

Cabinet

Date and Time - **Monday 6 September 2021 – 6.30 pm**
Venue - **Council Chamber, Town Hall, Bexhill-on-Sea**

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

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 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.

Agenda Item 14 – Additional Restrictions Grant - Discretionary Business Grants Scheme

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

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

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

declaration immediately prior to the commencement of the item in question.

6. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN 2020/21**
(Pages 1 - 10)
7. **FUNDING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT** (Pages 11 - 14)
8. **PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER** (Pages 15 - 22)
9. **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT; COMMUNITY LED HOUSING PROGRAMME**
(Pages 23 - 34)
10. **COMMUNITY GRANTS SCHEME - ROUND 1** (Pages 35 - 50)
11. **DISPOSAL OF LAND AT BLACKFRIARS, BATTLE** (Pages 51 - 56)
12. **PLANNING SERVICE REVIEW - UPDATE** (Pages 57 - 66)
13. **APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE** (Pages 67 - 68)
14. **ADDITIONAL RESTRICTIONS GRANT - DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS GRANTS SCHEME** (Pages 69 - 72)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 27 August 2021

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	6 September 2021
Title:	Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Outturn 2020/21
Report of:	Antony Baden – Finance Manager
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dixon
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To note the draft out turn for the financial year ending 31 March 2021.
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED : That the report be noted.

Introduction

1. This report updates Members on the Council's finances as at the end of March 2021 and includes a draft outturn for 2020/21. Members should note that the information is subject to the external audit of the Council's financial accounts, which is due to commence in September 2021.
2. The report was considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 19 July 2021, who have made no further comments or recommendations.
3. Since the Quarter 3 Monitoring report there have been no reportable virements.
4. At the end of 2020/21, the Council incurred a deficit of £1.284m, of which £367,000 was unplanned. This represents an improvement of £1.310m on the Quarter 3 forecast. The Cost of Services at line 7 in the table below shows a deficit of £2.441m, which reduces to £2.050m (see line 18) after changes in non-service budgets. This reduces further to £367,000 mainly due to additional grant income from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as detailed in lines 30 to 32 and line 35.
5. The financial position for the Council is summarised in the table below and further analysis is explained in the subsequent paragraphs. There is also a table, which shows how the forecast variances have changed between Quarters 3 and 4.

Line	Rother District Council General Fund Summary	Final 2019/20 Actual £ (000)	Revised 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Draft Outturn £ (000)	2020/21 Quarter 4 Variance £ (000)
1	Corporate Core	2,217	1,981	2,162	181
1a	Corporate Core - Coronavirus related	0	0	(45)	(45)
2	Environmental Services	321	505	458	(47)
2a	Environmental Services - Coronavirus related	0	0	49	49
3	Strategy and Planning	759	971	880	(91)
3a	Strategy and Planning - Coronavirus related	0	0	150	150
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(223)	(363)	(410)	(47)
4a	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration - Coronavirus related	0	0	18	18
5	Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services	7,634	8,312	8,241	(71)
5a	Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services - Coronavirus related	0	0	1,298	1,298
6	Resources	3,873	3,210	3,252	42
6a	Resources - Coronavirus related	0	0	1,004	1,004
7	Total Cost of Services	14,581	14,616	17,057	2,441
8	Interest from Investments	(508)	(400)	(324)	76
9	Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	416	1,359	477	(882)
10	MRP	29	242	150	(92)
11	Interest payments	286	610	292	(318)
12	Salaries turnover	0	0	0	0
13	(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy	0	(544)	0	544
14	(ii) Increase income (net) - other	0	(14)	0	14
15	(iii) Lean and Demand	0	(90)	0	90
16	(iv) Service Prioritisation	0	(100)	0	100
17	(v) Reduced Staffing Structure	0	(77)	0	77
18	Net Cost of Services	14,804	15,602	17,652	2,050

Line		Final 2019/20 Actual £ (000)	Revised 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Draft Outturn £ (000)	2020/21 Quarter 4 Variance £ (000)
19	Special Expenses	(674)	(687)	(687)	0
	Business Rates				
20	Local Share of business rates	(7,609)	(7,157)	(7,157)	0
21	s31 Grants including additional MHCLG funding (pandemic response)	(2,080)	(1,892)	(1,948)	(56)
22	Tariff	5,715	5,121	5,121	0
23	Levy	0	195	493	298
	Non-Specific Revenue Grants				
24	New Homes Bonus Grant	(449)	(247)	(247)	0
25	Rural Services Delivery Grant	0	(50)	(61)	(11)
26	Local Council tax Support Grant	(96)	(102)	(102)	0
27	Benefits Administration Grant	(214)	(238)	(220)	18
28	Homelessness Grant - New Burdens	(237)	(126)	(126)	0
29	Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(276)	(275)	(276)	(1)
30	Coronavirus Grants	0	0	(1,482)	(1,482)
31	Coronavirus Grant - administration costs	0	0	(328)	(328)
32	Coronavirus Grant - Partial reimbursement of sales, fees & charges	0	0	(352)	(352)
33	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(6,829)	(7,019)	(7,019)	0
	Other Financing				
34	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	337	(849)	(849)	0
35	s31 Grants including Hardship Fund grant (pandemic response)	0	0	(651)	(651)
36	Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure	(416)	(1,359)	(477)	882
37	Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	(1,769)	0	0	0
38	Total Income	(14,597)	(14,685)	(16,368)	(1,683)
39	Net Deficit/(Surplus)	207	917	1,284	367

Line	Rother District Council General Fund Summary	2020/21 Quarter 4 Variance £ (000)	2020/21 Quarter 3 Variance £ (000)	Change in Quarter Variance £ (000)
1	Executive Directors & Corporate Core	181	254	73
1a	Executive Directors & Corporate Core - Coronavirus related	(45)	22	67
2	Environmental Services	(47)	4	51
2a	Environmental Services - Coronavirus related	49	44	(5)
3	Strategy and Planning	(91)	(41)	50
3a	Strategy and Planning - Coronavirus related	150	172	22
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(47)	124	171
4a	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration - Coronavirus related	18	125	107
5	Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services	(71)	105	176
5a	Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services - Coronavirus related	1,298	1,472	174
6	Resources	42	579	537
6a	Resources - Coronavirus related	1,004	836	(168)
7	Total Cost of Services	2,441	3,696	1,255
8	Interest from Investments	76	60	(16)
9	Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	(882)	(148)	734
10	MRP	(92)	(82)	10
11	Interest payments	(318)	(310)	8
12	Salaries turnover	0	0	0
13	(i) Increase income - Property Investment Strategy	544	544	0
14	(ii) Increase income (net) - other	14	14	0
15	(iii) Lean and Demand	90	90	0
16	(iv) Service Prioritisation	100	100	0
17	(v) Reduced Staffing Structure	77	77	0
18	Net Cost of Services	2,050	4,041	1,991

Line		2020/21 Quarter 4 Variance £ (000)	2020/21 Quarter 3 Variance £ (000)	Change in Quarter Variance £ (000)
19	Special Expenses	0	0	0
	Business Rates			
20	Local Share of business rates	0	4,289	4,289
21	s31 Grants including additional MHCLG funding (pandemic response)	(56)	(4,269)	(4,213)
22	Tariff	0	0	0
23	Levy	298	0	(298)
	Non-Specific Revenue Grants			
24	New Homes Bonus Grant	0	0	0
25	Rural Services Delivery Grant	(11)	19	30
26	Local Council tax Support Grant	0	0	0
27	Benefits Administration Grant	18	18	0
28	Homelessness Grant - New Burdens	0	0	0
29	Flexible Homeless Support Grant	(1)	(1)	0
30	Coronavirus Grants	(1,482)	(1,482)	0
31	Coronavirus Grant - administration costs	(328)	(170)	158
32	Coronavirus Grant - Partial reimbursement of sales, fees & charges	(352)	(264)	88
36	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	0		0
	Other Financing			
37	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	0	0	0
38	s31 Grants including Hardship Fund grant (pandemic response)	(651)	0	651
39	Contribution from reserves to fund capital expenditure	882	(651)	(1,533)
40	Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	0	148	148
41	Total Income	(1,683)	(2,363)	(680)
42	Net Deficit/(Surplus)	367	1,677	1,310

Review of significant unplanned variations

6. The previous report estimated the net cost of the Council's pandemic response to be about £912,000 after the additional funding from the MHCLG. The draft outturn shows this figure to be only £485,000, which is a reduction of £427,000. The changes are summarised in the table below.

Area	Change £'000s
Corporate Core – reduced spend on staff support costs	13
Corporate Core – lower printing & stationery costs in Committee Services	10
Strategy & Planning – recovery in Planning fee income	22
ATRS - Reduction in property rental write offs	77
ATRS – Underspends in Tourism and Cultural Development budgets	26
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood – reduction in car parking income	(133)
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood – additional grants to fund the increased costs of Homelessness	135
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood – additional grants to fund the increased costs of rough sleepers	58
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood – reduced level of support to Freedom Leisure	112
Resources – Costs not collected due to courts being closed	(192)
Resources – Increased spend on Council Tax hardship relief	(39)
Resources – Grant to fund the administration costs of Test & Trace	60
Additional MHCLG funding to cover grants administration costs	158
Increase reimbursement from MHCLG - reduced Sales, Fees & Charges	88
Other Minor Changes	32
Net Change between Quarters	427

7. In regard to changes not related to the pandemic response, the draft outturn shows a reduction £883,000 compared to the Quarter 3 forecast. These variances are detailed in paragraphs 8 to 25 below.

Corporate Core – Deficit £136,000

8. The overspend has decreased by £140,000 since the last forecast partly as a result of reasons (£23,000) explained in paragraph 5 above. Also, expenditure on Postage was £48,000 under budget and Utilities costs on Administrative Offices were £27,000 lower than expected. Several smaller variances of £42,000 make up the remainder of the decrease.

Environmental Services – Deficit £2,000

9. The predicted overspend has decreased by £46,000 as a result of Disabled Facilities Grants being repaid to the Council.

Strategy and Planning – Deficit £59,000

10. The Strategy and Planning overspend decreased by £72,000 since the Quarter 3 forecast partly due to an improvement in income from Planning Fees (£22,000) as shown in the table in paragraph 5.
11. The Local Development Framework budget underspend increased by £52,000 with other minor variances reducing the deficit by a further £2,000.

Acquisitions, Transformation & Regeneration – Surplus £29,000

12. The draft outturn now shows a surplus of £29,000, which is an improvement of £278,000 since the Quarter 3 forecast. As shown in paragraph 5, overspends resulting from the pandemic are £103,000 lower than previously expected due to a lower than expected need to write off commercial rental income and an underspend in the Tourism & Cultural Development budgets.
13. Other significant changes include a £50,000 grant to the Sussex Wildlife Trust for the development of a community wildlife garden at Rye Harbour (Cabinet 3 September 2019, Minute CB18/20 refers) and increased charges of revenue costs (£56,000) to capital projects.
14. Outturn on commercially let properties also decreased by £50,000 due to a combination of higher than expected rental income and delays in contracted works. Other minor variances of £19,000 make up the remaining change.

Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services – Deficit £1,227,000

15. The draft outturn deficit is £350,000 lower than reported in the previous quarter's forecast. The overspend due to the pandemic response has decreased by £172,000 and is explained in paragraph 5.
16. There have been several material non-COVID-19 related changes since the Quarter 3 forecast. Expenditure was £141,000 lower on repairs, utilities costs, grounds maintenance and equipment across the Parks, Bexhill Promenade & Foreshore, Public Conveniences and Residual Highway areas although these are partially offset by £28,000 due to increased spend on clearing fly tipping.
17. The Housing Needs outturn is estimated to be £49,000 lower than previously forecasted mainly due to lower expenditure on supplies and services. Various smaller variances of £16,000 account for the other changes.

Resources – Deficit £1,046,000

18. The draft outturn has decreased by £369,000 although costs related to the pandemic response have increased by £171,000 mainly for the reasons shown in paragraph 5.
19. The net costs of Housing Benefits have decreased by £227,000 mainly due to lower than previously expected benefit payments (£163,000) and higher than expected income from the recovery of overpayments, (£64,000).
20. The Cost of Collection service within the Revenues & Benefits section was £151,000 lower than the Quarter 3 forecast mainly due to additional grant income (£72,000) and reduced running costs, (£79,000).
21. Staff related costs were £81,000 lower than expected mainly due to a lower than expected payment for additional pension fund costs.
22. Underspends across the department on IT and Consultancy costs reduced the outturn by a further £53,000 and other smaller variances totalling £18,000 make up the remaining changes.

Non-Service Budgets

23. As previously reported, the pandemic has slowed down much of the 2020/21 planned capital expenditure. This has resulted in the amount of revenue funding set aside for capital projects being £734,000 lower than reported in Quarter 3. The associated impact on Reserves is explained in paragraph 25.

Income

24. The Council's income from Business Rates is £222,000 lower than the budget mainly due to a higher than expected government levy payment. This is offset by additional income of £30,000 in relation to its Rural Services Delivery grant.
25. Since the previous forecast, the MHCLG gave the Council further funding of £246,000 to help meet administration costs of managing the overall pandemic response, including the support grants process. This brings the total additional COVID grant funding received to £2,813,000.

Impact on Reserves

26. Overall, Reserves have reduced by £1.761m against the planned use of £2.276m. This is an improvement of £515,000 on the previous forecast. The table below summarises the position as at the 31 March 2021.

	Revised 2020/21 Budget £ (000)	2020/21 Draft Outturn £ (000)	2020/21 Quarter 4 Variance £ (000)
Revenue Reserves and General Fund Balance at 1/4/20	(14,970)	(14,970)	0
Use of Reserves to Fund Capital Expenditure	1,359	477	(882)
Use of Reserves to Balance Budget incl deficit	917	1,284	367
Balance 31/3/21	(12,694)	(13,209)	(515)

Collection Fund

27. The collection rate for the Council Tax part of the Collection Fund was 96.60% against the budgeted yield, which is 2.88% lower than last year and 0.38% lower than the previous quarter expected. The collection performance to the end of March is shown below:

	Equivalent Period	
	2020/2021	2019/2020
Collectible Annual Debit (at 100% collection)	£77,503,276.12	£75,493,263.73
Income Received	£74,985,119.05	£74,161,068.73
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	96.75%	98.24%
Budgeted yield (at 98.5% collection)	£77,625,639.38	£74,549,856.52
Income Received as a % of budgeted yield	96.60%	99.48%

28. The collection rate for the Business Rates Tax part of the Collection Fund was 94.01%, which is 4.71% lower than last year and 1.97% lower than the previous quarter. The collection performance to the end of March is shown overleaf:

	2020/2021	Equivalent Period 2019/2020
Collectable debit	£8,220,438.35	£18,383,662.38
Income Received	£7,727,892.59	£18,148,922.18
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	94.01%	98.72%
Amount outstanding for year	£492,545.76	£234,740.20

29. Based on the current collection rates the Collection Fund was in deficit by £11.168m at the end of the financial year but this will not affect the 2020/21 position because the impact will be spread over the next three financial years. This has been reflected in the Revenue Budget for 2021/22.

Capital Programme

30. A summary of spend by project for 2020/21 and financing sources is shown at Appendix A. The total expenditure was £5.476m.
31. The outturn on the capital programme is an underspend of £8.04 million against the approved programme. Schemes that are underspent are largely affected by timing changes to planned expenditure due to the pandemic and this will be reflected in the 2021/22 Capital Programme.
32. Other reasons for the underspend relate to slippage on schemes for the following reasons: -
- £4.207m slippage on the Mount View Street housing and commercial development scheme. Progress was delayed due to legal issues surrounding land acquisition. It is intended that these matters will be resolved during summer 2021.
 - £1.085m in respect of the land swap at the former High School site, Bexhill.

Conclusion

33. The draft revenue outturn for 2020/21 is a deficit of £1.284m and includes the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Officers continue to submit financial assessments of the impact of the pandemic to the MHCLG. It is not clear at this stage whether further grant funding over and above what has already been notified to the Council, will be forthcoming. The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan reflects the additional use of reserves this year above the original budget but expects, with the delivery of savings and extra income, to be in surplus by 2024/25, when the Council will be able to start rebuilding its reserves.

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:	Antony Baden
e-mail address:	Antony.Baden@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A Capital Programme – Spend to 31/03/21

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

Capital Programme 2020/21 Spend to 31 March 2021

	2020/21 Original Budget £000	2020/21 Revised Budget £000	2020/21 Draft Outturn £000	2020/21 Variance £000
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration				
Community Grants	130	130	153	23
East Parade - project A - Bexhill East Beach	288	0	0	0
Cemetery Entrance	0	233	61	-172
Ravenside roundabout	0	200	0	-200
Development of council owned properties	0	0	53	53
1066 Pathways	0	93	27	-66
Property Investment Strategy				
PIS - Beeching Road/Wainwright Road	3,000	100	37	-63
PIS - Office development NE Bexhill	0	20	4	-16
PIS- Barnhorn Road	1,000	140	83	-57
PIS - Beeching Road site 18-40	460	554	445	-109
PIS - 35 Beeching Road	0	675	677	2
PIS - Mount View Street development - commercial	0	964	0	-964
PIS - Purchase of 64 Ninfield Road	0	0	103	103
PIS - uncommitted	6,820	0	0	0
Corporate document image processing	435	435	0	-435
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	345	384	0	-384
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services				
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	53	54	55	1
Bexhill Seafront - Fountain	350	0	0	0
Fairlight Coastal Protection	0	0	0	0
Blackfriars development	3,052	975	597	-378
Sidley Sports and Recreation	300	5	7	2
Bexhill Leisure Centre – site development	155	203	207	4
Disabled Facilities Grant	0	1,625	933	-692
New Bins	125	183	126	-57
Bexhill Promenade – Protective Barriers	0	50	3	-47
Bexhill Promenade – Outflow pipe	100	100	0	-100
Community led housing schemes	450	297	0	-297
Housing (purchases – temp accommodation)	2,000	1,350	1,719	369
Land swap re former High School site	1,085	1,085	0	-1,085
Mount View Street development - housing	0	3,286	3	-3,283
Strategy and Planning				
CIL Payments to Parish/Town Councils	0	163	75	-88
Executive Directors & Corporate Core				
Accommodation Strategy	0	75	91	16
Resources				
ICT Infrastructure – Ongoing Upgrade Programme	0	140	17	-123
Total Capital Programme	20,148	13,519	5,476	-8,043
Funded By:				
Capital receipts	1,240	1,085	0	1,085
Grants and contributions	4,262	3,907	2,469	1,438
Borrowing	12,820	7,316	2,530	4,786
Capital expenditure charged to revenue	1,359	1,211	477	734
Unfunded	467	0	0	0
	20,148	13,519	5,476	8,043

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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 6 September 2021

Title: Funding Residential Development

Report of: Antony Baden – Finance Manager

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dixon

Ward(s): -

Purpose of Report: To approve a loan facility of up to £80m to support delivery of Alliance Homes (Rother) Limited’s business plan, and to outline the mechanism for funding.

Decision Type: Key

Officer

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

- 1) the provision for a lending facility of up to £80m to Alliance Homes (Rother) to build out residential schemes be approved, in support of their Business Plan 2020-23 (and any subsequent update);
- 2) the approval of each loan be delegated to the Chief Executive and Finance Manager, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management;
- 3) separate loan agreements, secured on the assets of Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd, be entered into for each specific residential scheme, the terms and conditions of which to be approved to the satisfaction of the Finance Manager; and
- 4) the £80m lending facility as set out in the approved Capital Programme be funded through internal and external borrowing as appropriate.

Introduction

1. In December 2019, Full Council approved the establishment of a Local Housing Company with the initial aim to complete 1,000 new homes by 2035 (Minute C19/59 refers). In July 2020, Cabinet named the new company Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd (AH) and agreed their Articles of Association and the Shareholder’s Agreement (Minute CB20/21 refers).
2. AH’s approved Business Plan seeks to deliver a programme of 335 new homes at an estimated cost of £80m and these costs were reflected in the Capital Programme, approved by Full Council in February 2021. The AH business plan expects the majority of these costs to be met through loan funding at commercial rates provided by the Council as the sole Shareholder.

3. Depending on cashflows, it is not expected that the maximum lending facility of £80m will be needed. Delivery of projects within the programme will be staggered to ensure cost-effective, efficient development which can be appropriately resourced. Resultantly the full £80m will not be required at once, however the capacity to fund the entire programme is necessary to enable AH to enter into contracts with the development partners who will build out the schemes.
4. The lending from the Council to AH is likely to be short term on the basis that the new homes will be disposed of to either a registered social landlord (affordable homes) or direct to market. This model has the benefit of recycling the receipts from the disposals into repaying borrowing or into further phases of schemes/new schemes to minimise the cost of borrowing (interest).
5. It is proposed that the Council enters into a separate loan agreement for each scheme delivered by AH subject to the overall limit of £80m. Each loan will be subject to specific conditions as determined appropriate by the Finance Manager and will need to ensure compliance with any state subsidy requirements (previously state aid). This is expected to require the loan to be at an equivalent market rate which will generate a small short-term surplus for the Council. A draft template Loan Agreement is included at Appendix A. It is proposed that authority to enter into the loan agreements be delegated to the Chief Executive and Finance Manager in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management.
6. The lending to AH is likely to be funded through a mix of both internal and external borrowing. Given the complexities of the arrangements, particularly the uncertainties around the timing of cashflows for the AH schemes, advice will be sort from the Council's treasury advisors as to the most appropriate loan structure to adopt.
7. It is recommended that this process be reviewed by Audit and Standards Committee on an annual basis to ensure proper and effective controls are maintained.

Legal Implications

8. The Council has the power to enter into these arrangements under the General Power of Competence in Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 and by virtue of Section 12 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Environmental

9. Sustainability is central to how the AH operates, the designs of its developments, and the technologies it employs. All projects will adopt a fabric-first approach to reduce energy consumption and therefore fuel poverty, and modern methods of construction will be adopted where appropriate. Approving this mechanism to allow AH to build out residential schemes will directly contribute towards the Council's carbon reduction ambitions.

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

Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		
Report Contact Officer:	Antony Baden		
e-mail address:	Antony.Baden@rother.gov.uk		
Appendices:	A	Draft Loan Agreement	
Relevant Previous Minutes:	C19/59 / CB20/21		
Background Papers:	-		
Reference Documents:	-		

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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 6 September 2021

Title: Public Spaces Protection Order – Anti-Social Behaviour

Report of: Richard Parker-Harding – Head of Environmental Services, Licensing and Community Safety

Cabinet Member: Councillor Field

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To seek approval to carry out public consultation on a proposed Public Spaces Protection Order to control anti-social behaviour.

Decision Type: Key

Officer Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That public consultation be carried out about making a Public Spaces Protection Order and the outcome of the consultation and approval to proceed with a new Order be reported back to Cabinet in December 2021.

Reasons for Recommendations: The existing Public Spaces Protection Order expires in November 2021. A Public Spaces Protection Order is used to control anti-social behaviour.

Introduction

- The Council has made a Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) for the control of antisocial behaviour. This Order expires in November 2021-see [THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER \(NO. 2\) \(rother.gov.uk\)](http://rother.gov.uk). Consultation has taken place with Parish and Town Councils. Their responses (if received) are set out in the table below.

Parish	Control on alcohol consumption in public	Aggressive Begging	Sleeping in public place	Response-supports new PSPO?
Ashburnham and Penhurst			Applies	No
Battle			Applies	Yes
Beckley			Applies	Not required
Bexhill	Applies	Applies	Applies	
Bodiam			Applies	Yes
Brede			Applies	Yes
Brightling			Applies	No
Burwash			Applies	

Camber	Requested		Applies	Yes
Catsfield			Applies	
Crowhurst			Applies	
Dallington			Applies	Yes
East Guldeford			Applies	
Etchingam			Applies	Yes
Ewhurst			Applies	Yes
Fairlight			Applies	Yes
Guestling			Applies	Yes
Hurst Green			Applies	
Icklesham			Applies	Yes
Iden			Applies	Yes
Mountfield			Applies	Yes
Northiam			Applies	
Peasmarsh			Applies	Yes
Pett			Applies	Yes
Playden			Applies	Yes
Rye		Applies	Applies	Yes
Rye Foreign			Applies	
Salehurst and Roberstbridge			Applies	Yes
Sedlescombe			Applies	Yes
Ticehurst			Applies	
Udimore			Applies	
Westfield			Applies	Yes
Whatlington			Applies	Yes

2. To justify including controls within the PSPO, evidence that a problem exists or is likely to occur is required. In addition, consultation with interested parties, including the Police and Parish and Town Councils is required. The results of the consultation may provide evidence that the control is necessary. Bexhill Town Council Environment Committee will be considering this matter on 8 September and their comments and recommendations will be considered as part of the public consultation.

Public Spaces Protection Order

3. PSPOs can be used to control anti-social behaviour in a particular area. Such as alcohol bans, bans on the playing of amplified music, busking, swearing etc.
4. PSPOs are intended to deal with a nuisance or problem in a particular area that is detrimental to the local community's quality of life, by imposing conditions on the use of that area which apply to everyone. They are designed to ensure the law-abiding majority can enjoy public spaces, safe from anti-social behaviour.
5. A PSPO can be made by the Council if they are satisfied on reasonable grounds that the activity/activities carried out, or are likely to be carried out, in a public space:
 - have had, or are likely to have, a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality;

- is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature;
 - is, or is likely to be, unreasonable; and
 - justifies the restrictions imposed.
6. The restrictions specified in a PSPO can be set by the Council; these can be blanket restrictions or requirements or can be targeted against certain behaviours by certain groups at certain times. They can restrict access to public rights of way where that route is being used to carry out anti-social behaviour.
 7. Short-term PSPOs could be used where it is not certain that restrictions will have the desired effect, for instance, when closing a public right of way. At any point before expiry, the Council can extend a PSPO by up to three years if they consider that it is necessary to prevent the original behaviour from occurring or recurring.
 8. The breach of a PSPO is a criminal offence; enforcement officers can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of up to £100 if appropriate, but a fine of up to £1,000 can be made on prosecution.
 9. More than one restriction can be added to the same PSPO, meaning that a single PSPO can deal with a larger range of behaviours.

Enforcement

10. PSPOs can be enforced by council officers and police officers. Since the PSPO was made only one FPN has been issued, although numerous written warnings have been issued to persons aggressively begging and sleeping in vehicles overnight. The Police also use the power to control street drinkers.

Home Office Guidance

11. Home office guidance advises against making orders that discriminate against homeless or young people. The existing PSPO mitigates against such discrimination by requiring officers to provide housing assistance before issuing a FPN. The PSPO seeks to control behaviours, such as aggressive begging rather than targeting disadvantaged or vulnerable people. It should be recognised that people begging may have housing and are simply requesting financial income from the public, who may themselves be vulnerable.

Proposed Controls

12. It is proposed to consult the public about making a new PSPO replicating the existing controls with the addition of a control prohibiting wanton or dangerous cycling, hover boards, scooting, skating or skateboarding on the Bexhill Promenade. Appendix A sets other controls that could be included in the public consultation. Appendix B is Thanet District Council's Order, for your information. The results of the consultation will be reported back before formally consulting the Police etc.

Conclusion

13. It is recommended that public consultation is carried out on making a new PSPO to control anti-social behaviour.

Financial

14. Contained within existing estimates.

Legal

15. Contained within report.

Crime and Disorder

16. An effective PSPO supports controlling crime and disorder in the district.

Risk Management

17. The Council may be criticised for not exercising its discretion to have a relevant and comprehensive PSPO.

Human Rights

18. Article 2: Right to life – not applicable
Article 3: Freedom from torture etc. – not applicable
Article 4: Freedom from slavery and forced labour – not applicable
Article 5: Right to liberty and security – not applicable
Article 6: Right to a fair trial – complies
Article 7: No punishment without law – complies
Article 8: Respect for private and family life-not interfered with if recent encampment
Article 9: Freedom of thought, belief and religion – not affected
Article 10: Freedom of expression – not affected
Article 11: Freedom of assembly and association – not affected
Article 12: Right to marry – not affected
Article 14: Right to be free from discrimination – mitigated against

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

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Appendices:	Appendix A - Additional Controls that could be included in the public consultation. Appendix B- Thanet District Council's PSPO
Background Papers:	None

Reference Documents: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-guidance-on-the-use-of-the-anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-policing-act-2014>

Additional Controls that could be included in the public consultation

1. Taking off into flight (with wings, canopies with or without a motor) and landing from flight in a manner that causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
2. The flying or preparation for flying of drones in a manner that causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
3. Swearing or shouting in a manner that causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
4. Producing or allowing the production of amplified sound on the beach, promenade or Town centre in a manner that causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person.
5. Cooking or having fires (including BBQs) on the beach or other public place in a manner that causes or likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to any person during or after the fire or BBQ.
6. Depositing domestic waste in bags or commercial waste in a litter bin or beside a litter bin.

The Activities which are prohibited by this order are:

Obstruction of the promenade including vehicles/driving of vehicles -No motorised or electric vehicles may be parked or driven on the promenades or beaches as follows:

Cars, vans, lorries, trucks, motorcycles, scooters, segways, quad bicycles and any other motorised vehicles. With the exception of mobility scooters and electric bicycles. Unless permission has been granted by the Council and evidence of this can be produced. No deliveries to concessions after 10am.

No obstruction may be caused at any time to the promenade by vehicles or any other structure or object, which impedes access by emergency services or Council vehicles.

Bicycles – At any time of year between the hours of sunrise and sunset, and from 1 May to 30 September inclusive between the hours of 10.00am and 6.00pm, a person shall not ride any cycle on any of the promenades where localised signage requires you to dismount. You must adhere to the signs which vary around the coast. This is for the purposes of health and safety and the enjoyment of others in busy areas.

2.1 (A cycle means a bicycle, a tricycle or a cycle having four or more wheels, including one power-assisted by electrical (or other means not being in any case a motorcycle or motor vehicle.) Please refer to our safe cycling guide (that includes tips for where you will need to dismount regardless of signage ie beach huts mean dismount, and rules for electric powered bikes and scooters, disability scooters)

Bonfires, Barbecues and large gatherings –

i) Bonfires are not permitted on any of the Council's land at any time. BBQs are not permitted on any of the Council's land, however are permitted on beaches after 6pm.

ii) Large gatherings are not permitted on the Council's beaches without prior permission. Large organised groups of 20 or more need to seek permission from Thanet District Council.

Begging, Touting, Hawking, Selling – Begging, Touting, Hawking, Selling is not permitted anywhere on Thanet's beaches, promenades and coast. This includes;

i) Begging or soliciting for money*

ii) Advertising any article verbally or by the distribution of leaflets and flyers, circulars or advertisements of any kind

iii) Flyposting and other fixed notices on railings, posts or other street furniture without prior permission from the Beach and Coast Team, and a fee may be chargeable for this. Notices must be taken down within an agreed period.

iiii) Selling goods, products or services without prior permission of the Council.

(***Begging or soliciting for money.** The act of begging is deemed as either approaching people for money, or being stationary and asking for money , or positioned on the floor to invite the offer of money or goods.)

Horse/Donkey riding – Horse/Donkey riding is not permitted on beaches or promenades – between 1st May and 30th September, between the hours of 09:00 am and 19:00 pm; or at any time, all year round, within Pegwell Bay (Sandwich & Pegwell National Nature Reserve).

Encampments – Camping or the erection and occupation of any structure (this includes but is not exclusive to vehicles, tents, marquees, yurts and any other temporary building) being used to occupy land is not permitted on beaches, promenades, clifftops, nearby green spaces, car parks and surrounding areas of the public realm without prior consent of the Council with the exception of sun shades.

Preaching, lectures, music and entertainment, sporting events, other events – Lectures, speeches, sermons, busking, live music, use of generators and other types of entertainment performances/shows etc are not permitted, unless prior permission has been granted by the Council as per our events policy. In any case any activities of the kind, including filming and photo shoots, intended to be held on the beach/coast need prior permission from the Media Team and Beach/Coast Team.

Other actions which have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of others in the locality.

- i) Urination, defecation, spitting or littering are not permitted
- ii) Drinking alcohol in a public place, after being told not to: No person shall consume alcohol at any time or have an open alcohol container in any public place after request by an Authorised Officer or Police Constable to cease consumption or hand over the container. This provision does not apply to alcohol being consumed on licensed premises (Thanet District Council Alcohol PSPO).
- iii) Ingesting, inhaling, injecting, smoking or otherwise using drugs or substance reasonably believed to be psychoactive substances.
- iiii) Possessing or releasing any canister containing compressed gas

Beach recreational activities and water sports

To adhere to the set of Coastal and Beach 'Codes of Practice' set out by Thanet District Council. Within the code of practice, specific rules will apply for personal powered watercraft usage (including jet skis) and other areas of health, safety and anti social behaviour concern.

The use of water craft in a manner that poses a risk to the safety of people or wildlife

The use of craft in a manner that has the potential to cause harassment, alarm and distress to any other beach or coast users, or residents.

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 6 September 2021

Title: Housing Development; Community Led Housing Programme

Report of: Amy Fearn – Housing Development Manager

Cabinet Member: Councillor Byrne

Ward(s): Bexhill St Stephens, Bexhill Sidley, Southern Rother, North Battle, Netherfield & Whatlington and South Battle & Tellham, Northern Rother

Purpose of Report: To update Members on the Community Led Housing Programme and to recommend new approvals required to continue momentum with a programme of projects.

Decision Type: Key

Officer

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

- 1) the progress of the Community Lead Housing Programme in Rother be noted;
- 2) the Service Level Agreement with the Sussex Community Housing Hub be renewed for four years, for the sum of £100,000 on updated terms and conditions to be agreed by the Portfolio Holder Housing and Homes and Director of Place and Climate Change;
- 3) the remaining Rother District Council Community Housing Fund totalling £303,200.38 to be combined for both capital and revenue funding requests;
- 4) to agree in principle that the value of the covenant placed by the Council on land adjacent to 276 Turkey Road be removed, subject to an equivalent value provided in the form of land for additional affordable housing, over and above any Local Plan requirement, and that the Director of Place and Climate Change be granted delegated to agree the final terms;
- 5) in the first instance, the additional affordable housing to be offered to Bexhill Community Land Trust, to enable the affordable tenure to be secured legally in perpetuity;
- 6) the Director of Place and Climate Change be granted delegated authority to sell the site of Cemetery Lodge to Bexhill Community Land Trust and final terms of sale, for the purposes of delivering a Community Led Housing scheme, subject to achieving full planning permission and incorporating Cemetery Lodge as part of any final scheme; and
- 7) the Director of Place and Climate Change be granted delegated authority to sell the Land at Fairview, Guestling for the purposes of an affordable or

community led housing development subject to agreeable terms to the satisfaction of the Director of Place and Climate Change.

Reasons for

Recommendations: Housing Development seeks a number of approvals required to continue the important progress made by the Sussex Community Housing Hub, in partnership with the Council, to deliver a Community Led Housing Programme to grow the sector in Rother. This is with the overarching aim of increasing affordable housing supply in communities across the district, helping to address local housing need and towards achieving the Council's corporate housing priorities.

Introduction

1. The Community Led Housing (CLH) sector plays an important role in delivery of affordable housing in urban and rural communities where housing is genuinely affordable and supported by the community and held in perpetuity for future generations to benefit from.
2. The principle of CLH is embedded in the Council's corporate priorities (2020-2027). This includes increasing supply of affordable housing throughout the district. Additionally, to contribute towards the Council's 5-year land supply by end of 2023, by utilising Council owned sites for development, and by working with the Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH) and Registered Providers (RP) to bring forward applications on rural exception site schemes.
3. This report is to update Members on the progress of the CLH Programme since the last update in September 2019 (Minute CB19/44 refers) and to recommend new approvals required to continue momentum with a programme of projects. This is with the main objective of increasing the pipeline of CLH schemes and supply of new affordable housing provision across the district, to achieve the actions and targets included in the Housing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (HH&RSS) (2019-2024).

The Sussex Community Housing Hub

4. In July 2017, Cabinet approved £100,000 of the Council's Community Housing Fund (CHF) allocation (totalling £748,899) towards establishing the SCHH managed by Action in Rural Sussex. This service was commissioned on a 4-year Service Level Agreement (SLA) (Minute CB17/04 refers).
5. The SCHH offers a 'one stop shop' for all forms of community led schemes. Providing essential support for communities across Sussex wishing to deliver CLH projects. This is achieved through advice, support and guidance and increasing knowledge, developing skills and building capacity to realise development opportunities. Please refer to Schedule 1 of Appendix A for more detailed information on the range of services provided under the SLA.
6. To continue the progress already made by the SCHH to develop a programme of CLH projects in Rother, the first recommendation seeks to renew the SLA for a further 4-year term. This will ensure we have the

specialist enabling services and technical expertise required to progress projects successfully, and crucially, provides funding at the predevelopment stage, where the SCHH is currently, most dependent on local authority funding.

7. Furthermore, the SCHH has recently taken the decision to become an RP. This presents a significant opportunity to expedite growth of the CLH sector across Sussex, as well as potentially, reducing the risk of delivering smaller Section 106 rural housing sites. By offering CLH groups the option to partner with a specialist CLH RP, this provides improved certainty of schemes coming forward with specialist knowledge and experience to progress sites at pace. Importantly, RP status is also a Homes England capital grant funding requirement, meaning CLH partnerships could benefit from access to grants. Renewal of the SLA will contribute towards the SCHH transition to become an RP, whilst developing the existing range of services available.

Rother District Council Community Housing Fund

8. Previous authority (Minute CB17/04 refers) approved the ring-fencing of £50,000 of the Council's total CHF allocation towards revenue funding requests. This sum is now almost depleted, utilised by the projects included in this report. To ensure sufficient funding remains available to support pre-development costs of new emerging schemes coming forward, it is recommended that the remaining CHF allocation (totalling £303,200.38) be ringfenced for both capital and revenue funding requests accordingly.
9. CLH groups applying for CHF from the Council will continue to be referred by the SCHH and should be able to demonstrate they have applied for other funding sources where available, to ensure we are spending the remaining allocation as economically as possible.

Performance Monitoring

10. In terms of measurable performance indicators, the HH&RSS commits the following targets to be achieved under Priority 1, (1.2) CLH Outcome 1 & 2 to include:
 - at least two community led schemes delivered by 2022/23;
 - at least 45 community led homes delivered, or in the pipeline of delivery by 2024; and
 - at least four CLH groups established in Rother, by end of 2024.
11. In summary, there are three key projects/schemes progressing. Two legally affiliated groups already actively working on projects, and at least one formal steering group supported by the SCHH. There is one housing scheme now delivering on site totalling 15 out of the 45-home target to complete before 2024, and an *estimated* 36 homes potentially in the pipeline as detailed in this report.
12. It is important to observe that progress of community led schemes and rural exception site housing is invariably slower than mainstream housing development. This often requires significant lead-in times and with factors outside the control of the SCHH limiting progress. To include for example, the time and pace at which a group can commit. More recently, this has included

the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has presented significant challenges over the past 18 months, especially for new groups being unable to meet in person and who are less inclined to meet virtually for the first time.

13. Nevertheless, the CLH sector in Rother is growing and a programme of projects is well under way, with schemes now starting to emerge through the monitoring and delivery of the Council's Affordable Housing Development Programme. Future updates of the CLH Programme will be incorporated in the annual review of the HH&RS and reports will be provided to Cabinet where new authorities are sought to progress existing / new projects accordingly.
14. The remainder of this report provides a more detailed update of each project included in the programme towards meeting these targets.

Main Road, Icklesham

15. Main Road Icklesham, rural exception site is being delivered by Icklesham Parish Community Land Trusts (IPCLT) in partnership with Hastoe Housing. Construction started on site in June this year and is expected to complete during the summer of 2022. This is the first CLH scheme to be delivered in Rother, and the first new build CLH scheme to start on site in Sussex, since the SCHH was first established.
16. The scheme comprises of 12 homes for social rent and three shared ownership, providing 15 genuinely affordable homes for local people in perpetuity. This has remained a key priority for this project, led initially, by Icklesham Parish Council before the IPCLT emerged.
17. The scheme was successful with Homes England funding and the Council has committed £297,000 of capital CHF to support delivery of much needed social rented tenure.
18. In the interim, the SCHH has been working with IPCLT, Hastoe and the Council to agree the allocations policy and crucially, the procedure by which this accords with the Council's Housing Register and application process. This is also enshrined in the Section 106 for the scheme, which refers to the IPCLT Allocation Policy and agreed Local Lettings Plan.

Cemetery Lodge and Land Adjacent to 276 Turkey Road, Bexhill

19. Previous authority granted in September 2019 approved the sale of Cemetery Lodge site to Bexhill Community Land Trust (BCLT), for the purposes of delivering a CLH scheme, subject to progressing a planning application within 12 months, and if not delivered, to report back to Cabinet. The final terms of sale were delegated to the Executive Director at that time subject to recovering costs incurred by the Council in preparing the site for future development, and for the final sale value to be capped at no more than Existing Use Value (Minute CB19/44 refers).
20. In May 2021, the construction of the new entrance to Bexhill Cemetery on St Marys Lane to prepare the site for future development and to improve the former access was completed. The former entrance has now been closed

permanently to vehicle access, and the final landscaping plan is scheduled to take place during the planting season later this year, as approved by planning.

21. BCLT was formed on the back of this development opportunity, made possible by the Council owning the land at Cemetery Lodge. The SCHH has worked extensively with BCLT to become legally incorporated, developing a strong board, good community backing and a clear set of objectives they wish to deliver.
22. BCLT previously commissioned an architect to consider proposals for the Cemetery Lodge site, including a whole new redevelopment of the site to optimise the developable area available for new build housing. The SCHH and BCLT have since worked to broker a potentially much larger housing scheme with the adjoining landowner that would provide significantly more affordable housing. The scheme was redesigned on this basis with planning input.
23. A design workshop took place earlier this year with Planning to progress the scheme in more detail. A Heritage Statement has also been commissioned by BCLT for planning requirements, and to inform BCLT's decision to retain Cemetery Lodge as part of any scheme they deliver.
24. Members will recall that the adjoining land (land adjacent to 276 Turkey Road) is allocated in the Local Plan (BEX6) for some 30 dwellings and has been stalled for many years. This site is limited by a restrictive covenant benefitting the Council. The covenant was placed on the site when the land was sold by the Council to Gullivers Bowls Club (GBC) in 2002, for the sum of £70,000, for use as a bowls club. The covenant limits the land to that use. In 2003, GBC sold the site to a developer for the same amount. Agreement was later reached to release the covenant, but no development came forward and the release was never exercised. There have in recent years been attempts to agree a value for the covenant to be released, however, these negotiations have failed to conclude favourably. The covenant remains in place to ensure that any uplift in value generated by the subsequent change of use to housing, is realised by the Council.
25. In order to progress discussions with the adjoining landowner to bring forward a larger housing site, the SCHH negotiated a proposal in principle, whereby the landowner could offer the Council an 'equivalent value' for release of the covenant, in the form of land. This is with the view that the land would be used for the purposes of delivering affordable housing, additional to the current Local Plan requirement. The affordable homes would be transferred to BCLT for a nominal sum of £1 and secured in perpetuity by legal agreement, utilising the BCLT Financial Conduct Authority Registered Model Rules which provide an 'asset lock'. This essentially restricts the legal use of assets for the benefit of the community in perpetuity, as a registered community benefits society.
26. This innovative proposal would provide significant social value to the Council over and above the planning policy requirement of 30% onsite affordable housing provision to meet local need. Additionally, this would serve to unlock a stalled housing site to increasing supply in Rother. Contributing towards delivery against the CLH and affordable development supply targets included in the HH&RS, and our wider corporate priorities.

27. Based on indicative plans and initial pre-planning discussions, the whole site could deliver up to 39 dwellings and in the region of 56% to 70% affordable housing (to include the 30% onsite planning policy requirement). The indicative plan is included at Appendix B and has been provided without prejudice to the formal planning process, which remains at pre-application stage only.
28. To enable negotiations to progress and for both sites to come forward together, it is recommended that the above *principle* to release the covenant, be approved. With the final heads of terms to be delegated to the Director of Place and Climate Change, informed by an independent valuation and assessment of the 'equivalent value' proposal. Agreement of this principle will provide greater certainty to the landowner to sell the site for development, and for officers to negotiate the final terms concerning the appropriate number of additional affordable homes to be provided to release the covenant.
29. BCLT and SCHH previously submitted a revenue funding application to Homes England, with the Council agreeing to match fund. This bid was unsuccessful, due to the funding running out. Following the release of a new funding round a subsequent bid is now being prepared. If successful this grant will be used to proceed with a full planning application of the scheme, with or without the adjoining site.
30. For BCLT and the SCHH to continue investing time and money into this exciting and worthwhile project, a further recommendation is also required to replace the previous authority sought (summarised under paragraph 19? above). This is to request authority for the site of Cemetery Lodge to be sold to BCLT, subject to gaining full planning approval, to include Cemetery Lodge as part of any planning submission, and for the final terms of sale to be delegated to the Director of Place and Climate Change.
31. The the SCHH will continue to support BCLT in submitting their funding bid and finding an appropriate delivery partner for the scheme proposed. Progress of successfully combining the two sites to deliver a larger scheme will remain dependent on further negotiations concerning land value, with and without the covenant, and final agreement of an equivalent value of social housing land to offset the covenant accordingly.

Land at Fairview, Pett Road, Guestling

32. Land at Fairview was previously identified by Officers as a site potentially suitable for housing (Minute CB18/73 refers) with a resolution for a budget to undertake further feasibility work. On initial assessment officers considered the potential for some 14 dwellings. This is stated without prejudice to the formal planning process. The CLH Programme update in September 2019 subsequently approved a resolution for the SCHH to explore this as a possible CLH rural exception site opportunity, to support delivery of the CLH project included in the updated HH&RSS (2019-2024).
33. Following meetings with Pett Parish Council and Guestling Parish Council (GPC), the SCHH was recently commissioned to undertake a Housing Needs Survey to identify the extent of need in each parish and to gauge the general appetite for a CLH scheme. The survey was distributed to 1,129 households across both parishes with a 24% response rate. The outcome provided

positive results which indicate strong support for local needs affordable housing, with several residents wanting to know more about CLH and CLT. A significant affordable housing need was identified across both parishes, totalling 21 households.

34. In response to the survey, both parish councils have confirmed support in principle for an affordable housing scheme, with GPC taking the lead to progress this. Next steps are underway to arrange a public meeting to reach out to those wishing to know more/become involved in a CLH initiative. The SCHH will aim to formalise a steering group of volunteers at the earliest stage possible.
35. Land at Fairview will be considered in more detail as a priority for the group, among other sites suggested by responders of the survey, and in consultation with the parish councils. Advice will be required from Planning to consider the suitability of all preferred sites accordingly. If land at Fairview is the favoured site, this scheme will be progressed as a rural exception site scheme.
36. In the scenario a community group is not established, it is suggested that the SCHH continue their dialogue with GPC and in partnership with a preferred RP. This would be with the view of delivering a community supported scheme, evidenced from the outcome of the survey. This would be a similar approach to the rural exception site schemes delivered in Rother to include Ostlers Field, Brede and Shrub Lane, Burwash.
37. To progress a CLH affordable housing scheme in this area of Rother and to potentially utilise the availability of a Council owned site, otherwise designated as grazing land it is recommended that the land is sold. It is proposed that the Director of Place and Climate Change be granted delegated authority to sell the land to a legally affiliated CLH group, or RP and capped at up to agricultural value subject to achieving full planning permission, a detailed feasibility assessment and independent valuation of the site accordingly.

New Emerging CLH Projects:

Battle

38. The SCHH, in partnership with the Council, has been working with the community of Battle to establish interest for a possible CLH group. The main aim of this is to generate interest in the Blackfriars scheme being delivered by Alliance Homes in partnership with the Council.
39. Blackfriars is a 200-dwelling scheme that presents a significant opportunity for a community group to acquire some homes for local people in perpetuity and forming a CLH scheme. This could be in partnership with a RP (like Main Road Icklesham) or as a standalone community group.
40. Despite the challenges of working remotely, the SCHH has successfully harnessed interest from the Battle community and established a formal Steering Group. The Battle Steering Group is now meeting regularly to consider options in terms of project aims, objectives and governance options. Battle Town Council has also been briefed in relation to this work.

41. Next steps will involve the SCHH supporting the Steering Group in becoming legally affiliated as a CLT, or other community group. Additionally, to explore in more detail the parameters they must work to, should they wish to progress a scheme at Blackfriars. Any final CLH scheme agreed on this site will be required to demonstrate appropriate long-term housing management arrangements (advised by the SCHH) and must remain deliverable within the wider scheme programme. This is to ensure the Homes England HIF funding milestones continue to be achieved, and the 200 new homes are delivered by summer 2023.

Northiam

42. Northiam Parish Council (NPC) has already acquired a 34 acres site in the village and has ambitious plans, with a range of possible uses to include a local needs affordable housing scheme. NPC has also established a Community Group to manage the site and has been in early discussions with the SCHH for practical advice and support to deliver their housing aspirations.
43. This has progressed to the SCHH being commissioned to undertake a Housing Needs Survey to better understand the needs of the village and to inform any future housing proposals for the site. The survey is expected to 'go live' later this year. The SCHH will continue to provide their range of services available to help the Parish progress a CLH scheme accordingly.

Conclusion

44. In summary, there are three main projects progressing under the CLH Programme in Rother, with 15 homes already delivering onsite, due to complete next year, with an estimated 36 affordable new homes potentially in the pipeline, and other projects emerging. This is significant progress demonstrating the commitment of the SCHH to growing the CLH sector in Rother, and towards achieving the Council's CLH targets included in the HH&RSS (2019-2024) and wider corporate objectives.
45. To continue the good progress of the CLH Programme in Rother, authority is sought to renew the SLA with the SCHH to continue providing the extensive range of services available to our communities, and critically, the expertise needed to ensure the success of these schemes. Additionally, several project specific approvals are required to enable progress, relating to use of Council owned land and release of a covenant on a historically stalled site.

Financial Implications

46. The financial implications are detailed within the body of the report. The funding committed by the CHF is already allocated for CLH purposes, with previously delegated authority. Financial decisions relating to sale of Council owned land, or land where the Council has a financial and legal interest in, will be informed by the Council's disposal procedures for seeking best value.

Alignment to Environment Strategy

47. Housing Development endeavours to build more sustainably as committed in our adopted HH&RSS under Priority 3 (3.1 and 3.3). This considers reduction in fuel poverty and use of Modern Methods of Construction. Taking a fabric

first approach to new build housing where feasible, to deliver Council owned sites, as well as working to achieve this with our housing partners, to include RPs and CLTs.

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 – Schedule 1 - Services provided by the SCHH B – Cemetery Lodge/Land adjoining 276 Turkey Road
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB17/04 / CB19/44 / CB18/73
Background Papers:	Community Led Housing Project Cabinet report 3 July 2017 Community Led Housing Programme update Cabinet report 2 September 2019 Development of Council Owned Sites 11 February 2019 Cabinet report
Reference Documents:	-



SCHEDULE 1: THE SERVICES

Raising awareness and enabling: Via direct contact with individuals, groups and community based organisations, AIRS will enable local communities to understand what community led housing is, become aware of the different models and how these might provide long term community benefit. They will support communities that are considering setting up a Community Land Trust or other CLH model to enable them to understand both the potential and the feasibility.

Business planning: Facilitating the community group's vision for the project, considering an appropriate model of community-led affordable housing, exploring the implications for capital and revenue funding etc. Providing information and advice on funding, finance, development and management and assist with funding applications.

Technical assistance: To provide technical assistance for CLH groups that have been established in relation to finance and development issues in particular. Enabling groups to make informed choices by providing a full suite of processes, tools, templates and options.

Delivery of community led affordable homes: To work with CLH groups to achieve the delivery of affordable homes that contribute to the sustainability of the community. Acting as an intermediary between professionals/local authorities and community groups to facilitate understanding, constructive discussion, and decision making.

Legal formats and documentation: Consideration of appropriate legal entities such as a Community Interest Company, Community Benefit Society, Company Limited by Guarantee (with exempt charity status) etc. Help will be provided to draft the objects of, and to incorporate, the new entity.

Site identification and land acquisition: Advising on the site selection process and on the heads of terms between the community group and the landowner. Advising on the content and structure of a public meeting designed to win the support of the wider community for a recommended site. Recommending solicitors based on our experience of other projects. Providing template forms of option agreement and lease as necessary.

Planning issues: Supporting the community group in deciding the number, type, tenure and design principles of the proposed housing and to play a full part in promulgation of the planning application. Working alongside the LA and CLH group to agree the nominations process and facilitating discussions between the community, HA (if involved) and LA about the wording of the Section 106 agreement (where applicable) and ensuring that the community's preferences are incorporated as fully as possible.

Communication: Supporting the community group in its communications with the wider community as and when required, including as many public meetings as

necessary. Providing guidance on governance, management and community organising.

Project Management: Administering project team meetings; drafting agendas, chairing and taking minutes as required until the community group feels confident enough to take these on. Maintaining an up to date project plan which forecasts when all elements of a project will take place (example attached for a CLT/HA partnership). Supporting CLH groups throughout the development journey, including stand-alone CLTs, advising on all aspects of the development process. Acting as an intermediary between professionals/local authorities and community groups to facilitate understanding, constructive discussion, and decision making. Introducing project delivery partners and liaising with these.

Strategic advice: Researching ways of improving the social and financial return to community groups and advising on the implications of emerging initiatives such as the Government's Community Housing Fund.

Problem Solving: Helping to keep the project on track by problem solving as and when snags arise; ranging from how best to address budget shortfalls to occasional reductions in the capacity of volunteers.

Lobbying: Working with others in the Community-Led Affordable Housing sector to maximise resources and policy support for community-led projects, including relationships with MPs, civil servants and special advisers.

CEMETERY LODGE/LAND ADJOINING 276 TURKEY ROAD BEXHILL



Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 6 September 2021

Title: Community Grants Scheme – Round 1

Report of: Head of Acquisitions, Transformation, and Regeneration

Cabinet Member: Councillor Dixon

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To present and recommend approval of Community Grants applications for Round 1, 2021/22

Decision Type: Non-Key

Officer

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

- 1) the community grants detailed within Appendix A as recommended by the Grants Panel be approved, subject to specific conditions relating to each application;
- 2) a fund of £10,000 from the Community Grants Scheme be approved for supporting community events to celebrate the forthcoming Queen’s Platinum Jubilee (2 June 2022 – 5 June 2022);
- 3) delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chair of the Community Grants Panel to award or refuse the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Grants 2022 Scheme within the criteria set out within Appendix B to the report; and
- 4) all Members be requested to promote the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee Grants 2022 scheme within their Wards.

Introduction

1. The Council’s Community Grants Scheme (CGS) makes provision for up to £130,000 per annum to be made available to community groups or organisations that meet the grants criteria of Rother District Council’s (RDC) CGS.

Community Grants

2. The Community Grants Panel has delegated authority to award grants up to £1,000. No applications were received in Round 1 for these small grants.
3. Round 1 of the Rother CGS for 2021/22 closed on 15 July 2021. Eight applications were received requesting £143,153 in total. The Panel met on 4 August 2021 and have recommended awards for six applications.

4. Cabinet is asked to consider the following applications for funding from the Council's CGS as set out in Table 1 (Each application is summarised in Appendix A:

Applicant	Amount requested	Amount recommended
1. Beulah Baptist Church	£17,400	£12,500
2. Bexhill & Rother Homeless Unity Group	£2,500	£0
3. Bexhill Cricket Club	£5,733	£5,000
4. Bexhill Senior Citizens Club	£30,000	£17,500
5. Burwash Weald & Common Memorial Fund	£22,520	£22,500
6. Footbridge Project	£5,000	£0
7. Sedlescombe Parish Council	£30,000	£30,000
8. The Pelham	£30,000	£27,500
Total:	£143,153	£115,000

Table 1: Grants Panel recommendations

5. Should Cabinet agree with the Panel's recommendation to award the applications as set out above, this will result in a maximum of £115,000 being awarded in Round 1, leaving £10,000 for grants for the remainder of the financial year 2021/22 (£5,000 is ring-fenced each year for the small community grants scheme).
6. Members are reminded that conditions are applied when awarding the grants which include that full funding is obtained in advance of any Rother payments being made and that RDC is acknowledged in any publicity and promotional material associated with these projects. Other specific conditions will also be applied to grants as appropriate.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee Grants 2022 Scheme

7. It is proposed that Parish and Town Councils (P&TCs) and properly constituted community groups are encouraged to organise commemorative or celebratory events for The Queen's Platinum Jubilee on the weekend of 2 June 2022 to 5 June 2022.
8. To support this activity, it is proposed that RDC match funds, pound for pound, relevant expenditure to a limit of £500 of grant funding per application. A total fund of £10,000 is recommended and would be allocated on a first come, first served basis. This would leave no funding available for the medium and large grants scheme for Round 2 in 2021/22. A scheme guidance and application questions (online application form) are attached at Appendix B for consideration.

Small Grants Scheme

9. Members are reminded that small grant applications are accepted all year round. Applicants are encouraged to make applications through the online application process. Support and advice can be accessed through Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) and it is recommended applicants contact RVA before the submission of an application. A balance of £5,000 remains for applications for 2021/22.

10. It should be noted that all applications are to be driven by community support, and need to have an element of match funding, whether their own contributions or at least funding applications submitted to the total value of the project. This is to demonstrate it is fully costed, funded and ready to go. Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek funding from P&TCs.
11. Further information is available via the CGS section of the Council's website: <https://www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/community-grants-scheme/>

Conclusion

12. Members are requested to consider the applications attached at Appendix A and be mindful of the clear benefits these offer to their communities. The CGS offers a robust assessment process that benefits communities applying for grants and secures considerable additional value for money benefits for the Council.
13. Members are requested to consider that a fund of £10,000 be approved for supporting community events to celebrate the Queen's forthcoming Platinum Jubilee (2 June 2022 – 5 June 2022) and that delegated authority be granted to the Chief Executive in consultation with the chair of the Community Grants Panel to approve grants up to the value of £500.

Financial Implications

14. The assessment and monitoring system for Community Grants will mitigate the financial and reputation risks associated with handing over grant finance. The Council attaches specific conditions to grant applications to mitigate risk.

Risk Implications

15. We are often at the hands of voluntary groups to the amount of time, effort and other financial support they can commit to their projects. This is mitigated by the good working relationships that exist across the district, and the support provided by RVA.

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	Yes	Exempt from publication	No

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact:	Nicola Mitchell – Partnership and Policy Officer
e-mail address:	Nicola.mitchell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - Community Grants - Round 1 Financial Year: 2021/22 Appendix B – Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Community Grants application and criteria
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB08/115
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Document:	None.

ROTHER COMMUNITY GRANTS SUMMARY OF APPLICATIONS – ROUND 1, 2021/22

1. BEULAH BAPTIST CHURCH

Total cost of project: £34,800

Funding secured: £5,400

Funding shortfall: £29,400

Amount requested: £17,400

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: £12,000

(grant application has been made to funding organisations totalling £12,000)

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The Applicant is a registered charity. Formally within their constitution, and in addition to the teaching of the Christian Faith, the church carries out charitable purposes in the UK and/or other parts of the world. These charitable purposes are defined as ‘supporting and encouraging social action in the UK and abroad’, ‘giving and encouraging pastoral care’ and ‘teaching, encouragement, welcome and inclusion of young people’.

The grant will be used to replace a flat roof which has reached the end of its useful natural life and has no insulation within it, making the Barnet Room below the flat roof hot in summer and cold/difficult to heat in winter.

Benefits: A new roof will benefit the many users of the Barnett Room immediately below the area to be replaced. This is a multi-purpose area, capable of being divided into two separate areas and served by a small kitchen ready for use by day centre users. Prior to the pandemic, more than 500 people used the facilities each week. These include parent and toddler groups; lunch clubs; youth and children’s clubs; and art clubs.

In addition, a new roof benefits all the volunteers (currently more than 100) who use the building and provides a comfortable workspace for employees.

Support for the Project: Support has been received from users of the hall, group and club leaders. The two Rother Ward Members, Cllrs Bayliss and Courtel are in support of the project, along with Bexhill Town Council (BTC) Cllrs Plim and Taylor-Gee. Please note no financial contributions have been made towards the project by BTC as their Grants Scheme Criteria is yet to be set.

Project Sustainability: Any running costs and necessary maintenance will be budgeted from annual income as it is now. Building maintenance is overseen by a caretaker and volunteer who is responsible to the Trustees of the charity. The expected lifetime of the replacement roof is 25 years.

Other Funding Sources: The Applicant is contributing £4,900 towards the project and has received a donation of £500 from the Jempson Family Trust.

The Applicant has applied to the following and is awaiting an outcome:

- a) The Bernard Sunley Foundation – £4,000

- b) The Laing Family Trusts – £4,000
- c) All Churches Trust – £4,000

Environmental Considerations: A new roof will provide improved insulation and decreased heating costs in the winter.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel recommend a grant £12,500, subject to standard conditions and

- a) confirmation of funding from The Bernard Sunley Foundation;
- b) confirmation of funding from The Laing Family Trusts;
- c) confirmation of funding from All Churches Trust; and
- d) confirmation of alternative funding of £4,900 shortfall, possibly through insulation grants funding which Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) can advise on.

Since the Panel meeting where inclusivity to community facilities was discussed, a statement has been received from the Applicant confirming that the facility welcomes, and is available to, all groups and organisations.

2. BEXHILL AND ROTHER HOMELESS UNITY GROUP

Total cost of project: £5,000

Funding secured: £2,500

Funding shortfall: £2,500

Amount requested: £2,500

Percentage of total project costs requested: 50%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The project is to provide start-up packs to homeless people containing items such as a kettle when they first move from being homeless to being in temporary/permanent accommodation.

This project is not eligible as the medium grants scheme is for the provision of community facilities or capital projects. The items intended to be purchased would not be kept by the Applicant and would not have a capital asset at the end of the project.

The Applicant has been informed and has been provided with alternative funding suggestions.

3. BEXHILL CRICKET CLUB

Total cost of project: £14,300

Funding secured: £8,600

Funding shortfall: £5,700

Amount requested: £5,700

Percentage of total project costs requested: 40%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details: Bexhill Cricket Club (BCC) was founded in 1875 and has been playing in the Polegrove since the 1960s. The Club has a

membership of over 250, including the families of the junior members. There are currently 86 children aged between five and 18, including 27 females. Various adult teams play throughout the week, along with opportunities for children to learn and play cricket aged 5-18 including the junior sides.

The Applicant wishes to install female toilets, wash basins and other family friendly facilities to provide the changing club membership with suitable facilities, whilst at the same time renewing male facilities and the water supply to these, along with the supply to the kitchen and bar area.

Benefits: The additional fitting of female facilities will benefit those who are encouraged to take up sport. It will also benefit female spectators and volunteers. The Club now has female members aged 5-years old. These facilities will also benefit the volunteers at the Club, including parents. Currently, female users are occupying the disabled toilet facility which was installed off the main clubroom approximately eight years ago or getting changed in vehicles. The renewing of the other facilities will make the Club more appealing to all members, guests and club users and support the Club's aim of providing opportunities for all to participate in and support cricket.

Support for the Project: Support for this project has been received by numerous members of the BCC along with Cllrs Oliver and Brewerton.

Project Sustainability: The facilities will be regularly cleaned, serviced and maintained through existing budgets and repaired as required. In addition, it is hoped that by increasing female membership, this will lead to a future expansion of the building to allow female only changing rooms and shower facilities.

Other Funding Sources: The Applicant is contributing £8,600 towards this project. Please note no financial contribution has been made by BTC as their grants scheme criteria is yet to be set.

Environmental Considerations: The installation of one water cylinder will replace two large tanks which are expensive to heat and need to be switched on eight hours prior to use. The new system will heat in approximately 45 minutes reducing electricity consumption. New showers installed will be timed with on/off valves reducing the water usage and the risk of showers being left on. The new toilets will use less water. The Club has recently rendered the outside of the building and installed double glazed windows to reduce heat loss.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel recommend a grant £5,000, subject to standard conditions and confirmation of alternative funding for £733 shortfall.

4. BEXHILL SENIOR CITIZENS CLUB

Total cost of project: £88,500
Funding secured: £10,000
Funding shortfall: £78,500

Amount requested: £30,000
Percentage of total project costs requested: 34%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: £48,500
(grant applications have been made to funding organisations totalling £48,800).

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The Bexhill Senior Citizens Club (BSCC) has been offering a provision of facilities for the education, social interaction, physical and mental recreation of Senior Citizens over the age of 55 in Bexhill for the past 60 years. The aim of the Club is to promote longevity, wellbeing and combat loneliness and isolation in the older community and to offer support as needed wherever possible.

The Applicant wishes to use the grant for the repair and refurbishment of the Club building which requires extensive repairs to the roof, wall and replacement windows and doors to make the building wind resistant and watertight.

The roof and wall repairs have already commenced, making these elements ineligible for Rother Community Grant funding as the application will be retrospective when the Grant applications are considered by Cabinet. The revised project cost for the Community Grant application purposes (47 window replacements and three door replacements) is £41,900, with a maximum eligible grant of £20,950.

Benefits: The project will provide a solid foundation for the BSCC, ensuring it is safe and fit for purpose for the future. Consultations with members have highlighted the need for refurbishment and this will enable the Club to encourage new members at the younger end of the 'seniors' demographic with enthusiasm to carry the Club forward.

The activity programme is led by volunteers, sharing their skills with others. With a refreshed welcoming environment, the Club will be able to recruit more activity leaders and expand the activity programme to enhance the health and wellbeing of their members and combat the loneliness felt by the elderly often living alone.

It has become evident that many of our older people have some very specific needs coming out of the COVID pandemic; people have been isolated, lacking in social interactions, and limited support of family and friends. Groups such as BSCC can help and encourage many members of our community to participate in a welcoming community.

Support for the Project: Support for the project has been received from Ward Member Cllr Timpe, with further support from Cllr Langlands and East Sussex County Council Cllr Azad. Huw Merriman MP in his support has noted the importance of the community space, facilities and services that the BSCC provides on measures such as alleviating loneliness.

BSCC Members have been consulted on, and advised of, the necessity of the work. Project plans and fundraising plans are displayed on the Club's noticeboard for membership action and discussion, with activities planned for fundraising and the Applicant has provided an analysis of these consultations, along with members' letters of support demonstrating how valuable the Club is in providing a place to go, meeting friends and new people and the variety of activities provided.

Project Sustainability: Maintenance of the building and running costs will be met by the normal day-to-day operations of the Club, including a window cleaning schedule. The windows and doors will have a guarantee for 10 years. It is proposed to draw on

member expertise for in-house maintenance and repair if required outside the guarantee and raise funds in the pre-pandemic way.

Other Funding Sources: The Applicant is contributing £10,000 to the project and has made funding applications totalling £11,300 to Screwfix, The Bernard Sunley Foundation and Tesco Community Fund for the whole project. Please note, no financial contribution has been made to this project by BTC as their community grants scheme criteria is yet to be set.

Environmental Considerations: It is proposed that local suppliers are used, and a request is made that materials are sourced as locally as possible. The installation of new windows will reduce heat escaping in winter as well as reducing the amount of gas consumption.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel recommend an award of £17,500, subject to standard conditions and

- a) confirmation of successful funding of £11,300 from Screwfix, The Bernard Sunley Foundation, Tesco Community Fund, (or alternative funding); and
- b) confirmation of alternative funding for £3,100 shortfall.

Since the Panel meeting, where inclusivity to community facilities was discussed, a statement has been received from the Applicant confirming that the facility welcomes, and is available to, all community groups and organisations and are available to use in the evenings and weekends in addition to the normal opening times in the week.

5. BURWASH WEALD & COMMON MEMORIAL FUND PLAYING FIELD

Total cost of project: £62,520

Funding secured: £40,000

Funding shortfall: £22,520

Amount requested: £22,520

Percentage of total project costs requested: 36%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: Nil

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The Applicant is a registered charity established in 1957 to acquire land for use of a Playing Field for the benefit of the resident's village and Burwash Weald Cricket Club. The Playing Field Committee, act in a voluntary capacity, to manage the Playing Field on behalf of the Charity and has a strong group of supporters.

The Applicant wishes to use the grant towards building a 500m 1.5m width path around the playing field with appropriate drainage.

Benefits: The footpath will provide a safe and attractive venue for residents, including wheelchair users, parents with buggies, dog walkers, runners and children on bikes, that can be used all year round as the field gets extremely waterlogged during the wetter months, as well as providing a more user-friendly access from the memorial gate to the pavilion.

Improved drainage will enable more sports groups, formal and informal to use the east end area of the playing field.

Support for the Project: Support for the project has been received by Ward Members Cllrs J. Barnes and Mrs Kirby-Green and Burwash Parish Council (BPC).

Additional support has been received from Burwash Common and Weald Residents Association, residents and users of the field, along with the Managing Director of Oakdown House, a home for those with severe learning difficulties noting how the residents will be able to use the field all year-round making use of the local green space.

Project Sustainability: The ongoing maintenance has been discussed with the current contractors and it is expected the costs will be minimal and will be maintained by the usual volunteers in the same way as the rest of the field. Additional maintenance costs will be budgeted and funded through current fund-raising activities, such as the annual Fete and Pavilion hire fees.

Other Funding Sources: BPC has contributed £2,500 to the project, with the Applicant contributing £37,500 which includes monies from fund-raising activities specifically for the path.

Environmental Considerations: The playing field is undulating and made of heavy clay, so the project will improve the drainage across the land and the quality of the ecology.

An options appraisal has been completed for alternative footpath systems, however on balance a conventional tarmac path is the preferred option. The Applicant is proposing to use a local company for the works.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel discussed the width of the proposed path and accessibility. The width proposed is in line with guidance for as noted by [‘inclusive mobility’](#) section 2.2 (A wheelchair user and an ambulant person side-by-side need 1500mm width) and Sustrans [traffic-free route and greenways](#) design guide.

Further discussions with the Applicant have noted an increase in the width of the project would not be viable for affordability reasons and would impinge on the cricket pitch. The proposed width has the support of the managing director of Oakdean House, who would be a main user of the facility. On balance it is recommended to accept the width as proposed.

The Panel recommend a grant £22,500, subject to standard conditions.

6. FOOTBRIDGE PROJECT

Total cost of project: £18,500

Amended cost of project due to ineligible items and quotes provided: £9,230

Funding secured: £9,200

Funding shortfall: £30

Other Funding applications made:

- Sussex Foundation: £5,000
- Tom Chaplain: £250
- Bexhill Chamber of Commerce: not advised of amount

Amount requested: £5,000

Percentage of total project costs requested: 54%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: no shortfall for project delivery

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The project is to improve the appearance of a footbridge over the railway line, connecting Bexhill town centre to the north side of the town, by applying a digital reproduction of artworks from a local competition to the walls of the footbridge and banners at each end of the footbridge.

The project is not eligible as full project funding demonstrated. The Applicant has been advised.

7. SEDLECOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Total cost of project: £92,722

Funding secured: £16,945

Funding shortfall: £75,777

Amount requested: £30,000

Percentage of total project costs requested: 32%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: £45,777

(grant applications have been made to funding organisations for the project shortfall)

Applicant and Grant Request Details: Sedlescombe Parish Council (SPC) intends to replace and substantially upgrade the Riverside play park facilities for children up to the age of 12, including the installation of an aerial runway, a climbing frame, an assault course and wheelchair accessible roundabout. The Applicant also wishes to improve the pathways and access to the equipment. In addition, the Applicant wishes to install additional benches (including an all access picnic table), and closed lid bins.

Benefits: Approximately 50 children a week use the playground during good weather, but due to the poor surface of the play area this reduces dramatically during the winter months. A survey completed by the Sedlescombe Public Playing Field and Recreation Ground Trust (SPPFRGT) noted that more people would use the facility if it were to be more accessible all year round.

Children up to the age of 12 will benefit from the refurbishment and upgrade of equipment, as well as the wider community, through better access and better seating facilities. Improved accessibility will mean those with disabilities will have increased access to equipment as well as purposely designed seating. The playground will encourage children to go outside in the fresh air, exploring their local area and increased exercise opportunities increasing physical and mental wellbeing, alongside the development of social and cognitive and creative skills.

Support for the Project: The project is supported by the SPPFRGT, who carried out a survey to park users and the local community. The survey received a good response supporting the plans and project. The local primary school took part in a competition to help design their playground. Letters of support have been received from school children, headteacher of the local school, pre-school providers and parents.

Ward Member Cllr Vine-Hall is in support of this project.

Project Sustainability: The playground is maintained by the SPC; this includes grass cutting, repairs and cleaning. Weekly inspections are carried out by SPC Councillors and a yearly safety inspection is completed and documented. This is included within the Parish precept and this will continue, with any repairs as needed being funded by the SPC.

The consultation carried out by the SPPFRGT highlighted requests for basic gardening skills and interest in biodiversity and the environment which could be explored within the space to involve the wider community run by volunteers.

Other Funding Sources: SPC is contributing £13,700 to the project with the SPPFRGT contributing £3,000 raised through various fundraising events in the community. A donation has been received from a company with links to Sedlescome of £245. Funding applications have been made to the National Lottery and it is intended to apply to the new Rother Disabled Facilities Grant for a contribution towards a wheelchair accessible roundabout.

Environmental Considerations: Several designs in the children's design competition had an environment theme, leading to the Applicant incorporating a nature corner into the final design. The children will have access to this as part of an extension to their learning about the environment with environmental signage helping to educate them about climate change and biodiversity.

The proposed installer of the play park uses a rubber safety surfacing under the equipment. The base layer provided consists of 100% recycled rubber, mainly collected from automotive sources.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel recommend granting a full award of £30,000 subject to the standard conditions and:

- a) confirmation of full project funding;
- b) confirmation of funding for the wheelchair accessible roundabout is in place; and
- c) once installed, a statement from SPC confirming the new play equipment is included within schedule of maintenance.

8. THE PELHAM

Total cost of project: £171,850

Amended cost of project due to ineligible items: £162,651

Funding secured: £2,000

Funding shortfall: £160,651

Amount requested: £30,000

Percentage of total project costs requested: 19%

Funding shortfall if full grant approved: £130,651

(funding applications made for full project value)

Applicant and Grant Request Details: The Applicant wishes to use the Rother Community Grant towards the re-development of the basement of the Pelham into a purpose-built youth venue for all young people including sessions in the evening, weekends and holidays.

The basement will have three large rooms: a common room, a games/function room and a music room. The basement will have toilet facilities and include full disabled access and a dedicated street access.

Benefits: The basement will provide a dedicated secure space for children in the age group 11-17. It will be the only non-statutory space within the Ward that is open more than once a week, providing access to supportive activities. This project will support an age group that have limited transport access. The facility will be fully accessible with on street access to the new floor. The building has a lift to all floors and has a ceiling hoist and changing facilities.

Young people who attend a regular youth club get increased skills, including social, craft, games, sports and cooking, a sense of belonging and access to positive role models, The activities are free to attend, so income is not a barrier.

It is intended to run more sessions for younger people when the applicant has recruited and trained new local youth workers, using the National Youth Agency to provide accredited training. The Pelham provides counselling and pastoral support and plans to help more young people with emotional wellbeing.

Support for the Project: The current youth club members have informed the design and elements needed in the new space, and support has been received via several consultations and social media. Individual youth club members and group leaders have provided their support.

Support has also been received from smaller groups that need a space to practice or work at other times when the youth club is not on, for example alternative education providers such as Up-Grade training, Eggtooth (a mental health support group), Impact (supporting parents and carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and local supported accommodation provider for 16 and 17 year olds. The planned space and use have been designed in consultation with other groups to provide a space that meets all needs of the target age group.

The Rother Joint Action Group (JAG) has provided feedback to The Pelham that they are, albeit on a small scale, already helping to deter young people away from petty crime. The JAG funded the applicants' research promotional video that was used to research the wants and needs of young people locally.

Optivo, Fresh Visions and Heart of Sidley fully support the Applicant in their bid to redevelop the basement and provide this type of facility, noting that they will be able to make use of it for their project beneficiaries to access.

Ward Member Cllr Gray is in full support of the project and the aims of The Pelham as a Community Hub.

Project Sustainability: Currently over 80 young people attend various activities and groups at The Pelham which are run for free. The project will give the opportunity to provide different and new groups, and activities attracting an increasing number of young people who wish to attend.

It is planned to run an outreach project trying to target the young people who stay around the local shops and cause low level anti-social behaviour, encouraging them to come and join in the activities but if not to provide additional support to help them make the right choices.

Income from the coffee shop and room hire from the other floors to the community and statutory providers will help ensure that the costs associated with running the basement are met. Statutory services such as the Youth Offending Team have noted they will rent the space. In addition, East Sussex County Council has asked The Pelham to provide a school holiday lunch and play scheme for vulnerable families.

Other Funding Sources: The Applicant is contributing £2,000 and has made funding applications for the full project value to Biffa, Swire and the Trusthouse and is awaiting responses. The Applicant intends to make an application to BTC once their grants scheme criteria is published and open for applications.

Environmental Considerations: The Pelham plan to use local suppliers and trades people to carry out the alterations to the basement and have requested that they use good quality timber where possible. They are in talks to get slightly chipped plasterboards with a provider to three thirds that can be used at a discounted price, reducing slightly imperfect broken plasterboards going to landfill.

The current draughty cellar space will be insulated and heated; saving wasted heating on the floors above for the cellar to make them cold again. This will reduce the need for the heating to be on every day and night in the colder periods.

The Pelham is in a community venue in a central location to its service users enabling access by active transport.

Panel comments and recommendation: The Panel recommend a grant £27,500, subject to standard conditions and confirmation of full project funding.

Since the Panel meeting, where inclusivity to community facilities was discussed, a statement has been received from the applicant confirming that the facility welcomes, and is available to, all groups and organisations.



ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE GRANTS SCHEME GUIDANCE

Rother District Council has agreed to set up a grants fund to recognise the
QUEEN'S PLATINUM JUBILEE

The official 4-day celebration weekend will be held from 2 June 2022 till 5 June 2022

Grants can be made for a maximum of £500, and the maximum number of grants has not been set. The grant pot is set at a maximum of £10,000 and will be awarded on a first come, first served basis.

Applications will be assessed on their individual merits and against the criteria within this guidance.

1. Rother District Council Grants will be offered to properly constituted community groups and Parish and Town Councils within the Rother District.
2. The fund will open on 2 January 2022. The closing date for this Grants scheme is when all funds have been allocated or 30 April 2022, whichever is sooner.
3. The expectation is that events will take place on the celebration weekend between 2 June 2022 and 5 June 2022.
4. Applications will be considered on its own merit as they are received by the Council and applicants will be notified of the decision within 14 days of receipt.
5. All projects must demonstrate a clear link to the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Celebrations and actively benefit Rother residents, promoting access for all and community wellbeing.
6. Funding will not be granted towards firework displays.
7. Applicants will have to demonstrate that Rother District Council funding is at least matched pound for pound by other funds and will need to show they have a bank account in place to process the grant.
8. All community events must, in some way, acknowledge Rother District Council's contribution.
9. Advice about obtaining public liability insurance, licences etc may be sought from Parish and Town Councils and Rother Voluntary Action (RVA).

Online applications are accessed at our website: <https://www.rother.gov.uk/benefits-grants-and-funding/community-grants-scheme/>

Queen's Platinum Jubilee 2022 Grants Scheme Application Questions

About your organisation

Organisation name:

Contact name:

Position in organisation:

Your address:

Email:

Phone number:

Website:

How would you describe your organisation? *(select from drop down list)*

Do you have a formal structure? *(upload)* (if no unable to proceed, refer to RVA for support)*

Bank account details:

About your application

1. What is the name of your project/event?
2. When do you expect your project to start and finish?
3. Is your project taking place at your organisation's correspondence address? *Yes, if no select address*
4. What will you use the grant for? How will it celebrate the Queens Platinum Jubilee 2022?
5. Describe the main groups of people who will benefit from your project
6. Please provide evidence of support from local community groups and those who will benefit from your project *(upload)* letters/consultation/questionnaires*
7. Do you have written (including email) observations from the RDC Ward Member where your project is taking place? *(upload)* (unable to proceed if no)*
8. What actions are in your project that address its impact on the environment and contribute to the climate change agenda? **materials used, using local suppliers*

Costs and Funding

9. Are you able to reclaim VAT? yes/no
 - a) What is the cost of the project excluding/including VAT?
10. How much are you requesting from Rother District Council?
11. How much has your organisation committed to the project? **must be at least 50% of the total project cost*
12. Do you have other sources of funding?
 - a. Please list other sources of funding
 - b. Please provide evidence of other sources of funding *(upload)*
13. Please provide a clear project budget which sets out each cost identified to complete your project. *(upload)*

My files are too large to upload to this form: I will email to communitygrants@rother.gov.uk. *Tick box*

Submit

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	6 September 2021
Title:	Disposal of Land at Blackfriars, Battle
Report of:	Ben Hook – Director of Place and Climate Change
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dixon
Ward(s):	South Battle and Telham
Purpose of Report:	To facilitate development of housing at the Blackfriars, Battle site through Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd
Decision Type:	Key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to dispose of land at Blackfriars, Battle (as outlined at Appendix A) to Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd on terms agreeable to him in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management

Introduction

1. The site known as Blackfriars has a long history, with the principal of development on this site being accepted for many years. The site is approximately 16 hectares (40 acres) in size. Rother District Council (RDC) owns just over 50% of the land. Three other parcels of land are currently in separate, private ownerships (see Appendix A).
2. As outlined previously (Minute CB18/10 refers), past attempts to develop Blackfriars have been unsuccessful, principally due to many constraints including complex ground conditions, land assembly and the need for costly road infrastructure.
3. In February 2018, the Council was informed that it had provisionally been awarded grant funding by the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) as part of Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to finance the construction of the road infrastructure necessary to develop this site.
4. The Council's initial application for grant funding was based on a high-level cost estimate, informed by advice from consultants but subject to further due diligence as the project developed.
5. While working through the design process associated with the Council's outline planning application, it became clear that the viability gap on this site had increased, principally due to greater understanding of the site. Officers sought to negotiate a revised offer of grant funding, pushing to increase the

allocation to bridge the viability gap, and therefore increasing the deliverability of the site.

6. Homes England's panel increased the grant funding from £3.24m to £8.7m following acceptance of the Council's demonstration of uplift in costs. It should be noted, the increase in HIF and any grant funding relates specifically to the delivery and construction of the road infrastructure and cannot be used to inflate land values across the site.

Planning History and Land Acquisition

7. The site now has full planning permission for the delivery of 200 homes. Outline planning permission was granted in December 2020 (RR/2019/604/P) with full reserved matters approved in April 2021 (RR/2020/2307/P).
8. At the point of the initial planning application, the Council only owned circa 50% of the land included in the plan. The remaining land ownership was split between three other parties. As such permission was sought for a compulsory purchase order (CPO) to be undertaken (Minute CB19/86 refers) to ensure that the conditions of the HIF funding were met.
9. As part of the CPO process, officers continued to negotiate with the other landowners to acquire the land outside of the CPO process and thus removing opposition to this process. As of August 2021, all the plots are in the legal ownership of the Council, which is now able to consider how it will implement the planning permission.
10. The CPO process will continue to its conclusion, unopposed, to ensure the expunging of any residual rights held by others over the land and to deal with one small piece of unregistered land for which there is no forthcoming owner.
11. In addition to this process, the Council established a wholly owned local housing company, Alliance Homes (Rother) Ltd (AH) to accelerate housing development throughout the district and to deliver housing on council-owned land.

Disposal

12. It is intended that the housing land at this site will be sold to AH, who will procure a development partner to deliver the site. Even though AH is wholly owned by the Council, the land must still be sold in a manner that demonstrates good value.
13. Valuations, legal, and tax advice are all required prior to ascertaining the precise framework and structure through which the land will be disposed. However, the Council has invested significant sums in both the acquisition of the land and the development of the planning permission which remain unfunded costs at this stage.
14. Whilst the final value will be based on specialist advice it is expected that the minimum price paid by AH should not be less than the unfunded costs incurred by the Council in making this scheme 'build-ready'.

Conclusion

15. The Council established a local housing company to deliver sites within its ownership. The AH business case, approved at Full Council, identifies the Blackfriars Battle site as one of those to be brought forward.
16. Given the complexities of the sale it is recommended that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive to agree the terms of the sale between the Council and AH, in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management.

Financial Implications

17. The Council will receive a Capital receipt for the sale of this land that can be invested into the Capital Programme or offset against future Public Works Loan Board borrowing.

Legal Implications

18. The disposal is complex given the relationship between the vendor and vendee and therefore specialist legal and tax advice is required to ensure compliance.

Alignment to Environment Strategy

19. The proposed development at Blackfriars will be of a high environmental standard targeting a 31% reduction in CO2 over current Part L requirements. Four homes will be built to Passivhaus principles, three Earth sheltered homes will be provided, and a fabric-first approach will be adopted to lower fuel consumption and running costs. These are all in alignment to the Environment Strategy.

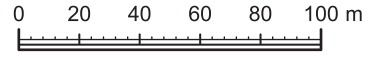
Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	Yes	Access to Information	No
Sustainability	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	No		

Director:	Ben Hook – Director, Place and Climate Change
Report Contact Officer:	Stephen Marsden
e-mail address:	stephen.marsden@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - Site Plan
Relevant Previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

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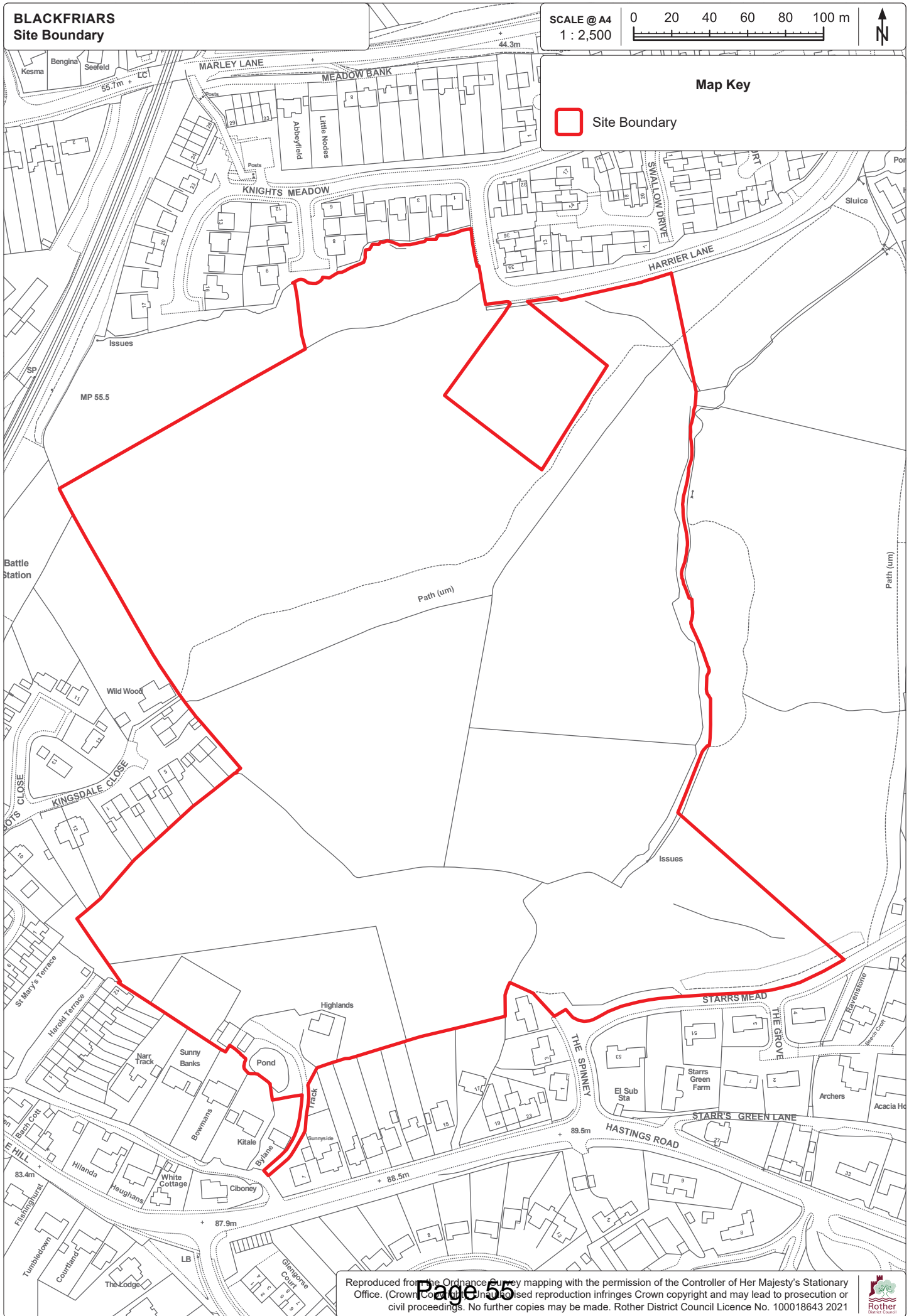
**BLACKFRIARS
Site Boundary**

SCALE @ A4
1 : 2,500



Map Key

 Site Boundary



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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	6 September 2021
Title:	Planning Service Review – Update
Report of:	Ben Hook – Director of Place and Climate Change
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Vine-Hall
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To update Members on the outcome of the iESE Planning Service review and the consequent action plan based on their recommendations.
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED : That the outcome of the Planning Service review by iESE and the consequent action plan be noted.
Reasons for Recommendations:	To ensure that the Members are aware of the outcome of the iESE review of the planning service and how the recommendations are to be implemented.

Introduction

1. During March 2021, iESE was engaged to carry out a review of the Council's Planning Service. This report gives a brief synopsis of the review, its main recommendations and the key actions arising.
2. There were a number of drivers to the review including:
 - a) The Council is under significant pressure to deliver very ambitious housing targets in a geographic area that has a very significant Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
 - b) There are additional pressures from COVID-19 challenges, BREXIT and the potential for significant changes to planning through the Planning for the Future white paper.
 - c) Coupled with staffing levels and recruitment concerns, the Council needs to take a radical look at how best to deliver its future planning service.
 - d) There is a need to meet the rising demand of planning applications, which need appraising in a modern, customer-focused and responsive manner.

Areas Covered by the Review

3. The review covered the following aspects of the Planning service:

- a) An analysis of the current state of play taking into account stakeholder views (both internal and external) and an assessment of performance.
- b) A review of customer demand.
- c) Review of current processes for pre-application advice, application validation, planning applications, enforcement and Community Infrastructure Levy.
- d) Staffing and resources.
- e) Designing a new vision for the Planning services.
- f) Communications.

Headline Recommendations

4. The review made the following headline recommendations that the Council should:
 - a) Consider the level of Transformation the organisation is prepared to invest in.
 - b) Create a project plan, identify roles and a timeline to deliver based on your priorities.
 - c) Categorise your approach across three key areas, people, processes and systems.
5. The three key areas are expanded into work themes at Appendix A together with an action plan.

Planning Re-imagined

6. Part of the work undertaken by iESE with officers and Members was to examine the current Planning Service to develop a new vision and mission that encapsulated both Members' and officers' aspirations.
7. The collective vision for Planning re-imagined is described as: 'An innovative, inclusive and dynamic service working collaboratively to meet the social, economic and environmental aspirations of our District.'
8. To underpin this vision the agreed planning mission is to shape the future direction of the District by:
 - Preserving and protecting AONB and the historical aspects of the District.
 - Reducing carbon emissions and environmental impact.
 - Stimulating economic growth, inwards investment and housing development to attract and support residents and businesses.
 - Protecting, enhancing and upholding built and natural environmental standards for the District.

Early Actions

9. As part of the iESE report there were a number of quick wins, early actions the Council could take to start to make changes to the Planning Service. These are focused on how we interact with Planning customers including through our website and Customer Services Team and how we keep customers up-to-date with progress of their application. In addition, it was recommended that the expectations of Members and officers be reviewed and

agreed. As part of this the committee reporting process would also be reviewed.

10. Further detail of the quick win actions are shown at Appendix B.

Longer Term Actions

11. The iESE review also made some longer-term recommendations which built on the quick wins and reflected the main themes of People, Process and Systems. Appendix C details these actions and the action plan.

Progress so far

12. Since receiving the draft report from iESE, work has already started on implementing the recommendations. Detailed at Appendix D is a summary of the work completed to date.

Communications

13. A communications plan is being developed that will cover both internal and external communications.
14. Internal Communications – this will cover both officers and Members and will include regular progress updates. An important part will be proactively engaging officers and Members to develop and implement the agreed changes.
15. External Communications – this will cover key stakeholders including customers of the planning service and strategic partners.

Resources

16. To deliver on the recommendations of the iESE review will require a cross departmental team to ensure they are implemented in a timely way. In addition to the Planning team, staff resources will be required from the Transformation Team, Communications Team and Human Resources.

Conclusion

17. The review by iESE highlights the significant pressures the Planning Service is experiencing and on the negative impact this has had on their relationship with both customers and Members. These pressures have been exasperated by long term difficulties in recruitment and limitations of the current configuration of software to deliver high levels of self-help and interactivity with customers.
18. The action plan has been developed to enable a high degree of participation both internally (officers and Members) and key partners and customers. The overall objective of the plan is to enable the Planning Service to deliver a customer focused and reliable service going forward. This will require the support and commitment of both officers and Members to ensure this is delivered.

Financial Implications

19. At present the costs of delivering the plan are largely officer and Member time. It is likely however that there will be costs arising from investment in Information Technology (IT), particularly to deliver greater levels of self-help for customers. This cost will be met from the Capital Programme provision for Rother Transformation ICT Investment.

Environmental Implications

20. The planned improvements in themselves do not have a direct environmental impact at this stage. However should investment in IT be required there potentially will be an impact through the manufacturing, operation and ultimately disposal of devices and network equipment, in addition to the energy used to operate the planning software systems. The Council electricity supply contract is based on 100% renewable energy.

Risk Management

21. There is a risk that the Council fails to deliver the recommendations of the iESE review through many drivers including but not exclusively:
- a) Lack of commitment and capacity of officers.
 - b) Lack of commitment of Members to support the service during the transition period.
 - c) Lack of adequate resources to support service improvement.
22. In order to manage these risks a cross department team will be established to deliver the action plan and will use the project management methodology developed to support the Corporate Plan.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook, Director of Place and Climate Change
e-mail address:	Ben.hook@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A – Suggested Work Themes Appendix B – Early Actions Appendix C – Other Actions Appendix D – Actions undertaken following the iESE service review feedback
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None
Background Papers:	iESE Review document
Reference Documents:	None

Suggested Work Themes

People

- Review lines of definition between roles
- Reduce spans of control (no. of employees under one manager)
- Consider career grading
- Invest in learning and development
- Develop values and behaviours essential for high performance

Processes

- Review 'as-is' analysis and invest in 'to-be' redesign for key processes
- Implement quick wins
- Design from a customer perspective

Systems

- Develop a business case, technical specification for a new Planning system
- Review of the website – design from a customer perspective

Early Actions

Action	Work Theme	Comment	Start date	Target finish date
Website design – engage in comprehensive re-design of planning pages on the Council website from a customer perspective. Follow best practice examples from other organisations to save time.	Systems	The Council's website has already undergone major improvements, particularly around customer self-service. The current usability of planning part of the website will be reviewed for enhancement.	Sept 21	March 22
Customer notification service – take advantage of the free gov.uk 'Notify' service to send emails and text messages to customers to provide regular progress updates and help manage expectations around the service: https://www.notifications.service.gov.uk/ . This can help offset demand and improve the customer experience.	Systems	This work will be incorporated into the "my Rother" solution currently deployed through the Council website. This allows customers access to their interactions with the Council. The number of services accessible is increasing and a solution for planning will be given priority.	Sept 21	March 22
Identify your top ten planning service enquiries and develop training documentation for customer services staff to respond to these – feed into Customer Solutions approach in the longer term.	People	Confirmation of current information provided and identification of training needs for Customer Services. Links to longer term actions re customer services below.	Sept 21	March 22
Committee Screening Process – consider a screening process to remove applications that do not need to be considered at committee. Potential to develop a sub-group to handle these applications (including those from Members/employees).	Process	Part of a review of Committee processes to identify scale and scope of the problem / issue and agree relevant changes.	Sept 21	March 22
Jointly re-negotiate member expectations on performance and behaviour-to be agreed by both Members and Planning Officers.	People	Need to review identify scale and scope of the problem / issue and agree any consequent actions to ensure Officers and Members have a common understanding of what is expected and deliverable.	Oct 21	March 22
Opportunity to review committee report length, format and quality, including timescales for report distribution prior to committee meetings.	Process	Part of the Review of committee processes (including reports).	Sept 21	March 22

Other Actions

Action	Work Theme	Comment	Start date	Target finish date
Define technical specifications for a new IT system, including a client view allowing for self-service.	System	<p>Before embarking on a new procurement, this work will include a review of utilisation of existing software to determine whether it is fit for purpose and any investment required.</p> <p>Also within scope will be a separate piece of work on the Council's mapping software, GGP and its integration with Planning software. To include looking at alternative suppliers to improve efficiency of service.</p> <p>If new system to be implemented, new project and timescales to be agreed.</p>	<p>January 22</p> <p>TBC</p>	<p>March 22</p> <p>TBC</p>
Review information recorded and shown on mapping layers – as applicant you should be able to view different layers showing AONB, Grade II listed buildings, development zones etc.	System	Review GGP as a provider - as per comment above. Also, review data and layers on GGP to ensure that old and irrelevant information is deleted or updated.	TBC	TBC
Organise a visit to Sevenoaks DC (SDC) to understand their thinking around the use of Customer Solutions and the management structure within planning.	Process	Work has already commenced to engage with Sevenoaks DC to understand their approach. Action plan to be agreed for delivery of any changes to the customer service/planning processes and demarcation points – combined with recommendation below. Timescale not just related to engagement with SDC but the longer-term change project for the service.	Sept 21	Sept 22
Continue to engage applicants and stakeholders in the design of the planning service going forward	People/ Process	Planning Agents' Forum & Parish & Town Councils' Seminar to re-start in Autumn to enable engagement and feedback.	Oct 21	On going

Action	Work Theme	Comment	Start date	Target finish date
Change the culture – it is currently perceived as risk averse and inward looking. Can it be refreshed to be more commercially minded and engaging with applicants, seeing them as customers rather than problems.	People	This work will focus on understanding the perception of the planning service and embedding the new agreed vision and mission. A staff and Member engagement plan will need to be developed and where necessary specific training delivered.	Dec 21	June 22
Engage Customer Services in the 'to-be' process design – they can do so much more than they are doing and help spread the load, and in doing so, reduce failure demand.	Process	This work will review the demarcation points between customer services and planning including where best staff resources are deployed to have maximum impact.	Sept 21	Sept 22
Review of staffing to include recruitment and retention.	People	This will review the service structure taking into consideration recruitment and retention issues including shared services where appropriate and grading.	Oct 21	June 22

Actions undertaken following the iESE service review feedback

Action	Comments
Set up service review group	<p>Planning meeting to review the feedback from iESE. As a result, a Teams group has been set up with current actions being:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. List actions taken to date (this document). 2. Review iESE 'quick wins' and begin to draft officer response to recommendations.
Meet with Sevenoaks DM managers	Met with DM managers at Sevenoaks to understand what they do differently to RDC – the outcome seems to suggest very little difference albeit SDC has created a firewall between planning and customers (the public and general enquiries) this is dealt with by the Customer Solutions team (largely it appears they are better resourced and fully staffed).
Meet with Sevenoaks validation manager	Met with Sevenoaks to seek an understanding as to what they do in relation to processing/validating applications. Meetings ongoing on a monthly basis (as Sevenoaks was referred to in the review – reference to their Customer Solutions model – which seemed to cover several service areas).
Liaise with Customer Services (CS)	Met with CS to seek better communication links and produce additional advice and support for CS officers when dealing with customer queries on planning matters – including FAQs, sign posting to the website and duty officers in Planning Business Support to take calls as a last resort. Further meetings undertaken and continuing with CS.
Set up PBS duty officer	Rota for duty officers implemented – 2 PBS officers are available each day to take queries that CSOs cannot address themselves.
Review CS planning script	Planning Business Support have reviewed the CS planning script to ensure planning advice is up to date. This should ensure CSOs are equipped to deal with as many queries as they can themselves.
New procedure for CSOs liaising with planning officers – particularly for delayed applications.	As a result of the meetings new procedure implemented for CSOs contacting officers – Queries are now posted on Teams.
Contracted with Capita	Capita are now under contract and are supporting the service to provide planning application validation and application processing services to help reduce the outstanding workload. As of 23 August 2021, they had validated 111 applications (+ processed 10 invalid). Progress on applications will be known as consultation periods start expiring and the reports can be written up.

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	6 September 2021
Title:	Appointment of Chief Executive
Report of:	Councillor Doug Oliver, Leader of the Council
Cabinet Members:	-
Ward(s):	-
Purpose of Report:	To recommend the appointment of the Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service role on a substantive basis.
Decision Type:	Key
Officer	
Recommendation(s):	Recommendation to COUNCIL: That following a successful initial year in the role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service, Malcolm Johnston be appointed to that role on a substantive basis.

-
- Members will recall that as part of the senior staff restructuring in 2020, Full Council agreed on 21 September 2020 that Malcolm Johnston be appointed to the role of Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service with effect from 28 September 2020 for an initial period of one year (Minute C20/41 refers).
 - As part of the process it was agreed that a Member Panel would conduct regular performance reviews against set objectives and a behaviour framework. That Panel would submit a report to full Council in one year's time. The Panel comprised the following Members:

 Panel 1: Cllrs Oliver, Prochak, Bayliss and Vine-Hall
 Panel 2: Cllrs Oliver, Prochak, Bayliss and Dixon
 Panel 3: As for Panel 2
 - The purpose of this report is to comply with that decision in giving the Panel's recommendation to Full Council.
 - This past year has certainly been challenging given the impact COVID-19 has had on our communities, businesses and the Council itself in terms of delivery of services and its own financial resources. As the Council went through the pandemic it had to adapt the way it delivered its services and as the country comes out of the pandemic the Council needs to continue to adapt to a new post-COVID-19 environment.
 - In addition, the Council is committed to an ambitious Corporate Plan, with many projects either in an advanced stage of planning or actually being delivered.

6. Over the past year Mr Johnston's performance has been formally assessed on two separate occasions by the Panel using the criteria referred to previously. At a third meeting to consider the outcome of those reviews the Panel unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council that he be appointed to the role on a substantive basis with immediate effect.

7. At a third meeting, the Panel considered whether the appointment should be made substantive, or whether the Chief Executive post should be opened up to external competition. Their final decision was taken in the context of the current needs and future prospects of the authority. On the basis of Mr Johnston's successful performance, the Panel unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council that he be appointed to the role on a substantive basis with immediate effect.

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

Report Contact Officer:	Councillor Doug Oliver
Appendices:	None
Relevant Previous Minutes:	C20/41 – Minutes of Full Council meeting 21 September 2020
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 6 September 2021

Title: Additional Restrictions Grant - Discretionary Business Grants Scheme

Report of: Ben Hook - Director of Place and Climate

Cabinet Member: Councillors Bayliss and Dixon

Ward(s): ALL

Purpose of Report: To agree a revised Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme to provide funding to a targeted range of support to businesses affected by the continuing COVID-19 pandemic. This follows confirmation of additional funding from the Government of £711,303.

Decision Type: Non-Key

Officer

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

- 1) the new Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme outlined in the report be approved;
- 2) the Community Grants Panel be given delegated authority to approve grants to businesses not exceeding the available funds; and
- 3) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Finance and Performance Management and Economic Development and Regeneration to determine the amounts of grants and detailed criteria.

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.

Introduction

1. Members will be aware that the Council has operated a discretionary business grant scheme in various forms since the first countrywide lockdown in March 2020. This has always been in addition to the previous schemes which helped small businesses and the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors. The current Additional Restrictions Grant Scheme (ARG) came to an end on the 30 July 2021. In total the Council paid out £2,856,772 in grants to businesses, in excess of the £2.7m of funding received. In doing so the Council qualified to receive a further round of grant funding of £711,303 that will need to be spent by 31 March 2022. Part of the funding has already been committed to meet the cost of the

grants awarded under the previous scheme in excess of the original £2.7m of funding. This means £554,531 is available for the new scheme.

Proposed Scheme

2. For this expected final round of funding it is proposed to target this funding to achieve a longer-term benefit for the local economy through protecting viable but vulnerable businesses and jobs. The scheme will focus on the following:
 - a) **Businesses forced to close temporarily due to staff self-isolating** – Members will be aware that many businesses have had to close temporarily as a result of staff having to self-isolate. Whilst the Government have relaxed the rules, it is proposed to earmark some (up to £150,000) of the additional funding to support businesses in this situation meet their costs, particularly staffing costs not met through the Government furlough scheme.
 - b) **Rural Businesses** – Rother has a significant rural economy and due to not only COVID but also BREXIT many are struggling to remain viable, especially through difficulties in recruitment. This would not extend to bed and breakfast or holiday type accommodation which have been supported throughout the pandemic and now should be benefiting from the continued staycation of much of the population.
 - c) **Empty Shops** – to support retail shopping it is proposed to fund the installation of temporary shop window displays to improve the look of vacant shops in our towns and villages. This grant will be available to shop owners/landlords.
 - d) **Empty Commercial Space** – in addition to retail, there are vacant business premises in the district. To encourage new businesses to the area it is proposed to provide one-off grants to cover fixed property costs such as rent for up to two years. This could also extend to cover business loan repayments for those businesses acquiring property in the district. This grant would not be open to landlords.
3. It is also hoped that the Council will work with its partners such as the Business East Sussex Growth Hub and Job Centre Plus, to ensure the funding achieves the best long-term impact for the local economy.

Application Process

4. It is proposed to require businesses to make a bid for a grant which will then be assessed by a panel. To save time it is proposed to utilise the experience, knowledge and officer support of the Community Grants Panel. This established group of Members, officers and external experts has the necessary awareness of the issues local to Rother to enable sound decisions to be made on the award of grants.
5. The bids will need to be assessed at the same time (in case awards need to be moderated to the available funding) and therefore it is proposed that a deadline of 31 October 2021 be used to receive applications by. The assessment process will need to be satisfied as to the viability of the business and take into consideration the impact on local economy and employment should it fail.

Consultation

6. Officers and Members are in dialogue with local business representatives in the Chambers of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses to help establish the detailed criteria for the new scheme. In addition, parish and town councils will be consulted to help identify viable businesses that may require further temporary support.

Conclusion

7. From the operation of these grants over an extended period of time, it is clear that many businesses continue to struggle despite most of the COVID restrictions being lifted or relaxed. By targeting the new funding, the Council can provide a better level of support to specific businesses/sectors and make best use of the funding provided. Members are therefore asked to approve the new ARG discretionary 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 determine the amounts of grants and detailed criteria. It is also proposed to delegate the decision to award a grant to the Community Grants Panel.

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

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

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