, 19% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The remaining 7% did not know if they agree or disagree. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	36%
Agree	38%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	17%

<b>Don't know/not sure</b>	7%
<b>Total no. of respondents</b>	103

56. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference.

- Working age respondents are less likely to strongly disagree at 10% of those respondents.
- Bexhill residents are more likely to agree with this objective at 43% strongly agree and total agreement is 79%.

### **Action plan for the fair society objective**

57. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the objective for a fair society.

58. Local organisations said:

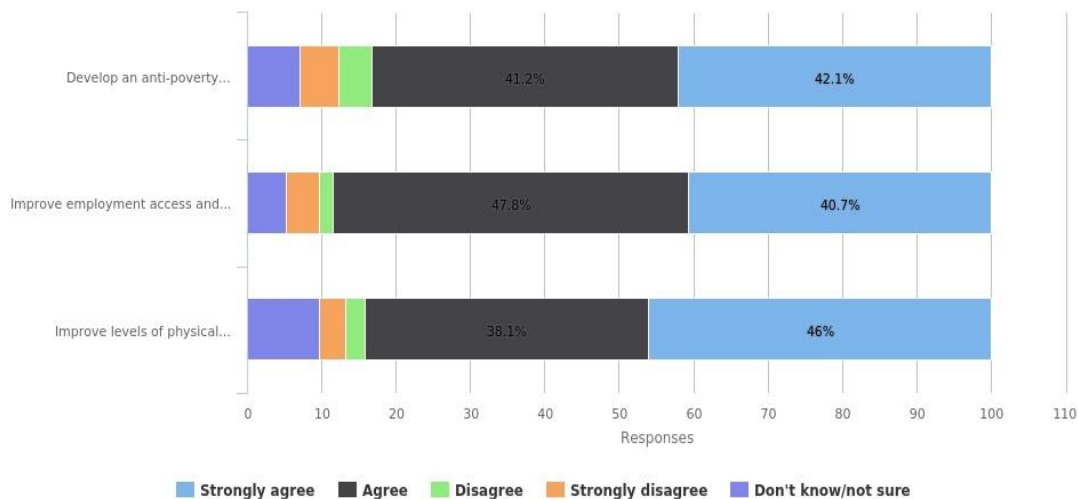
- Develop an anti-poverty strategy for 2021:** Five organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help deliver a fair society. One organisation did not know or was not sure.
- Improve employment access/readiness for homeless:** Six local organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help.
- Improve physical activity in disadvantaged and poor health groups:** Six local organisations strongly agreed, two agreed and one organisation did not know or was not sure that this action would help.

59. Residents said:

- Develop an anti-poverty strategy:** 83% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help deliver a fair society.
- Improve employment for homeless:** 89% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Men are slightly less likely to agree at 84%. Women are slightly more likely to agree with this action at 94%.
- Improve physical activity in disadvantaged and poor health:** 84% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.

60. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. The chart shows that where residents were least sure if an action would help were when 10% answered they don't know about improving levels of activity in target groups. It shows the most popular action was improving employment access and employment readiness for the vulnerable homeless.

**How much do you agree or disagree that the following actions will help deliver the objective for a fairer society?**



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Develop an anti-poverty strategy for the District by 2021</b>	42%	41%	4%	5%	7%	114
<b>Improve employment access and readiness among vulnerable homeless groups: 40 supported by 2022</b>	41%	48%	2%	4%	5%	113
<b>Improve levels of physical activity among residents experiencing socio-economic deprivation and poor health outcomes</b>	46%	38%	3%	4%	10%	113

## Other matters to take into account on a fair society

61. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

### a) Active Rother

1. The objective statement reads *To build a fairer society by promoting acceptance and equality in the District, developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy to improve existing support services and identifying new ways of working in collaboration with the voluntary sector to reduce poverty and hardship within the District.*

- Can this be changed to reflect collaboration not just with the voluntary sector but also with the rest of the statutory sector e.g. schools and the NHS. This would better reflect a whole system approach, which I believe is essential to action on addressing poverty and its associated determinants.

2. The action *For the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the District.*

- If not already done so, is the Anti-Poverty Strategy working group engaging with the new Rother Food Partnership? This is led by RVA

and supported by funding from ESCC Public Health. Created as a local response to the Covid pandemic disparity findings and recovery planning, this is a priority area within the new East Sussex Healthy Weight Action Plan, co-ordinated by ESCC Public Health and due to be published in April. The Plan will be taken forward by the East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership, of which RDC is a member. It is recommended that the work of the Rother Food Partnership is reflected in the Anti-Poverty strategy.

- Has an Equalities and Health Inequalities Impact Assessment been completed and published in relation to the work of the Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group?
3. The action *Improve levels of physical activity amongst residents experiencing socio-economic deprivation and poor health outcomes. Milestone - New leisure contract delivers demonstrable improvement in levels of activity amongst residents experiencing deprivation.*
- It is not just the leisure contract that can contribute to this milestone. The Active Rother programme which RDC hosts and is supported by a partnership funding agreement with ESCC. The funding that RDC receives from ESCC in respect of this agreement funds my post and thus supports the co-ordination of the Active Rother programme and the Partnership. The aims and outcome areas in respect of this agreement are as follows:
    - To improve health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities in Rother by increasing access and participation in physical activity interventions
    - To utilise physical activity as a driver for community development and building social capital in Rother
    - To develop the physical activity sector in Rother through effective communication, networking and capacity building
    - To build the physical activity evidence base at a local level
  - The Active Rother Partnership strategy reflects the current evidence base, as well as national and local policy guidance in relation to increasing physical activity participation, with strategic aims and priorities that focus on inactivity amongst residents, in areas in which deprivation and health inequalities are most prevalent. <https://www.activerother.org.uk/about-us>
  - This approach aligns fully with the new recently launched Sport England strategy <https://www.sportengland.org/why-were-here/uniting-the-movement> This is important.
  - How is this *demonstrable improvement* going to be measured? It would be good to understand this further and integrate the agreed approach with Active Rother and Sport England approaches.
  - Reporting progress to both the Active Rother Partnership and the East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership would demonstrate connectivity as part of a system wide approach.
- b) **Bexhill Heritage** Loneliness is one of the main issues in Bexhill. It's a major driver of poor mental health in the town, especially among older people. We suggest that addressing this issue be included in the Council's action plan alongside its commitment to improve physical health.

Bexhill Heritage would like to work alongside the Council and other voluntary groups in developing this strategy.

- c) **1066 Cycle Club** Implement a cycling and walking strategy.
- d) **Rother Environment Group** Prioritise training for 'green jobs' as part of a just transition to a net zero society.

What is lacking is a recognition of the ageing population. Rother is the third area with over 80s district in the country.

Why have a new Bexhill leisure centre when Hastings is planning a new leisure centre just three miles away?

Affordable houses for young people.

- e) **East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group** 'developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy'.
- It would be helpful to extend this collaboration to the statutory section and include schools, social care and the NHS, in particular the NHS East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). We believe a whole system approach is essential to taking action on addressing poverty and its associated determinants.
  - Engagement with the new Rother Food Partnership is key to development of this strategy. The partnership is led by RVA and supported by funding from East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Public Health. Created as a local response to Covid-19 disparity findings and recovery planning, this is a priority area within the new East Sussex Healthy Weight Action Plan, co-ordinated by ESCC Public Health and due to be published in April. The plan will be taken forward by the East Sussex Healthy Weight Partnership, of which RDC is a member, along with the CCG. It would be helpful if the work of the Rother Food Partnership could be reflected in the anti-poverty strategy.
- f) **Sedlescombe Parish Council** Should be a 100% reduction (in line with HBC) of council tax to poorest households.  
Commitment to funding mental health services to all age groups in light of the pandemic.
- g) **Parks Development Service (RDC)** Can this also include 'healthier' i.e. A fairer and healthier society. Much of RDC's work (not just our service area) has a direct link to people's physical and mental health and wellbeing.

Our public realm and the facilities we provide are for all, not just those who are affected by inequality. The importance of this and the services we provide to maintain the public realm (waste collection, grounds maintenance, public toilets, safe beaches etc.) in terms of both people's physical health and mental health has been clearer than ever throughout this past year during the pandemic. Access to public space for exercise, recreation, play, sport, fresh air, reflection, socialising, closeness to nature etc. has been critical to the majority of residents. On that basis, it might be more appropriate to have an additional objective; 'A healthier society'.

A high-quality public realm that is attractive to residents, visitors and business supports the creation of a more prosperous society which also links to the development of Rother's economy.

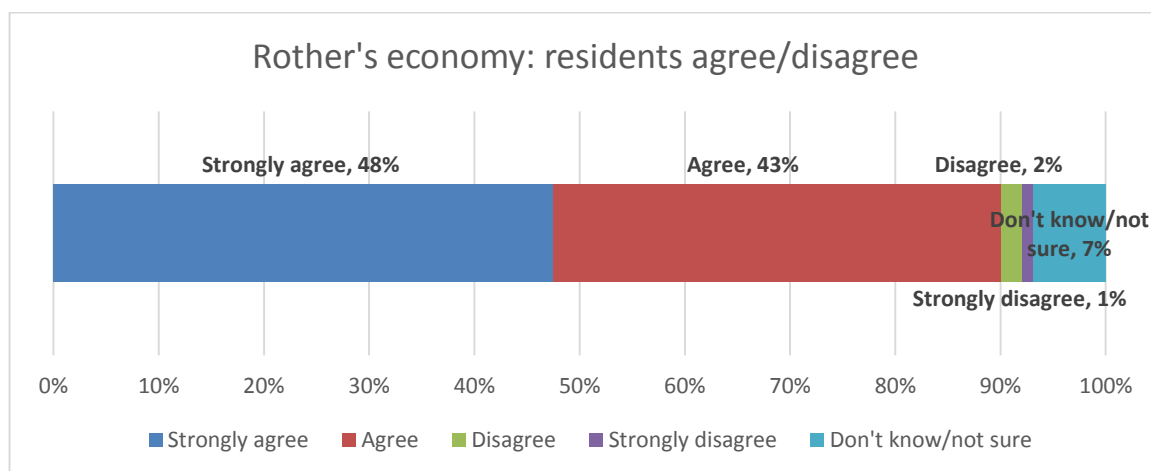
The action 'Improve levels of physical activity amongst residents experiencing socio-economic deprivation and poor health outcomes' only refers to the new leisure centre. Parks, open spaces and the facilities within them (or the public realm) should also be referenced. Specific projects could also be stated. This is a big part of the services we provide.

62. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:
- a) Prioritise this objective over others and over less important actions or projects.
  - b) **Add** - Add more ideas/actions, 3 not enough. Ask target groups what they need. Listen to residents. Work with voluntary sector. Add buddying scheme for those leaving long term care or hospital to reduce long term costs. Address fast broadband and internet access. Invest in infrastructure and green projects that create jobs. Speaking of fairness do something that helps reduce average age of councillors. Anti-social behaviour and safe, well-lit areas. Accessible transport.
  - c) **Anti-poverty strategy** – want to know what would be in it. Make staff more aware of what poverty exists in community and which services impact upon it.
  - d) **Employment access/readiness homeless** - Needs improved education levels. Raise aspirations, qualifications, work experience.
  - e) **More activity:** Prioritise walking and cycle to improve activity levels. Planning remove dangerous junctions. Address activity in outdoor areas. Work with non-council indoor and outdoor facilities, make accessible. Not enough about activity and health in the corporate plan. Milestone due to be achieved before start of plan, so what next? Build the new leisure centre. Add connection with health, nutrition, lifestyle, mental health, etc. Up to the individual too. Include education programme. Free access to some facilities.
  - f) **Disagree** - This objective is beyond the powers/remit/role of a district council – for county council, for government. Needs fairer distribution of wealth. A district council will not have a significant effect. No/little hope for a fairer society. Impossible to achieve. Can only add to cost of running business, living locally. People want everything for nothing, stop this culture. Official interference in people's lives. People choose to be short of a home and a job.

## Objective 8: Development of Rother's Economy

63. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the eighth objective for the development of Rother's economy: to lift the average indexed wage in Rother District from the bottom of the national league table by the end of 2023. Ten local organisations responded to this question and six agreed strongly with the objective and two agreed. One organisation did not know if this objective should be included. In addition, Bexhill Chamber of Commerce sent a detailed report analysing the Corporate Plan from a business and regeneration point of view that is attached as Appendix A.
64. For residents, 48% strongly agreed and 43% agreed, giving us a total of 91% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective on Rother's economy. This is a highest level of agreement out of any of the objectives. Only 3% of public respondents disagreed or strongly

disagreed. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	48%
Agree	43%
Disagree	2%
Strongly disagree	1%
Don't know/not sure	7%
Total number of respondents	105

65. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference. Women were more likely to agree at 48% of women agreeing. Added with women who strongly agreed a total of 96% of women respondents agreed with having this objective.

### Action plan for Rother's economy objective

66. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the objective on Rother's economy.

67. Local organisations said:

a) **Key actions in Rother's economic recovery plan, rural ultrafast broadband and tourism events:** four organisations strongly agreed and two agreed that this action would help tackle the economy. One strongly disagreed and one did organisation didn't know or wasn't sure if these actions would help.

b) **Completion of council-led commercial developments increasing employment levels:** four local organisations strongly agreed and two agreed that this action would help. However, two strongly disagreed with this action. One organisation didn't know if this would help.

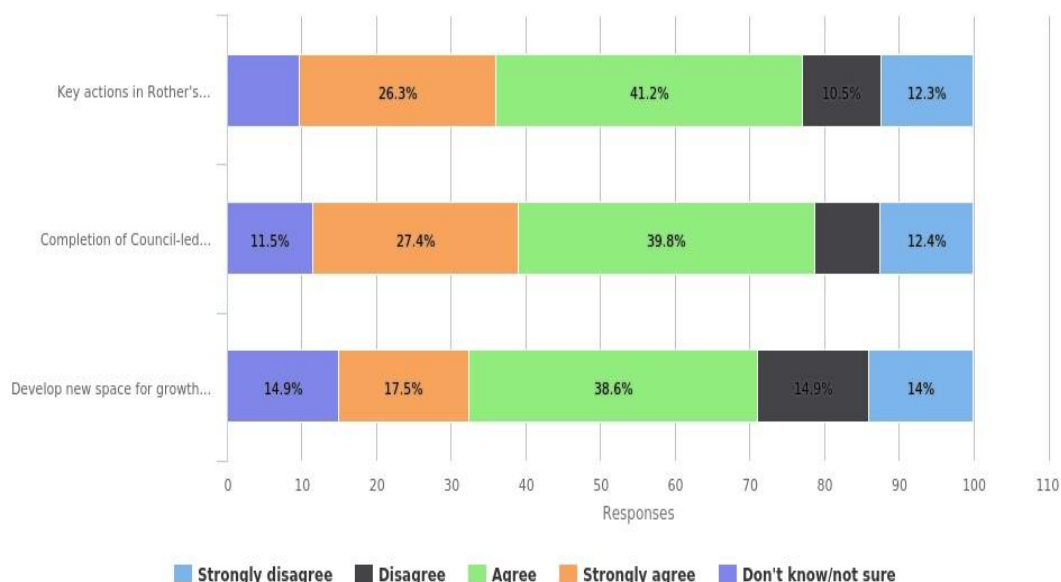
c) **New space for creative sector: Bexhill studios:** Three local organisations strongly agreed, two agreed. One organisation disagreed and two strongly disagreed that this action would help.

68. Residents said:



- a) **Key actions in Rother's economic recovery plan:** 67% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help tackle Rother's economy. Working age respondents (18-64 yrs) were a little more likely to agree that this action would help at 72% of respondents. Bexhill residents are more likely a little more likely to agree/strongly agree at 72%.
- b) **Council-led commercial developments:** 67% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Working age respondents (18-64 yrs) were a little more likely to agree that this action would help at 72% of respondents. Bexhill residents are a little more likely to agree/strongly agree with this action at 72%.
- c) **Bexhill studios:** 57% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Men were a little less likely to agree at 52%. Bexhill residents are a bit more likely to agree/strongly agree with this action at 64%.

69. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. One point of interest is how the chart shows how 14% of respondents disagree with the Bexhill studios and 14% didn't know or were not sure if it would help.



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total
<b>Key actions in Rother's Economic Recovery Plan: 500 more rural homes with ultrafast broadband, 15 new sustainable tourism events by 2023</b>	26%	41%	11%	12%	10%	<b>114 100%</b>
<b>Completion of Council-led commercial developments increasing employment levels in the district: 15,000 sq metres by 2023.</b>	27%	40%	9%	12%	12%	<b>113 100%</b>
<b>Develop new space for growth of creative sector in the district: Bexhill Studios</b>	18%	39%	15%	14%	15%	<b>114 100%</b>

## Other matters to take into account on Rother's economy

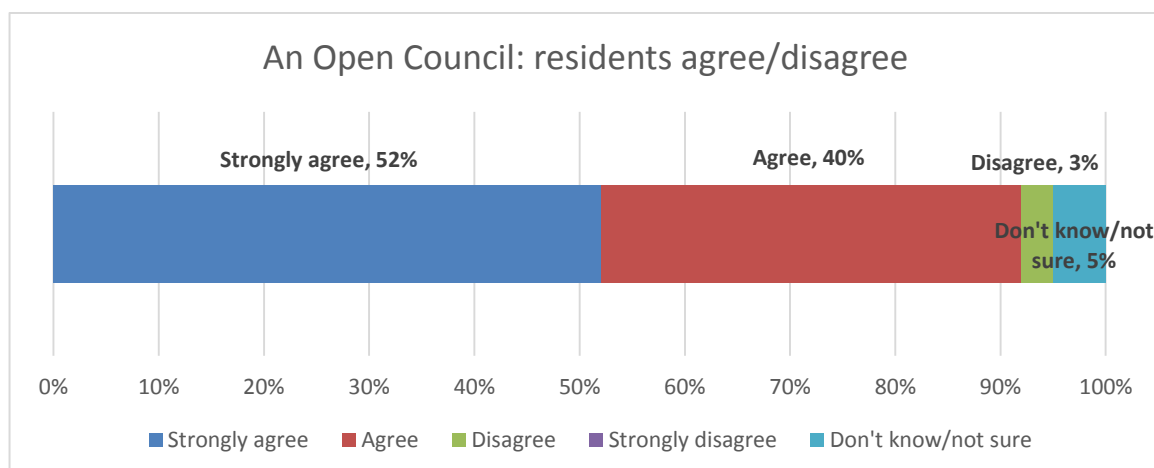
70. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:
- a) **Rother Greenways** All new commercial developments should include improved walking and cycling access and public transport. The number of car parking spaces should be reduced, instead car sharing and EV car sharing schemes should be put in place. [Rother Greenways strongly disagreed with commercial development and Bexhill Studios.]
  - b) **Bexhill Heritage** strongly supports this objective and wishes to play a significant part through the development of Bexhill's former bandstand.
  - c) **Battle Town Council** Growth of the creative sector should be across the whole of Rother and not just Bexhill. [Battle Town Council disagreed with the Bexhill Studios action.]
  - d) **1066 Cycle Club** RDC should be acquiring green space to be kept and used as green space, yielding economic and wellbeing benefits.
  - e) **Rother Environment Group** Prioritise sustainable development that helps Rother meet its net zero targets, and improves quality of life for all, so including other well-being measures as well as indexed wages.
  - f) **East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group** We acknowledge the link between deprivation, economic growth, education, skills and employment and exclusion and health outcomes. The positive impact that health has on economic growth and poverty reduction, occurs through less worker illness, increased productivity, lower absenteeism rates and improved learning among school children and adults, higher incomes and improved housing accessibility. We therefore support the aspirations set out in these objectives and would wish to further develop our collaborative work with RDC, established in recent years through the CCG's membership of the Local Strategic Partnership and the CHART (Connecting Hastings and Rother Together) Executive Board.
  - g) **Bexhill Chamber of Commerce** - the full submission is at Appendix A
71. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix available to Members. A summary of the main points is as follows:
- a) **Recovery Plan: Ultrafast Broadband** - Broadband is the work of the county council, central government paid. Why only 500 homes? Specify the benefits. All homes is a better target. Unsure how this helps economic development if in homes.
  - b) **Recovery Plan: Tourism events** - against tourism events because: Cost to taxpayer. Should be paid for by local businesses. Other priorities (e.g. housing, homeless). Prioritise low impact, environmentally, and eco-tourism.
  - c) **Employment space** - Against new commercial, office space, etc. There are already empty offices/shops. Businesses should pay to develop, pay for own premises. Use brownfield sites.
  - d) **Bexhill Studios** - It is not clear what is Bexhill Studios. Is this housing, studio flats? Is the creative sector not low income, low pay?
  - e) **Add** - supporting rural tourism, pubs, campsites, things to support UK holiday market, green economy. Add improving unattractive appearance of Bexhill. Add transport. Road and rail links. Focus on larger employers, larger sites. Not all in Bexhill. Add Rye Harbour. More investment in

Eastern Rother. Add environmental protection sector. Find ways to use local people’s knowledge, experience, skills, including retired. DWP office in Hastings is not fit for purpose so consider building them an office block to rent. Protection for green spaces, though. Add repurposing our high streets.

- f) **Clarify** – how these actions will help lift wage levels, where is the connection.

## Objective 9: Open Council

72. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the ninth objective for an open council: to improve access to Council meetings, open the council to the public ensuring increased transparency, meaningful consultation and better visibility by end 2023. Eight local organisations answered this question and six agreed strongly with the objective and two organisations agreed.
73. For residents, 52% strongly agreed and 40% agreed, giving us a total of 92% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective for an open council. Only 3% of public respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. However, 5% said they didn’t know or were not sure about this objective. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	52%
Agree	40%
Disagree	3%
Strongly disagree	0%
Don't know/not sure	5%
Total number answered	100

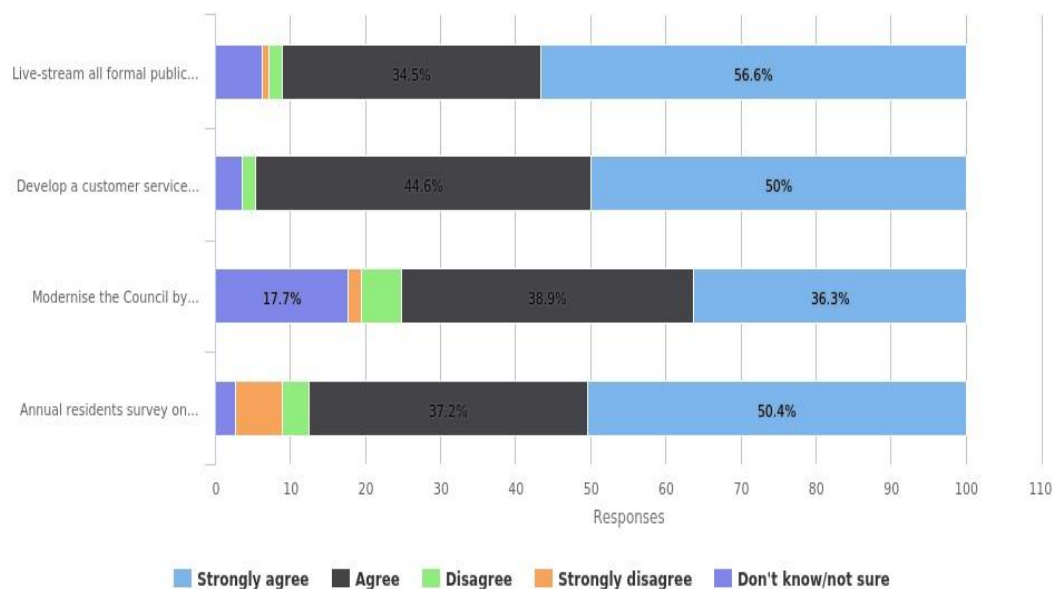
74. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference.
- Men were more likely to strongly agree at 59%. Women were less likely to strongly agree at 43% and more likely to agree at 48%.
  - Working age people were less likely to strongly agree (45%) and more likely to select agree (48%) but still the greater majority agreed with this objective.

- Bexhill residents are more likely to say strongly agree at 58%.

## Action plan for an open council

75. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the XXX objective.
76. Local organisations said:
- Live stream all formal public council meetings:** Five organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help deliver an open council.
  - Develop a customer service strategy. Ensure equality of access:** Six local organisations strongly agreed and two agreed that this action would help.
  - Updating the council's constitution:** four local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed and one organisation did not know or was not sure that this action would help.
  - Annual residents survey on needs and experiences:** three local organisations agreed strongly and four agreed that this action would help. One organisation didn't know if this would help deliver an open council.
77. Residents said:
- Live stream public meetings:** 92% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help deliver an open council.
  - Customer service strategy, equality of access:** 95% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
  - Updating council constitution:** 75% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Bexhill residents are slightly more likely to agree with this action at 80%.
  - Annual residents survey:** 87% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help.
78. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement. It shows how the most popular action is the customer service strategy and equality of access and the least supported action is updating the council's constitution (although it does have a high majority support). We can also see that 18% of respondents said they didn't know or were not sure if updating the constitution would help deliver an open council.

**How much do you agree or disagree that the following actions will help deliver the objective of an open council?**



Answer	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/not sure	Total No.
Live-stream all formal public Council meetings on accessible platforms by 2021	57%	35%	2%	1%	6%	113
Develop a customer service strategy - improving accessibility to all services and customer services standards. Ensure equality of access to meet the diverse needs of residents	50%	45%	2%	0%	4%	112
Modernise the Council by updating the constitution by 2022	36%	39%	5%	2%	18%	113
Annual residents survey on needs and experiences	50%	37%	4%	6%	3%	113

## Other matters to take into account on an open council

79. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Not all organisations commented but those that did said:

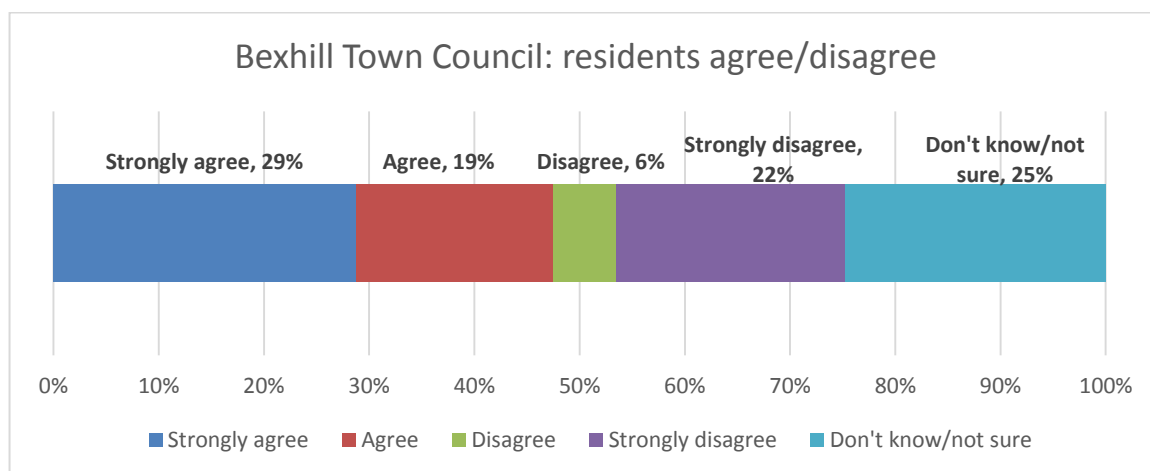
- a) **Bexhill Heritage** We recommend that the Council should also develop a strategy to engage and work alongside local groups and organisations in reviewing its operational effectiveness.
- b) **Battle Town Council** The Constitution should be reviewed regularly and updated when necessary.
- c) **1066 Cycle Club** Look into having a citizens' assembly in relation to the climate emergency. Press ahead with the Bexhill Town Council as an important means of engagement with the residents of Bexhill.

80. Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:
- a) **Live Streaming** Concerns about cost of live streaming being value for money considering lack of debate. Make more welcoming atmosphere for public to attend meetings, including documents/text should welcome public attendance. The council has always been open and people could attend meetings and see documents, this makes it sound like that never happened.
  - b) **Constitution** Concerns about being costly. Not aware current has any problems. What is wrong with it? Prioritise improving services first. Shouldn't the constitution meet the needs of the council and district and not simply modernise it? Add more accountability and clear leadership. Remove the Queen and God from the council chamber as have no place in 2021.
  - c) **Customer Service Strategy** Better not to have hard targets like answer in three rings. Have general directives. Make part of staff handbook. Removing services from the Town Hall, moving out, does not meet improved customer service. Carry out annual survey before developing a customer service strategy to help inform it.
  - d) **Equality of access** Concerns about expensive translation services. Do not start printing everything in multiple languages.
  - e) **Annual Survey** Concerns about cost of annual survey. Waste of resources. Combine with budget consultation. Combine with customer surveys after service use. Concerns this will not result in actions. Surveys and consultations are currently designed to get the answers the council wants. Make less frequent than annual as it takes time to get impact such as changes in economy, also pandemic is going to have immediate downward impact.
  - f) **Add these actions:** Improve communication from the council. Make communications less ESCC centric. Address fake news on social media groups. Clearer suggestions and complaints system. Review if all reports are needed. Use less jargon. Have lay people sit on scrutiny and review committees. Have more long term actions, doesn't cover 7 years. Add one stop help channels for all public services. Actions to get young people involved, with schools and colleges. Add an annual report to the Council Tax bill like Sussex Police so can see what money has gone on. Members should hold local surgeries. Do a regular ward tour with councillors. Schedule zoom meetings for residents about the Corporate Plan so residents can ask questions of senior councillors and officers.

## Objective 10: A Town Council for Bexhill

81. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed with the final objective for the creation of a town council for Bexhill-on-Sea: to form a parish (town) council for Bexhill with effect from 1 April 2021 and first elections in May 2021. Seven local organisations answered this question and four agreed strongly with the objective and three agreed.
82. For residents, 29% strongly agreed and 19% agreed, giving us a total of 48% of residents and visitors (the public) agreeing that the Council should have an objective on creating Bexhill Town Council. There are 28% of public

respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. The chart and table below refer only to the responses from the public.



Answer	%
Strongly agree	29%
Agree	19%
Disagree	6%
Strongly disagree	22%
Don't know/not sure	25%
<b>Total number of respondents</b>	102

83. We can breakdown this information into some groups but due to the small sample they are limited and are only reported where there is a significant statistical difference.
- a) Bexhill residents are more likely to say strongly agree at 45%, giving an overall agreement of 64%.
  - b) Men were a little less likely to agree at 14% and therefore less likely to strongly agree and agree at 42% in total.
  - c) For women, 56% either agreed or strongly agreed with this objective. Primarily, women were more likely to select 'agree' at 24%.
  - d) Working age residents (18-64) were less likely to answer 'agree' at 14% and more likely to answer 'strongly disagree' at 27%.

### **Action plan for the Bexhill Town Council objective**

84. We asked respondents if they agreed or disagreed that each of the actions or projects in the draft action plan would help deliver the objective to set up Bexhill Town Council.
85. Local organisations said:
- a) **Draft community governance order:** Three organisations strongly agreed and three agreed that this action would help deliver a new town council for Bexhill. One organisation strongly disagreed.
  - b) **Appoint interim administrator:** Three local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed that this action would help and one strongly disagreed.

- c) **Work with new town council on transferring assets:** Three local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed that this action would help and one strongly disagreed.
- d) **Work on appointing permanent town clerk:** Three local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed that this action would help and one strongly disagreed.
- e) **Conduct election:** Three local organisations strongly agreed, three agreed that this action would help and one strongly disagreed.

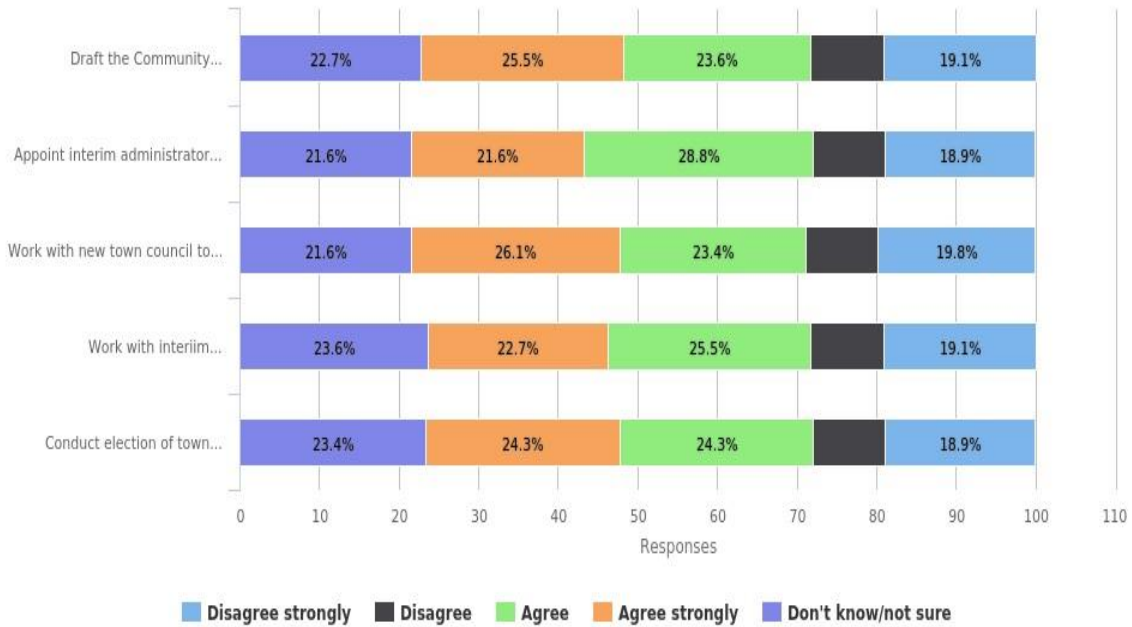
86. Residents said:

- a) **Draft community governance order:** 50% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help deliver a town council for Bexhill. Those who disagreed and strongly disagree were 28%. The remaining 23% did not know or were not sure. For Bexhill residents, 64% agreed or strongly agreed. Men were less likely to strongly agree and agree at 43%. Women were more likely to agree/strongly agree with this action at 55%. Working age respondents were more likely to disagree than overall results at 33% of working age respondents.
- b) **Appoint interim administrator:** 51% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help, 28% either strongly disagreed or disagreed and 22% didn't know. Bexhill residents were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 64%. Men were less likely to strongly agree and agree at 44%. Men were more likely to strongly disagree or disagree at 34%. Women were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 57%. Working age respondents were less likely to agree at 46%.
- c) **Transferring assets:** 49% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. A further 29% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Finally, 22% said they didn't know or were not sure. Bexhill residents were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 64%. Men were slightly less likely to agree at 44% (agree and agree strongly). Women were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 55%.
- d) **Permanent town clerk:** 49% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. As above, 29% either disagreed or disagreed strongly. The remaining 24% didn't know or were not sure if this action would help. Bexhill residents were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 62%. Men were less likely to agree at 40% and more likely to disagree at 34%. Women were more likely to agree/strongly agree at 57%. Working age respondents were more likely to disagree/strongly disagree at 33%.
- e) **Conduct election:** 48% either strongly agree or agree that this action would help. Once again, 29% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. Finally, 23% did not know or were not sure. Respondents from Bexhill had majority support for this action with 62% answering agree or strongly agree. Men were more likely to disagree at 44% (disagree and strongly disagree) and a little less likely to agree at 43%. Women were more likely to agree and strongly agree at 53%.

87. The chart and table below refer to the responses by the general public and show the distribution of agreement and disagreement. It clearly shows the consistency of the answers between all the actions.

**How much do you agree or disagree that the following actions will help deliver the objective of creating a town council for Bexhill-on-Sea?**





Answer	Agree strongly	Agree	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know/not sure	Total No.
<b>Draft the Community Governance Order to establish a town council</b>	26%	24%	9%	19%	23%	<b>110</b>
<b>Appoint interim administrator to set up initial governance structure, including election</b>	22%	29%	9%	19%	22%	<b>111</b>
<b>Work with new town council to identify and agree assets and services to transfer from Rother District Council</b>	26%	23%	9%	20%	22%	<b>111</b>
<b>Work with interim administrator on appointment of permanent town clerk after May 2021 elections</b>	23%	26%	9%	19%	24%	<b>110</b>
<b>Conduct election of town council</b>	24%	24%	9%	19%	23%	<b>111</b>

## Other matters to take into account on Bexhill Town Council

88. We asked if there was anything else the council should take into account for this objective or the action plan. Organisations said:

- a) **Rye Conservation Society:** We will watch the arrival of the new Bexhill Council with interest. For Rye we would wish it noted that any plans for Rye should be discussed and agree with Rye Town Council before implementation and that we want to see good constructive relations between Rye and Rother.
- b) **Bexhill Heritage:** The town council has a critical role to play in engaging with local groups and organisations in the town and helping to release their potential for community benefit.

- c) Town councillors should see themselves as facilitators and co-ordinators rather than providers. A focused community partnership and development strategy will be key to the town council's success.
  - d) We recommend that town councillors should be encouraged to access best practice through a focused induction programme. This is an important prerequisite for a successful council and should be include in the plan.
  - e) **Battle Town Council:** Events have overtaken this questionnaire. Bexhill Town Council has been formally agreed.
  - f) **Rother Environmental Group:** Why are you asking these questions? They are all happening! or have happened!
  - g) **Peasmarsh Parish Council:** RDC's objective should also be in ensuring resources/support provided to the new Bexhill Town Council are equitable with resources provided to rural towns and parishes.
  - h) Residents commented and most comments were suggested additions for the action plan. A full list of all responses is available as an appendix. A summary of main points is as follows:
    - i) **Establish Town Council:** Don't like local councils, how much cost, don't want higher costs, pointless, makes no sense, as already happened, what is impact on those not living in Bexhill, rural resident so not affected, will be a poorer place, yet another layer of bureaucracy, competing needs across the town, a distraction, only financially comfortable middle-class want this not those on UC, minimum wage, zero hours who don't want rise in Council Tax. About time, at last. Support.
    - j) **Transfer of services:** Transfer DLWP as a Bexhill asset/benefit, what is impact on green spaces? Transfer parks, recreation grounds, public conveniences, seafront, environmental improvements.
    - k) **Appointment of permanent Town Clerk:** RDC should not be involved in this.
    - l) **Suggested other actions:** Train new councillors.
89. Finally, we asked respondents to suggest other objective, priorities and actions that they would like the council to consider for the Corporate Plan. This was an opportunity for respondents to say where they felt there were omissions, where they had other priorities and generally give their views beyond the draft document.
90. Organisations said:
- a) **Rye Conservation Society:** We feel that the objectives as listed sound good although at this stage lack detail of exactly what is meant by various actions. It is also not clear what influence local areas such as Rye will have on outcome or what consultation will be allowed?
  - b) **Rother Greenways:** Please start taking the Climate Emergency seriously and develop cross-cutting policies across departments that are not hampered by bureaucratic inertia and unwillingness to change amongst established elites. Thank you.
  - c) **Bexhill Heritage:** This is an ambitious and exciting plan. Remember to take people with you by building on their goodwill, and their huge potential to engage and contribute. Bexhill Heritage will support the Council in any way that's consistent with our charity's agreed objectives.
  - d) **1066 Cycle Club:** We are a walking and cycling club. A strategy to encourage this activity will provide health and environmental benefits and support many of the Corporate Plan's objectives. Radical action is needed as a third of Rother's carbon footprint is from transport.

- e) **Rother Environmental Group:** The format of this consultation form is inconsistent - with strongly agree and disagree changing from question to question.
- f) The sequencing of the targets should be in date order.
- g) We don't know at this moment if there is a post back to sender facility and there should be.
- h) **East Sussex Clinical Commissioning Group:** The CCG looks forward to continuing our collaborative work with RDC. This has been developed in recent years through the Healthy Hastings and Rother Programme, our membership of the Local Strategic Partnership and other themed partnerships such as Safer Communities, CHART (Connecting Hastings and Rother Together), and Active Rother. In addition, we have collaborated on joint work to support vulnerable population groups such as rough sleepers and the establishment of the Rother Community Hub as part of the local Covid-19 response.
- i) **Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum:** Although Hastings Sustainable Transport Forum is focused on the Borough of Hastings we recognise that many transport issues cross our Borough/District boundary and require a Hastings and Rother perspective.

91. The following is a summary of key points made by the public. Duplications of comments already made and services provided by other public organisations (ESCC, Sussex Police) are not included. All responses are available on the appendix made available to the Members.

- a) Take better financial advice.
- b) Action Plans: Include actions for all 7 years. Clarify action plans and milestones. Underwhelming goals, ambiguous statements. More specific targets. Restructure action plans to remove duplication and make it clearer. Change terms to aims, deliverables, outcomes not actions and milestones.
- c) Vision should be reworded 'putting residents at the heart of all we do' also sub-visions all end in 'ing' except two so should be ensuring financial stability and enabling economic prosperity.
- d) Remove references to what has already been achieved or will be achieved by time of adoption of plan.
- e) Focus on recovery from pandemic, particularly economic and business recovery. Health and wellbeing. Social needs.
- f) Economic development – support employment, skills development, career development, business establishment and development, variety of businesses, more tourism venues or attractions for visitors, more dementia friendly businesses, farming and fishing support.
- g) Repair seafront fountain.
- h) Add actions for the rest of Rother, outside Bexhill. More small rural sites for both housing and business/commercial.
- i) Add actions for green spaces.
- j) Add actions for health and wellbeing through sport. Sport is mentioned but there are no plans for any actions. Leisure centre stopped. Improve leisure facilities. Disabled access down to the sea. Encourage sea bathing, changing rooms, showers.
- k) Don't support moving Town Hall. Convert extensions to housing and have staff continue to work from Town Hall combined with home working.
- l) Cleaner district – litter, dirty road signs, dirty streets, rubbish bags.

- m) Transports (district council level) – car reduction plan, car parks, planning, off-road walking and cycling, rural transport.

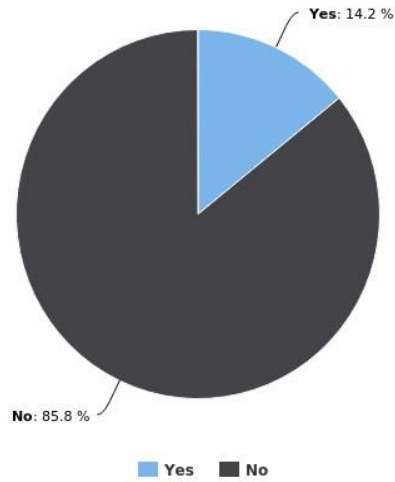
## About Our Respondents

92. We asked the public for information about themselves to see if we were getting responses from Rother's population and to be able to analyse response by groups of residents.
93. 97% of respondents lived in Rother and 3% visited or worked in Rother but were not residents. The majority of respondents were male, at 56% compared to female at 44%. The largest age group to answer were working age adults aged 35 to 64 that made up 62% of respondents. The next largest group were retirement age adults aged 65 to 79 with 30%. No one under 18 took part, although invited there were a number of complex issues and a document to read and this may have been why. Young adults aged 18 to 34 only made up 6% of respondents and there were not enough to analyse by this age group alone. Only 2% of respondents were aged 80 and over.
94. Residents with a disability or long-term illness made up 14% of respondents, but there were not enough individual responses to do analysis by this group.
95. We had no representation from black and black British minority groups. Almost all respondents, 97% of respondents were white and white British. Only 2% were from Asian backgrounds and 2% from mixed ethnicities. The small sample means we can't do analysis by ethnicity. (This doesn't add up to 100% due to rounding up to the nearest whole number.)
96. Bexhill residents were a little over-represented at 55% (47% of Rother's population lives in Bexhill). Villages and rural Rother (outside the three main towns) were under-represented at only 23%

Answer	%
<b>A resident or Council Tax payer of Rother (live in Rother)</b>	97%
<b>A visitor or worker in Rother but who does not live in Rother</b>	3%
<b>Total who answered</b>	116

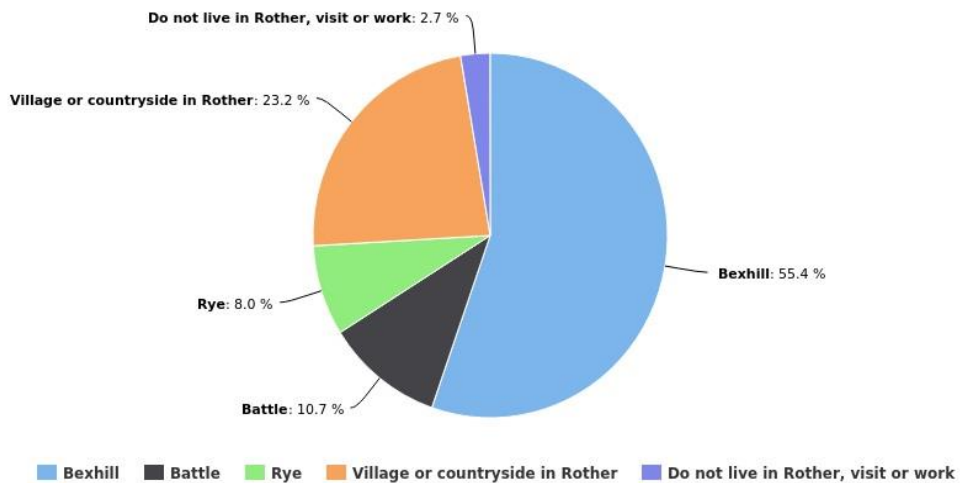
Answer	%
<b>Male</b>	56%
<b>Female</b>	44%
<b>Total number who answered</b>	113

Answer	%
<b>Under 18</b>	0%
<b>18 to 34</b>	6%
<b>35 to 64</b>	62%
<b>65 to 79</b>	30%
<b>80 and over</b>	2%
<b>Total who answered</b>	113



Answer	%
Yes, disabled/long term illness	14%
No, not disabled	86%

Answer	%
White British (English, Scottish, Welsh, N.Irish)	95%
White Other	2%
Mixed heritage or ethnicity of any origin	2%
Asian or Asian British	2%



Answer	%
Bexhill	55%
Battle	11%
Rye	8%
Village or countryside in Rother	23%
Do not live in Rother but visit or work	3%
Total answered question	112

## Conclusion

97. The development of Rother's economy and having an open council were the two most supported objectives.

98. Internally focused or organisational objectives, about how the council would make itself fit to delivery its objectives, tended to have less participation from some organisations as they felt they could not make a response on these matters. A key example was an empowered organisation, which is overall the least supported objective. Another objective that was not particularly supported was the foundation of Bexhill Town Council. Part of this was due to all but one action in the action plan would be completed in the first half of 2021. However, this objective did have majority support from the Bexhill residents who took part in the consultation.
99. We also noted where respondents asked for clarification or found some terms confusing.
100. The Council is grateful to all those, both individuals and organisations, that took part in the consultation for their time and effort. Their participation and contributions are appreciated.

**Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration**  
**Rother District Council**  
**14 April 2021**

## Draft Corporate Programme List

<b>Project ref: Project name</b>	<b>Target completion date</b>
<b>1 Green Asset Management Plan</b>	31/12/2021
<b>2 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Installation</b>	31/12/2021
<b>3 Town Hall Renaissance Project</b>	31/12/2024
<b>4 Asset Management Plan &amp; Improvement Programme</b>	31/12/2022
<b>5 Public Asset Devolvment Programme</b>	31/03/2025
<b>6 Barnhorn Green Health &amp; Employment Scheme</b>	31/03/2023
<b>7 Beeching Road Estate Regeneration Programme</b>	2023/24
<b>8 Bexhill Enterprise Park Development</b>	2022/23
<b>9 Income Generation Programme</b>	30/09/2021
<b>10 Temporary Accommodation Programme</b>	31/03/2023
<b>11 Housing Development Programme</b>	2026/27
<b>12 Blackfriars Residential Development, Battle</b>	30/06/2024
<b>13 Private Sector Access Review</b>	31/03/2023
<b>14 Housing Allocations Policy Review</b>	30/10/2021
<b>15 New Local Plan (2019-2039)</b>	Winter 2023
<b>16 Corporate Restructure Programme</b>	30/06/2022
<b>17 Anti-Poverty Strategy Development and Delivery</b>	01/12/2021
<b>18 Rural Superfast Broadband Infrastructure Scheme</b>	31/12/2023
<b>19 Beeching Road Creative Studios</b>	30/12/2023
<b>20 Council Chamber Technology Improvement</b>	31/01/2022
<b>21 Customer Service Strategy Development</b>	31/03/2022
<b>22 Council Constitution Review</b>	31/01/2022
<b>23 A Town Council for Bexhill-on-Sea</b>	30/09/2021

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## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Disposal of Land adjoining Pages Gap, Bexhill-on-Sea

**Report of:** Ben Hook

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Dixon

**Ward(s):** Bexhill Collington

**Purpose of Report:** To obtain authority to dispose of part of the freehold land adjoining Pages Gap as public open space, as required under the Local Government Act 1972.

**Decision Type:** Key

### Officer

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

- 1) by virtue of Section 123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the Council gives formal notice of its intention to dispose of part of its landholding at Pages Gap, South Cliff, Bexhill as public open space;
- 2) any objections received to the Public Notice to be reported back to Cabinet for further consideration; and
- 3) subject to the above, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to sell the land on terms and conditions to his satisfaction.

### Reasons for

**Recommendations:** To generate a capital receipt and reduce future maintenance liabilities.

### Introduction

1. Pages Gap consists of a sloped pathway from South Cliff, opposite its junction with Pages Avenue, leading down to the splash deck fronting the beach. The path itself is a ramped access of sufficient width to accommodate small vehicles, with a separate railed footpath alongside. Either side of the path are banked verges covered in vegetation. The path was originally constructed in 1964 as a trackway to provide a winched access to the seafront for wheelchair users.
2. Pages Gap is owned and managed by Rother District Council (RDC). Whilst not a public right of way, it is used by the public to access the beach and also occasionally by emergency services.

## Proposal

3. The owners of the adjoining property at 43 South Cliff have made an offer to purchase part of the freehold land adjoining the footpath. The area they are seeking to acquire comprises the verge to the west of the path, approximately 7m in width and shown edged blue in Appendix A. For avoidance of doubt, this does not include the ramped pathway nor the separate railed footpath alongside it.
4. The offer is made subject to contract and formal valuation. The sale will be a direct transfer of the freehold between RDC and the owners of 43 South Cliff.
5. The owners of 43 South Cliff have made it clear that their intention is to build a double storey side extension to be used as a separate annex. The offer is not however conditional on obtaining planning permission.
6. The offer is subject to no objections being made from the Public Notice advertisement which is a requirement under Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972. This advertisement will need to be placed within a local paper for two consecutive weeks.
7. An external Red Book valuation will be instructed by RDC to ensure that the offer represents Best Value for the Council.

## Financial Implications

8. There will be costs associated with transfer of this land. This will include officer time and legal costs. In addition, the cost to advertise the disposal in the local press will be approximately £1,000 for two weeks as well as approximately £1,000 for an external Red Book valuation.
9. It is understood that there will be a small saving on future maintenance of the verge. The property does not provide a source of income.

## Alignment with the Environment Strategy

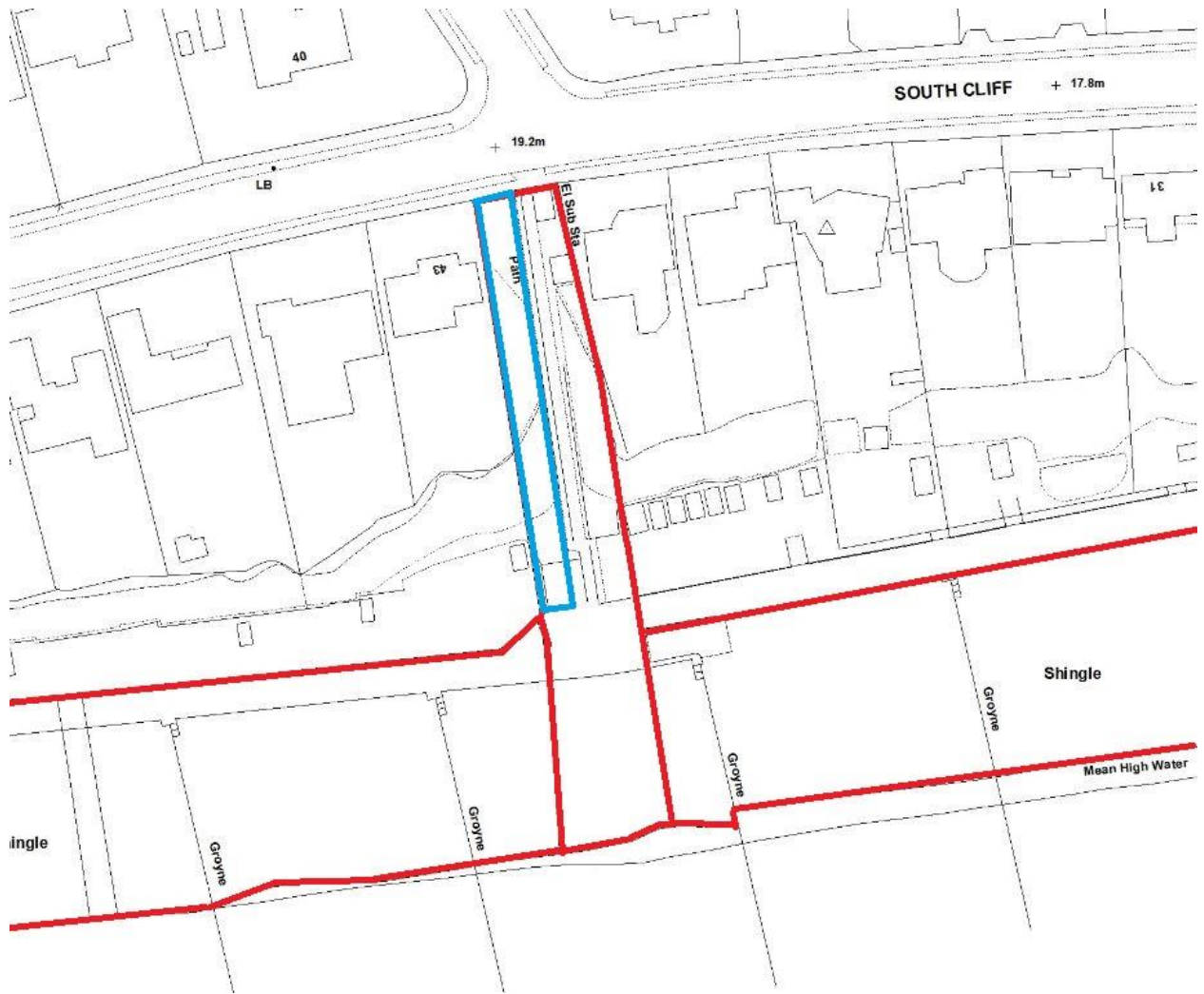
10. Although the verge provides some habitat for wildlife, it is of no special ecological significance. Loss of green space is contrary to the principles of the Environment Strategy however, Members may wish to consider if and how any capital receipt would be earmarked and whether to allocate towards future Environment Strategy Capital Projects.

## Conclusion

11. The verge is not accessible from any other properties and is surplus land abutting the pathway with a maintenance liability. The offer is not conditional on planning consent. Therefore, it is recommended that the Council sells the freehold part of land in question on terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	Yes
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No

Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	Yes		
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston		
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook		
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:ben.hook@rother.gov.uk">ben.hook@rother.gov.uk</a>		
Appendices:	A – Site layout and description		
Relevant Previous Minutes:	N/A		
Background Papers:	N/A		
Reference Documents:	N/A		



**Rother District Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Egerton Park Leased Tennis Courts: Disposal of Public Open Space
<b>Report of:</b>	Ben Hook
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Timpe
<b>Ward(s):</b>	Central Ward, Bexhill
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To determine the letting of tennis courts at Egerton Park, Bexhill to Bexhill Tennis Club.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-Key
<b>Officer Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED:</b> That a new lease of three years term be granted to Bexhill Tennis Club with terms and conditions to the satisfaction of the Chief Executive.
<b>Reasons for Recommendations:</b>	To support Bexhill Tennis Club to sustain their current membership in addition to maintaining the associated physical and mental health benefits of the sport for the community.

**Introduction**

1. In February this year, Cabinet approved the letting of the tennis courts at Egerton Park to Bexhill Tennis Club, subject to advertising as a disposal of Public Open Space in accordance with the provisions of S.123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended). The advertisement was required because the arrangement of the courts would differ from that previously let to the Tennis Club (Minute CB20/104 refers). A plan showing the area of the proposed letting is attached as Appendix 1.

**Analysis / Details of the proposals**

2. Following advertisements in the local press, three objections have been received to the proposed letting. Broadly these objections are all raised on the basis that the election of Bexhill Parish Council (now known as Bexhill Town Council) was imminent, and this is a matter on which the Parish Council might wish to comment. Redacted copies of the objections are attached as Appendix 2.

## Conclusion

3. As the proposed letting is for a short-term and simply replaces one tennis court with another without any other substantive change to the previous arrangement, it is recommended that the letting proceed.
4. Cabinet is recommended to approve the proposed letting to Bexhill Tennis Club as set out in the previous Cabinet report.

## Financial Implications

5. The rent will be £2,640 per annum exclusive.

## Legal Implications

6. The Council has fulfilled its requirements in relation to a disposal of public open space. The site is not subject to the Fields in Trust QEII Playing Fields scheme therefore there are no implications in that regard.

## Consultation

7. The demised area has been duly advertised as a disposal of public open space in accordance with S.123(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

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
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No

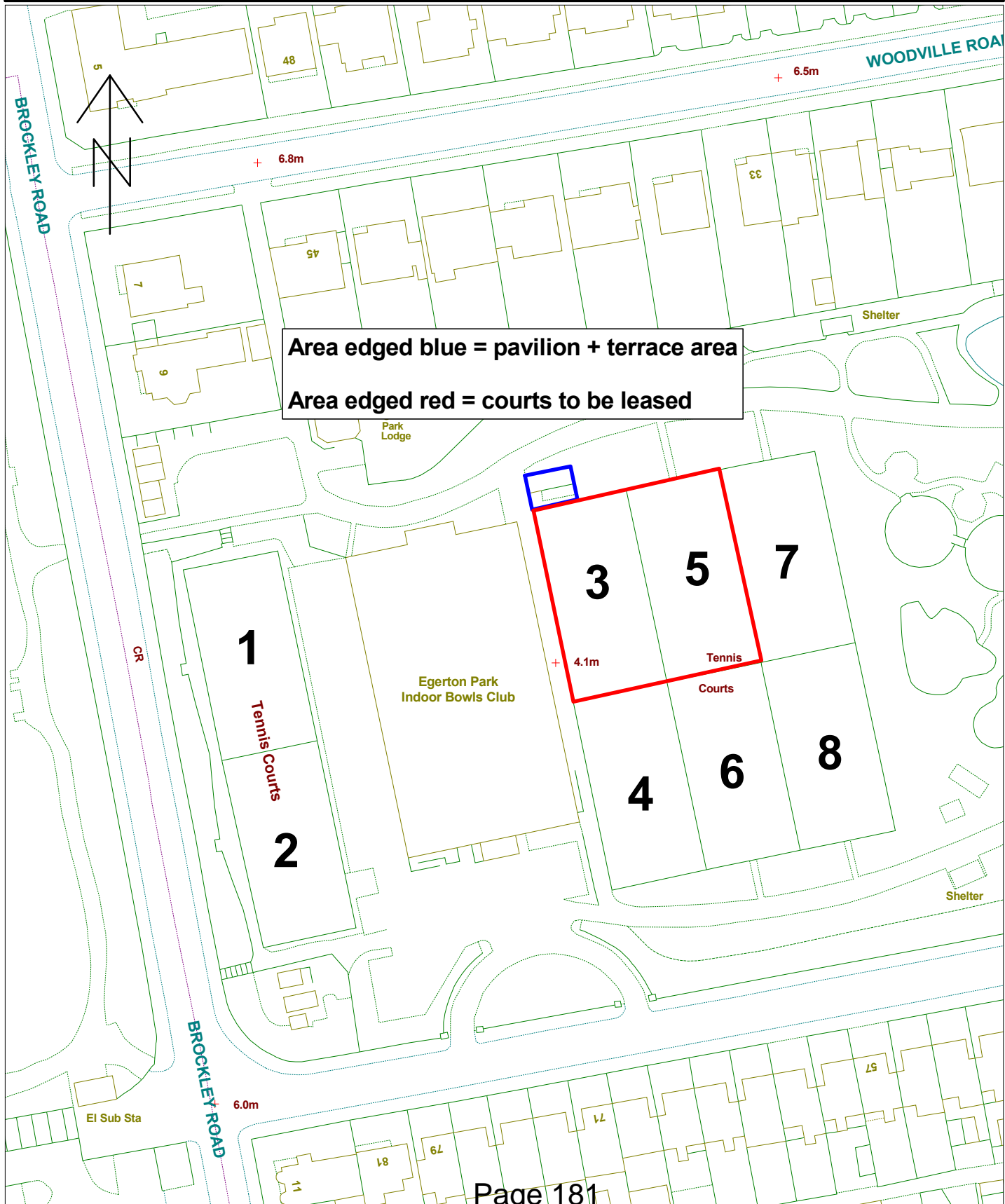
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:Ben.Hook@rother.gov.uk">Ben.Hook@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix 1 - Area to be leased to Bexhill Tennis Club Appendix 2 - Objections
Relevant previous Minutes:	CB20/104
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

Title: Area to be leased to Bexhill Tennis Club

Drawn: RO

Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

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Rother District Council

The Town Hall Bexhill on Sea

East Sussex TN39 3JX

FAO: Neo Georghiou: Estates Surveyor

YOUR REF: B021A Date: 20 April 2021

Dear Sir

With reference to your public notice in the Bexhill Observer to dispose of the above asset through a lease I wish to OBJECT for the reasons given below.

On 5 May 2021 Councillors for the new Parish Council for Bexhill will be elected. As part of the process of setting up the new Council, a process is required to be put in place to agree which assets will transfer to the new Parish Council from the Rother District Council. It seems likely that some if not all responsibilities for Egerton Park may be included in the asset transfer register and possibly also contracts for the maintenance of the park. It seems to me that the land subject to the notice may be a valuable asset and also the value of any lease to be signed between whichever Council holds the asset (either the RDC or the new Parish Council) with the Bexhill Tennis Club.

Given that the date of the election is so close it is in my view not appropriate at this time for the transfer to take place until any negotiations regarding asset transfers between the RDC and the new Parish Council take place or for any agreements between the RDC and the Tennis Club to be signed and sealed.

To many members of the public in Bexhill if this process goes ahead now before the new Parish Council has met and discussed the issue in public it may appear to many to be peremptory in light of probable interest in the RDC assets generally, and particularly in Egerton Park given the current discussions about the future of the Sure Start Nursery (Cygnet) Assets.

I have written to the interim Town Clerk to the new Bexhill Parish Council, Linda Butcher, who currently represents the interest of the emerging BTC. I understand that she has asked Officers of the RDC for a delay in implementing this particular asset transfer process until after the Bexhill parish council has met and is able to consider the issue.

I have however not yet heard the RDC response to Linda's letter: hence my OBJECTION today.

As an active member of the Bexhill Tennis Club it may well be in the Club's interest to acquire this land but my objection is in principle is because of the wider issues of the RDC/BTC negotiations over asset transfers.

And as a BT club member I would like to know the full and plausible implications for the tennis club of the asset transfer.

## Bexhill-on-Sea Parish Council



14<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Your Ref: B021A**

Neo Georghiou  
Estates Surveyor  
Rother District Council  
Town Hall  
Bexhill-on-Sea  
East Sussex  
TN39 3JX

Dear Sirs

Courts, Pavilion and Terrace Area of Egerton Park, Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex

Having been approached by local residents, I write to express concern that the Public Notice dated 9 April 2021 concerning the matter detailed above appears to ignore the fact that very shortly a designated Parish Council for Bexhill-on-Sea will be in a position to consider the matter and perhaps come to a decision that would better reflect the wishes of the whole local community.

I respectfully ask if the closing date for objections could be extended by at least six weeks (to 3<sup>rd</sup> June) so the elected Councillors could consider this matter and present a view to Rother District Council.

I am sure such a revision of the original date would only create a good working relationship into the future between the two authorities and I hope you can give this serious consideration please.

Yours faithfully

Linda A Butcher FSLCC  
Proper Officer – Bexhill-on-Sea Parish Council

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[REDACTED]

**Rother District Council  
The Town Hall  
Bexhill on Sea  
East Sussex  
TN39 3JX**

**YOUR REF: B021A**

**FAO: Neo Georghiou: Estates Surveyor**

**Date: 19 April 2021**

**Local Government Act 1972 Section 123(2A)  
Courts, Pavilion and Tennis Area at Egerton Park  
Disposal of an Asset  
OBJECTION TO THE PROPOSAL**

**Dear Sir**

**With reference to your public notice in the Bexhill Observer to dispose of the above asset through a lease I wish to OBJECT for the reasons given below.**

On 5 May 2021 Councillors for the new Parish Council for Bexhill will be elected. As part of the process of setting up the new Council, a process is required to be put in place to agree which assets will transfer to the new Parish Council from the Rother District Council. It seems likely that some if not all responsibilities for Egerton Park may be included in the asset transfer register and possibly also contracts for the maintenance of the park

It seems to me that the land subject to the notice may be a valuable asset and also the value of any lease to be signed between whichever Council holds the asset (either the RDC or the new Parish Council) with the Bexhill Tennis Club.

Given that the date of the election is so close it is in my view not appropriate at this time for the transfer to take place until any negotiations regarding asset transfers between the RDC and the new Parish Council take place or for any agreements between the RDC and the Tennis Club to be signed and sealed.

To many members of the public in Bexhill if this process goes ahead before the new Parish Council has met and discussed the issue in public this looks like Asset Stripping on the part of Rother District Council

I have been in touch with the interim Clerk to the new Parish Council Linda Butcher who has said she has asked Officers of the RDC for a delay in implementing the transfer process until after the parish council has met and is able to consider the issue. I have however not heard whether this has been agreed hence my OBJECTION today.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

**CC: Linda Butcher; Interim Clerk to the Bexhill Parish Council**

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**Rother District Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet
<b>Date:</b>	28 June 2021
<b>Title:</b>	Council Restructure
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Executive
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Councillor Oliver
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To inform Members of changes to the Senior Officer structure to best meet the needs of the Corporate Plan and to seek approval for changes to the statutory posts of Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Non-Key

**Officer**

**Recommendation(s):** **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That at the appropriate time in the implementation of the new officer structure, the Chief Finance Officer role be reassigned to the post of Finance Manager and the Monitoring Officer role be reassigned to the post of Deputy Chief Executive.

**AND**

It be **RESOLVED:** That the Leader of the Council in consultation with Group Leaders agree the five Members to serve on the Interview Panel for the posts of Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place/Climate.

**Introduction**

1. Members will be aware that the new Corporate Plan is nearing adoption following an extensive period of consultation. It was always envisaged that in response to the new Corporate Plan, that the officer structure and allocation of resources would need to change to ensure sufficient organisational focus is maintained on delivering the ambitions of the current administration. This report sets out the broad proposals for the new structure and seeks approval for the reassignment of the Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer roles. The report also includes the timetable to deliver a new structure. This report concerns the initial phase of the restructure concerning the senior management structure.

**What the new structure needs to achieve**

2. In considering the future shape of the Council and associated staffing structure, it is important to reflect on what is expected to be achieved over the life of the Corporate Plan and beyond. It will be essential that Members and the Chief Executive provide the strategic lead in the new structure. Two key themes are also clear from the Corporate Plan, firstly shaping the district to deliver improvements in the environmental, economic and social environment that

Rother residents, businesses and visitors enjoy. Secondly enabling the Council to transform through an efficient and empowered workforce placing the “customer” at the centre of all we do.

3. Although staffing matters are normally dealt with by the Licensing and General Purposes Committee, reorganisation of this nature and also involving the statutory posts of Chief Finance Officer and Monitoring Officer, requires approval of full Council. The restructure will take place in two phases, firstly the restructure of the senior management team (Chief Officers) and secondly the departmental structure.

### **New Structure**

4. To support the two key themes described above, it is proposed to create two new posts, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Place/Climate. The Deputy Chief Executive post will focus on the transformational change of the Council to be more efficient and customer centric organisation. This post will also carry the statutory role of Monitoring Officer. The change in Monitoring Officer has been consulted on and agreed with the Democratic Services Manager who currently holds this role under a special responsibility arrangement. The Director of Place/Climate will focus on the climate emergency and the place shaping ambitions of the Corporate Plan.
5. The Assistant Director, Resources post is to be deleted from the new structure. This post currently holds the statutory position of Chief Finance Officer and it is proposed that this be reassigned to the Council’s Finance Manager. In addition, to ensure the two new posts are affordable, there will also be a reduction of two existing Heads of Service Posts. This process will inevitably lead to redundancies at the current Head of Service level. The Council’s employment stability policy will be applied throughout this process.
6. The draft senior officer and departmental structure has been the subject of staff and union consultation, which at the time of writing, is still live. A verbal update will be given to Members on the outcome of the consultation. The draft Chief Officer and departmental structure is shown at Appendix A.

### **Next Steps and Timescale**

7. As the post of Director of Place/Climate will be initially ring fenced internally, recruitment can commence as soon as the consultation is complete. Members are asked to recommend to Council the changes to the two statutory posts as detailed in this report. Assuming approval is given by Council, then recruitment to the Deputy Chief Executive role can commence immediately following that approval. The appointment process to both posts will require the establishment of a Member Panel to undertake the interviews, with the support of the Chief Executive. It is suggested that five Members are appointed to the Panel, made up of representation from all the political parties/groupings on the Council. Cabinet may wish to consider whether the same Member Panel should interview for both roles or whether two separate Panels are established. It is proposed that the Leader of the Council agrees the Members for the Panel(s) with the appropriate Group Leaders.
8. Once the two new posts have been appointed to, then the departmental structure will be finalised to support the new corporate management team in meeting the needs of the Corporate Plan. Further consultation will be carried out with staff and unions as appropriate.



9. It is envisaged that the full implementation of the new structure will take in the order of six months to complete including the necessary staff and union consultation. This suggests that the final restructure should be in place by January 2022. An outline of the timetable is shown at Appendix B.

### Financial Implications

10. Members are very aware of the Council's financial position and the need to make significant on-going savings. Consequently, it is proposed that any restructure needs to be broadly cost neutral in terms of on-going staffing costs. However, it should be recognised that there may be one-off costs that will need to be met from reserves in order to deliver the new structure. Whilst the restructure will need to be cost neutral, it is likely that there will be a redirection of staffing resources to meet the needs of the Corporate Plan. This may by necessity involve redundancies in order to release resources to enable this to happen.

### Conclusion

11. The restructure has been designed to allow the Council to focus on delivery of the Corporate Plan, along with its climate change ambitions while also concentrating on customer focus and efficiency.

### Environmental

12. As stated above, one of the key aims of this Council is to maintain a clear focus on the clearly stated carbon reduction ambitions. This proposed restructuring, along with the remainder of the process, will allow clarity of focus.

### Consultation

13. Full consultation has been carried out with the relevant officers and is still live. As stated above, an update will be given at the meeting on the final outcome. Consultation on the further stages of the restructuring are on-going.

### Risk Management

14. There are risks associated with a restructuring approach, but these are mitigated by adhering to the Council's already agreed employment policies and practices.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:malcolm.johnston@rother.gov.uk">malcolm.johnston@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	Appendix A – Structure Chart Appendix B – Timetable
Relevant Previous Minutes:	
Background Papers:	-
Reference Documents:	-

**Chief Executive**

**Director of Place and Climate Emergency**

Planning Policy and Strategy 192	Planning DM/Building Control contract	Regen and Major projects / estates	Neigh'hood/ Commercial Services & Climate Emergency
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**Chief Executive's Office**

Executive Support, HR & Policy, CFO and Financial Services, Democratic Services & Elections, Communications

**Deputy Chief Executive & Monitoring Officer**

Revenues and Benefits	Housing and Customer Services	Legal Services Contract	Environmental Services, Licencing and Community Safety	ICT/ Transformation	Internal Audit & risk management
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**Staffing Restructure - Timetable**

	<b>Action</b>	<b>Start by</b>	<b>Completed by</b>
	<b><u>Corporate Management and Departmental Structure</u></b>		
1	Chief Executive design new management structure and high level departmental structure	03-May-21	28-May-21
2	Consultation with staff and UNISON on new management/Departmental structure	24-May-21	21-Jun-21
3	Cabinet notes new senior structure and agrees proposed changes to statutory posts	28-Jun-21	28-Jun-21
4	Full Council approve changes to statutory posts	05-Jul-21	05-Jul-21
5	Relevant staff put under notice of risk of redundancy	05-Jul-21	05-Jul-21
6	Senior Officer interviews	07-Jul-21	16-Jul-21
7	Appointments of Senior Officers	16-Jul-21	30-Jul-21
8	Unsuccessful staff receive redundancy notice	30-Jul-21	30-Jul-21
9	Redundancies of staff unsuccessful	TBC	TBC
	<b><u>Departmental Restructure</u></b>		
1	CMT design detailed structures	23-May-21	30-Aug-21
2	Consultation with staff and UNISON on Service structures	07-Jul-21	30-Aug-21
3	Finalise Department structures and financial appraisal	30-Jul-21	13-Sep-21
4	Report to Cabinet or L&GP - might need special L&GP	04-Oct-21	04-Oct-21
5	Relevant staff put under notice of risk of redundancy	05-Oct-21	05-Oct-21
6	Interviews for staff posts	04-Oct-21	12-Nov-21
7	Unsuccessful staff receive redundancy notice	15-Nov-21	15-Nov-21
8	Redundancies of staff unsuccessful	01-Jan-22	01-Jan-22
9	Structure implemented	01-Jan-22	01-Jan-22

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**Rother District Council**

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date:** 28 June 2021

**Title:** Additional Restrictions Grant - Discretionary Business Restart Grant Scheme

**Report of:** Chris Watchman, Revenues and Benefits Manager

**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Dixon

**Ward(s):** ALL

**Purpose of Report:** To agree further grant assistance for hospitality businesses that are public houses, restaurants and cafes following the delay announced by Government in lifting all COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

**Officer**

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

- 1) Additional Restrictions Grant - Discretionary Business Restart Grant Scheme be expanded to provide additional support to hospitality businesses that are public houses, restaurants and cafes;
- 2) Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to finalise the amounts of grants and detailed criteria; and
- 3) Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to amend the criteria to award similar grants to any other businesses who have been severely impacted by the extension of restrictions as detailed in the report.

**Reasons for**

**Recommendations:** To maximise the use of the available funding to support local businesses. Any unspent funds will have to be repaid to the Government.

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**Approval from the Chairman of Council will be sought prior to the meeting to enable this decision to be taken as an urgent decision to allow the Council to implement the scheme as soon as possible.**

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1. Members will be aware that the Government announced that there would be a delay to the lifting of all COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. This will, in particular, impact businesses that are public houses, restaurants and cafes,

where due to the continuation of social distancing restrictions, they are unable to operate at capacity. This is seen as a particularly vulnerable area of the economy dominated by small businesses/sole traders, many of which will have substantial fixed property costs. This may include business rates, should the Government not extend to current business rate holiday beyond 30 June 2021.

2. It is proposed that these businesses receive an additional grant from the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) discretionary funds the Council holds, to cover the extra four-week period. The amount of grant will be based on a proportion of the latest national business restart grant that they have received. Based on initial calculations, in excess of 170 local businesses will benefit from this extra help. It is not proposed that a further application from the businesses will be necessary and therefore payment can be made swiftly.
3. In taking this action, the Council is likely to spend all the original £2.75m of funding by the deadline which would enable the Council to qualify for the additional top up funding the Government announced earlier this year. It is anticipated that of the £425m announced, the extra funding for Rother would be in the region of £700,000 and would enable the ARG discretionary grant scheme to continue to support businesses.
4. Members are asked to approve the extension of the scheme as detailed in the report. It is also proposed to delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to finalise the amounts of grants and detailed criteria. It is also sensible to have a further delegation to amend the criteria to enable the swift award of grant to other business sectors that Officers and Members become aware of that have been severely curtailed due to the continued COVID restrictions and have fixed/additional business costs. Any decisions made under the delegations will be published as normal.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Chris Watchman, Revenues and Benefits Manager
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Appendices:	None

Relevant Previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None