

Cabinet

Date and Time - **Monday 31 October 2022 – 6:30pm**

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, A.K. Jeeawon, H.L. Timpe and J. Vine-Hall.

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 3 October as a correct record of the proceedings.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS

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

4. URGENT DECISIONS

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

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

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

6. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2022/23 UPDATE (Pages 3 - 14)

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 putting residents at the heart of everything we do.

7. **ROTHER HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND LEISURE FACILITIES STRATEGY**
(Pages 15 - 22)
8. **EAST SUSSEX TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY** (Pages 23 - 36)
9. **ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL OWNED/LEASED ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY** (Pages 37 - 46)
10. **ECONOMIC RECOVERY PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 47 - 70)
11. **SECTION 106 FUNDS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY LED HOUSING - CEMETERY LODGE, BEXHILL** (Pages 71 - 76)
12. **REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT QUARTER 2 - 2022/23** (Pages 77 - 86)

Malcolm Johnston
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 21 October 2022

Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	31 October 2022
Title:	Procurement Strategy 2022/23 Update
Report of:	Antony Baden - Chief Finance Officer
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Dixon
Wards:	All
Purpose of Report:	To provide a half yearly update on the delivery of the Council's Procurement Strategy in 2022/23
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED: That the updates in Appendices A and B to the report be noted.
Reasons for Recommendations:	To note the progress made in the first half year.

Introduction

1. Cabinet approved the Council's 2022/23 Procurement Strategy on 14 December 2020 (Minute CB 20/77 refers) following a workshop with Members in July 2019. The main purpose of the strategy is to ensure that it meets current legal and policy objectives.
2. Appendix A of the report provides an update on procurement activity during the first two quarters of the current financial year, whilst Appendix B highlights the progress made against some of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) underpinning the Strategy.

Procurement activity in the first two quarter of 2022/23

3. The East Sussex Procurement Hub (ESPH) continues to deliver the Council's operational procurement function as well as its strategy. Ongoing support and advice are provided to officers across the Council and it has recently delivered procurement training to the Special Projects team. Further training will be rolled out across the Council in due course.
4. The ESPH also provide a financial checks and updates service whereby the Chief Finance Officer is notified immediately of about any of its suppliers and contractors experiencing financial distress. This does not mean the Council can terminate contracts, but it does provide an opportunity to begin preparing back up plans.

5. Appendix B sets out procurement activity undertaken in quarters 1 and 2 and sets out future activity for the remainder of the financial year.

Procurement Strategy KPIs - progress to date

6. The analysis in Appendix B highlights the performance in the current financial year against the targets in the agreed Procurement Strategy. It contains 18 KPIs and a brief analysis of what has been achieved so far is also included.
7. In the annual Procurement report presented to Cabinet on 28 February 2022, two key areas of the strategy were identified as requiring development during 2022/23. The first was Governance (Key Area 2 – see KPI 2) and central government's Green paper to 'Transform Public Procurement', which would entail legislative changes. The second was Obtaining Social Value (Key Area 3 – see KPIs 3 to 6) and the production of the Council's Social Value Policy focusing on the procurement approaches to Climate Change and social wellbeing. Both areas are explored in greater detail in Appendix B.

Environmental Implications

8. As mentioned in paragraph 6, the Procurement Strategy targets for 2022/23 will address how the Council approaches procurement in respect of climate change.

Conclusion

9. Progress in some areas had been restricted due to the pandemic, which was reflected in the setting of the targets outlined in Appendix B. The half yearly review of the Procurement Strategy highlights the developments that have been made in the first two quarters of 2022/23. Further progress is required before the targets can be met, and these will be reported to Cabinet at the end of the financial year.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Antony Baden, Chief Finance Officer
Email address:	Antony.Baden@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - Procurement Activity – Quarter 1 & Quarter 2 in 2022/23 Appendix B - Progress made against Procurement Strategy KPIs
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB20/77 CB21/87

Background Papers:	None
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Reference Documents:	None
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Procurement Activity - Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 - 2022/23

Progress – The following procurement activity was concluded during Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 by the ESPH.

Contract Title	Date	Outcomes
RSI contracts	May / June / July / August	Outreach Contract Awarded to Southdown, Assessment Centre contract due to be extended.
Integra	September	Expected to be awarded via direct award on G Cloud 12 to Integra.
Stray dogs	August / September	Delayed as offered to collaborate with Eastbourne and Lewis. ITT expected to be issued in October.
EVCP	September	Completed the feasibility study.
Garden waste stickers	August / September	Tender Pack drafted and due to be on the portal.
Arboriculture contract	August / September	Single bid received, evaluation due to commence.
Legal case management software	September	Awarding via direct award on G Cloud 12 to Access Group.
Colley corner	July / August / September	ITT expected to be issued early October.
Affordable Housing and CIL Viability Assessment	July / August / September	Contract Awarded to Aspinall Verdi Limited.
Climate Change Evidence for the Rother Local Plan	July / August / September	Currently in Post Tender Clarification Stage.
RDC Specialist Housing Advice	April / May	Contract Awarded to incumbent supplier.
Retail, Leisure and Town Centre Assessment	April / May / June	Contract Awarded to Lambert Smith Hampton Group Limited.
Enforcement of Environmental Offences	April / May / June	Contract Awarded to National Enforcement Solutions Limited.

Forward Looking to Q3 2022/23 & Q4 2022/23

- Spend Analysis utilising Microsoft Power BI
- Construction of new Beech Huts
- Garden Waste Stickers (Continuing)
- Camber Public Conveniences Refurbishment
- EV Charging (Continuing)
- M&E Minor Works
- Modular Temporary Accommodation Project

- Colley corner (Continuing)
- Hybrid Mail
- King Offa Demolition
- Old Lydd Road Remediation Works
- Mount View Street Construction

ESPH Arrangements for Q3 2022/23 & Q4 2022/23

- Arboriculture Services (Continuing)
- Stray dogs (Continuing)
- Single Person Discount and Exemptions
- Review of E-Tendering platform
- Finance System (Unit 4)

Rother Procurement Strategy - 2022/23

	Performance Level	Action/ Improvement Plan 2022-2023	Progress in 2022/23
Key Area	Value for Money and Efficiency	Targets	Progress to date
1.	Delivery of budget savings through procurement.	Set target for 2022/23 based on 1.5% of external spend in 2021/22.	Savings target of £167,000. Last year's savings figure was £124,177, (1.12% of total spend).
Key Area	Governance	Targets	Progress to date
2.	Procurements are undertaken legally (including in accordance with changes in legislation/case law e.g. Brexit), consistently and within the Council's own Procurement Procedure and Financial Procedure rules.	<p>Procurement refresher training for all relevant officers to take place in Spring of 2022, to be delivered by the ESPH in conjunction with the Chief Finance Officer and by a combination of online and on-site training.</p> <p>Green Paper Transforming Public Procurement comes into force in late 2022/early 2023 and a training programme will be established for staff and Members in the Autumn of 2022.</p>	<p>Procurement Training completed for newly formed Special Projects Team. ESPH will continue with a Council wide training programme tailored for service areas.</p> <p>Green paper still going through the legislative process. Training programme will be developed following this.</p>

Key Area	Obtaining Social Value	Targets	Progress to date
3.	Policy and scope.	Principles of Social Value support the Council's Corporate Plan and adds value for Rother residents. Inconsistent levels of engagement and awareness currently exist.	<p>Social Value and Environmental Strategy addressed in 'above threshold' procurements. ESPH also working with Officers on a Policy / Strategy to address climate change and sustainability through the procurement process.</p> <p><i>Note: "Above threshold" refers to the UK Procurement thresholds for goods, works and services. It is the value at which procurements must be advertised on the 'Find a Tender' service and follow Public Contract Regulations. The thresholds are £170,782 for goods and services and £4,269,550 for works (excluding VAT).</i></p>
4.	Councillor or cabinet board/authority member given responsibility for reporting leading on social value.	Create Lead Member role responsible for Social Value and undertake specific Member training programme in 2022.	Cabinet appointed Councillor Dixon on the 28 February 2022 (CB21/87) as Lead Member for Procurement & Social Value policy
5.	Market engagement and Contract Management.	Social Value Action Plans to be produced for each contract and to be held centrally so that they can be monitored effectively. Explore potential for an Understand the Buyer event in Bexhill 2022.	The Social Value policy is being developed. THE ESPH is working with officers across East Sussex councils to formulate a sustainable procurement strategy, which will address both community benefits, added value and environmental challenges.

6.	Governance and accountability	Procurement focus on developing wider understanding of Social Value within the Council and how to apply it through contractual arrangements. All relevant reports to be placed on ESPH and RDC websites. Clear evidence that Lead Member has direct oversight of Social Value and that the Social Value sub-group supports the embedding of culture into all contractual processes.	To be developed upon completion of KPI 5 and the delivery of Procurement training for Members and Staff. A wider understanding of social value is being delivered through training and will be further enhanced as the sustainable procurement strategy is developed.
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Key Area	Local SMEs, micro-business and VCSE engagement	Targets	Progress to date
7.	Policy and scope.	Pipeline of opportunities to be published on website to inform relevant parties of local needs and the desired market outcomes.	ESPH engaged with Construction Companies at a Constructionline event in September 2022.
8.	Facilitating good relationships with SMEs, micro-businesses and VCSE organisations	Increase local spend/SMEs each year by 5% per year. Undertake analysis of external spend with companies outside of area to identify future opportunities for local businesses. Explore potential for Understand the Buyer event to update local businesses on changes to Procurement regulations in 2022/23.	2021/22 SME Spend £6,289,457 (annual increase of 22.82%)

Key Are a	Commercial opportunities	Targets	Progress to date
9.	Annual Procurement Programme	Forward planning needs to be undertaken across the organisation to consider commercial opportunities. Procurement is engaged in the inception of strategic projects to effectively contribute ideas for revenue generation in the forward planning process.	Programme meetings to commence October 2022. Early engagement with officers is necessary to forward plan and consider commercial opportunities.
10.	Tendering	Continued focus on ensuring that tendering opportunities are innovative, and that market attractiveness is maximised.	Please refer to Appendix A.
11.	Performance reporting	Annual report to Cabinet outlining performance against the Key Performance Indicators of the Council's Procurement Strategy. Quarterly reviews to be undertaken between the ESPH, Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer.	Annual report to be reported to Cabinet in June 2023. Quarterly reviews have been undertaken with the ESPH.
12.	Post contract review	Identify criteria for undertaking post contract reviews to ensure that opportunities are being exploited effectively.	Post contract review meetings have taken place and the information is being used to improve future procurement opportunities.

Key Area	Supplier relationships & contract management	Targets	Progress to date
13.	Data collection and analysis	Need to develop contract register that includes all projects (including those under £50k) in order to have a complete overview of procurement with the Council.	Regular meetings held with Chief Finance Officer and Principal Accountant to share contract data and establish a mechanism for capturing contracts that are below £50k for the Council to meet transparency requirements.
14.	Early engagement with future strategic suppliers	Publish project pipeline early into each financial year to alert local business of potential opportunities.	Programme meetings started in October 2022, following approval of the annual programme by the CFO. It will be published for the first time as a pipeline on ESPH website.
15.	Supplier financial distress	Review training and guidance to officers on managing and identifying supplier financial distress during post Covid 19 recovery phase.	Alerts received from our credit agency Dun and Bradstreet are passed onto relevant contract officers for review.
16.	Savings and benefits delivery	ESPH will develop a streamlined approach to savings capture/benefits realisation, which will be applied uniformly across the Council and reported to Cabinet on an annual basis.	The intention is still to report this to Cabinet in June 2023.
17.	Recognition and cultural acceptance	Review the approach to contract management to reflect the current requirement for social value monitoring.	Integrating social value reporting as part of contract management is being reviewed by the sustainable procurement working group and is currently in development.

18.	Skills and knowledge	Contract management training to be part of induction and appraisal process. Refresher programmes will be available to staff involved in contracts with video training guides available on ESPH Buyer side webpages.	CFO to discuss with Human Resources.
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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 31 October 2022

Title: Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy

Report of: Deborah Kenneally – Head of Neighbourhood Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor Timpe

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To consider the recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 October 2022, regarding the proposed Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix A) should be read in conjunction with this report.

(The appendices to the original report have not been reproduced here and can be accessed on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Agenda).

Decision Type: Key

Overview and Scrutiny

Recommendation(s): It be **RESOLVED:** That Cabinet be requested to:

- 1) amend the name of the Strategy to 'Rother Health and Well-Being: Leisure Facilities Strategy';
- 2) reword Key Principle 2 of the Strategy to 'The Council's role is one of deliverer as well as enabler and sign-poster to opportunities to be physically active';
- 3) reword Key Principle 6 of the Strategy to 'All new provision should be designed to achieve carbon neutrality and be as energy efficient as possible'; and
- 4) approve the draft Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy prior to public consultation commencing in November 2022, taking into account points raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Introduction

1. The Corporate Plan 2014 included a priority regarding the development of the former Bexhill High School site as a leisure destination which consisted of building a new leisure centre including a swimming pool, and residential housing.
2. Following a review by the Project Steering Group in June 2020, Cabinet, at their meeting on 27 July 2020 (Minute CB20/22 refers), approved the

suspension of the above project given the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on leisure facilities and future use, and uncertainty surrounding Council finances.

3. Rother District Council (RDC) undertook to review leisure requirements in the longer-term, including the possibility of a new facility in Bexhill, as demand for leisure services and the financial climate became clearer. In the meantime, it was agreed that a new contract to maintain existing leisure services up to 31 March 2024 would be procured.
4. The new leisure management contract for Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool, operated by Freedom Leisure (FL), commenced on 1 April 2021 and will expire on 31 March 2024. The separate Rye Sports Centre contract, also operated by FL, expires on 31 March 2026.
5. The leisure facilities buildings in Bexhill are coming to the end of their structural 'life' and patch repairs to the current structure are no longer economical or environmentally efficient. The buildings are in need of major refurbishment or replacement and it is therefore important that a strategy is agreed for the provision of appropriate leisure facilities for the future.
6. On 10 January 2022, Cabinet approved the appointment of a leisure strategist to complete market research on residents' use and requirements from built leisure facilities across the district and on health and well-being in general to inform a draft Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy that is realistic and achievable, and supports an active and healthy lifestyle (Minute CB21/70 refers).

Strategists' Brief

7. The strategists' scope includes the following:
 - Identify and engage with a broad spectrum of people across Rother District that accurately reflects the demographic nature of the district.
 - Through using a variety of methods, which may include interviews, focus groups and sample groups, gather specific data on who are current users of leisure facilities and what they use, including Council owned sites; who are not using leisure facilities and why; what facilities current consumers and potential users would wish to have.
 - Gather information on the barriers preventing people using facilities and how these may be overcome.
 - Identify and map current provision of leisure facilities including the type, quality and access for the public. This should build on previous strategy data and use Sport England Methodology and tools to comply with the Sport England Assessing Needs and Opportunities guidance.
 - Undertake a district wide survey with stakeholders, clubs, residents and groups to identify views of current provision and future needs.
 - Consult with agreed stakeholders to identify opportunities and partnerships including the NHS & Public Health, education partners, RDC officers and Members, Active Sussex and the Active Rother Partnership.

- Develop the Strategy to build on and compliment the strengths of the local area including its natural assets, built and other outdoor physical activity opportunities.
- Establish the role of physical activity in contributing to Rother communities' health and well-being, Rother's Public Health Strategy, Active Rother Partnership, East Sussex Healthy Weight Plan and RDC's Corporate Plan.
- Review of national and local relevant strategies and policies, including Moving Communities' trends, demographic data specific to Rother, and industry best practise.
- Review of each facility in relation to key strategic factors: meeting local need; community capacity; adjacency to/competition with other provision; financial (cost, investment, income generation); building condition; catchment areas; unmet demand; key users e.g. schools for curriculum delivery.
- Draft a Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy, informed by the above research, that includes setting out:
 - Existing provision – facilities and services.
 - Development of national and local strategic context and policy.
 - Assessment of the Rother demographic data.
 - A Needs Analysis for Rother (facilities and services, supply and demand).
 - A new Vision and Strategic Framework for Physical Activity facility provision in Rother – why, what, where, and how this links to and reflects shared priorities for Rother.
 - Delivering the Vision (this will reflect review and assessment of all other aspects of the brief), and what this means in terms of facilities, finance, timescales, resources (Interventions and Commitment).

Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy

8. Please find attached at Appendix B the draft Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy for consideration and amendments prior to public consultation.
9. The timetable and process for review, amendments and final approval is as follows: -
 - O&SC -17 October -review draft and make recommendations for changes to Cabinet.
 - Cabinet -31 October -agree recommendations and any amendments to be made to the draft strategy.
 - November - December -public consultation on final draft strategy
 - O&SC - 23 January 2023- report on results of public consultation
 - Cabinet - 6 February 2023 -final draft strategy for approval
 - Full Council 20 February 2023

Please note: no new proposals can be added to the draft strategy once it has gone to public consultation; proposals included in the consultation can be amended following responses from members of the public.

10. In addition to the above, it should be noted that the current Freedom Leisure contract expires on 31 March 2024 and so time is short in which to procure a new contract if required. It is therefore important that the above timetable is met.

Conclusion

11. The current contract with Freedom Leisure to operate Bexhill built leisure facilities ends on 31 March 2024 and the Bexhill buildings need major refurbishment or replacement prior to a new contract. It is important that the Council has a realistic and achievable strategy in place to ensure continuity of provision of leisure facilities that promotes health and well-being and an active lifestyle across Rother District.

Recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

12. That Cabinet be requested to approve the draft Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy prior to public consultation commencing in November 2022.

Financial Implications

13. On the 27 July 2020, Cabinet agreed to suspend the proposed redevelopment of the Bexhill Leisure Centre (Minute CB20/22 refers). Therefore, any recommendations arising from the strategists' report that require significant investment would be unfunded. Should Members decide to proceed with these recommendations funding would need to be identified before commencement.
14. Failure to have a strategy in place may mean further Council funding will be spent on maintaining old, inefficient buildings that may not meet the needs of residents and could mean sites cannot remain open.

Risk Implications

15. There is a risk that if a Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy is not agreed and in place there will be a delay to decisions on the future of built leisure facilities in Rother District and how they will be managed and operated in the future, and this may result in loss of service.

Environmental Impact

16. Fully understanding the needs and requirements of residents in the Rother District, and then providing appropriate leisure facilities to meet these needs, is vital to support the community's health and well-being.
17. The existing built facilities are old and beyond their useful structural lifespan and no longer meet the environmental and 'climate change' aspirations of the future.

Equalities Impact

18. Equalities – a new strategy may improve the offering and inclusiveness of the sites, including making them more welcoming for disabled people.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
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:	Deborah Kenneally, Head of Neighbourhood Services
e-mail address:	deborah.kenneally@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	A – OSC Minute Extract – 17 October 2022
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB09/57, CB20/22, CB21/70
Background Papers:	- Overview & Scrutiny Committee Agenda - Monday 17 October 2022
Reference Documents:	-

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 17 October 2022**OSC22/26. ROTHER HEALTH, WELL-BEING AND LEISURE FACILITIES
(5) STRATEGY**

Members received the report of the Head of Neighbourhood Services which outlined the draft Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy for Members' consideration, prior to public consultation and final approval by Cabinet and full Council.

Cabinet, in July 2020, had approved the suspension of the project in the Corporate Plan 2014 to develop the former Bexhill High School site as a leisure destination, which consisted of building a new leisure centre including a swimming pool and residential housing, given the COVID-19 pandemic, its impact on leisure facilities and future use, and uncertainty surrounding Council finances. It was agreed that a new contract to maintain existing leisure services up to 31 March 2024 would be procured.

The new leisure management contract for Bexhill Leisure Centre and Bexhill Leisure Pool, operated by Freedom Leisure (FL), commenced on 1 April 2021 and was due to expire on 31 March 2024. The separate Rye Sports Centre contract, also operated by FL, was due to expire on 31 March 2026. The buildings in Bexhill were in need of major refurbishment or replacement and it was therefore important that a strategy was agreed for the provision of appropriate leisure facilities for the future.

On 10 January 2022, Cabinet approved the appointment of a leisure strategist to complete market research on residents' use and requirements from leisure facilities across the district and on health and well-being in general to inform a draft Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy that was realistic and achievable, and supported an active and healthy lifestyle. The draft Rother Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy was attached at Appendix B to the report for Members' consideration and amendments prior to public consultation. Members were led through the Strategy by Rachel Fowler, Managing Director, Strategic Leisure Limited who completed the independent market research and drafted the Strategy report

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

- leisure facilities were part of an overall health and well-being strategy and Members felt that the current title of the Strategy was misleading. Members therefore recommended and agreed that Cabinet consider amending the title of the Strategy to 'Rother Health and Well-Being: Leisure Facilities Strategy';
- Members suggested consideration be given to adding dancing into the Strategy as a known popular activity amongst the residents of Rother, with both physical and social benefits;
- there was no mention of concessions for residents on low incomes,

young people or of any local membership options in the Strategy. Members suggested consideration be given to incorporating these into the Strategy;

- the research provided a representative sample of the population of Rother and the detailed data could be found in the appendices to the Strategy;
- East Sussex Public Health had been consulted with and were very supportive of the Strategy. Working locally with GPs would be challenging and would need to form part of the implementation plan;
- nationally, leisure centres had seen a return of approximately 75% of their users from before the COVID-19 pandemic. Habits had changed and many users were continuing to exercise at home or outside, rather than choosing to go back to indoor centres;
- the largest proportion of returning leisure centre users were to swimming pools, with gym users being second;
- Members were keen to ensure that high quality, accessible to all wet facilities would be a priority, as the need had been demonstrated by the results of the research;
- Members did not consider the Council's role in the Strategy to be purely one of an enabler and sign-poster to opportunities to be physically active, as implied in the key principles of the Strategy. Members recommended that Cabinet consider rewording this principle to the Council being a deliverer as well as an enabler and sign-poster;
- Members were keen to ensure that the Gullivers site in Sidley be incorporated into the Strategy;
- references to the use of technology may attract more young people to leisure facilities and increased physical activity, such as virtual reality and video games;
- Members paid tribute to the Council's Community Grants Scheme in developing rural communities, which had enabled partnership working with parish councils to deliver leisure facilities such as the community pools and outdoor gym in Etchingham. This was a scheme that Members felt played an important role in the Strategy;
- Members requested consideration be given to adding the wording '...and be as energy efficient as possible' to key principle 6 in the Strategy, as achieving carbon neutrality in all new leisure provision was not enough;
- FL had recently announced the temporary closure of the swimming pool in Rye due to rising utility costs. Members recommended and agreed to explore the reasons further. Swimming was important for both physical and mental health and was the most requested activity in the market research survey, particularly lane swimming which was offered at the Rye pool. Representatives from FL and Rye Town Council would therefore be invited to the next meeting of the Committee to discuss further.

The Chair thanked Rachel Fowler for her detailed presentation of the Strategy and the Committee for their comments, which would be reported to Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) Cabinet be requested to amend the name of the Strategy to

‘Rother Health and Well-Being: Leisure Facilities Strategy’;

- 2) Cabinet be requested to reword Key Principle 2 of the Strategy to ‘The Council’s role is one of deliverer as well as enabler and sign-poster to opportunities to be physically active’;
- 3) Cabinet be requested to reword Key Principle 6 of the Strategy to ‘All new provision should be designed to achieve carbon neutrality and be as energy efficient as possible’;
- 4) Cabinet be requested to approve the draft Health, Well-Being and Leisure Facilities Strategy prior to public consultation commencing in November 2022, taking into account points raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- 5) representatives from Freedom Leisure and Rye Town Council be invited to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee scheduled to be held on 21 November 2022 to discuss the temporary closure of Rye Swimming Pool.

(Councillor J. Barnes declared a Personal Interest in this matter as Vice-Chair of Etchingham Trust for Sports and Recreation and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).

(Councillor Maynard declared a Personal Interest in this matter as Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Health, East Sussex County Council and in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct remained in the meeting during the consideration thereof).

Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 31 October 2022

Title: East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy

Report of: Joe Powell – Head of Housing and Community

Cabinet Member: Councillor Byrne

Ward(s): All

Purpose of Report: To consider the recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 October 2022, regarding the proposed East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix B) should be read in conjunction with this report.

Decision Type: Non-Key

Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy be approved and adopted.

Introduction

1. All Councils in East Sussex aim to work with households to prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible; however, in some cases households will become homeless and require temporary accommodation (TA).
2. The East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy was written by the operational housing managers across all five districts and boroughs. The Policy outlines the standards applied to the size and location of TA as well as the processes and procedures we will follow. The Policy applies both within district or borough, and outside of the placement authority area. The Policy is appended at Appendix A.
3. The Policy covers both interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996 (as amended), during the relief duty and while homelessness enquiries are undertaken, and longer-term TA placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the Act.
4. The East Sussex Housing Officers Group (ESHOG) has identified that a more consistent approach to the placement of households in TA is needed across East Sussex. The new policy will lead to a more efficient process and procedure for making placements between local authorities and the various private providers of TA within East Sussex.

5. The Policy does not cover the standard of TA used, with these standards being dictated by the national Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) overseen by the different local authority housing teams. In the Rother area, we conduct routine inspections against these standards as demanded by the Housing Services' risk assessments. The operational housing managers within East Sussex are working on aligning the application of the HHSRS standards across East Sussex presently.

The Policy

6. The Policy is relatively limited in its scope, focussing on the suitability standards for the size and location of TA, as well as the processes and procedures local authorities will follow when placing households in TA. The main areas of the Policy are:
 - What local authorities agree constitutes suitable TA, in terms of its size and location, enabling us to better manage the expectations of the customer.
 - To provide a more consistent approach to the amount of money households that are working are expected to contribute, if they are not eligible for full housing benefit.
 - That the districts and boroughs do not accommodate pets in TA and how breaches of licence conditions will be addressed.

Conclusion

7. There are many different private providers of TA that local authorities use and it is beneficial for the Council, accommodation providers and the customer to have a consistent approach to making placements across the East Sussex area.
8. It is recommended that the Council adopt the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy. The proposed Policy will enable the Council to work in partnership with the other district and boroughs to ensure a consistent approach across East Sussex.

Financial Implications

9. Historically, the Council would meet more of the cost of TA if a household is working. The Policy will lead to working households making more of a contribution towards the full cost of their placement.

Legal Implications

10. While not a legislative requirement, a Temporary Accommodation Policy will support the Council and its statutory duty to provide interim, temporary, accommodation.

Equalities and Diversity

11. An equalities impact assessment has been completed to accompany the Policy.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	Yes
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:	Joe Powell		
e-mail address:	joe.powell@rother.gov.uk		
Appendices:	Appendix A - East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy Appendix B – OSC Minute Extract – 17 October 2022		
Relevant previous Minutes:	None		
Background Papers:	None		
Reference Documents:	None		

East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All Councils in East Sussex aim to work with households to prevent homelessness occurring wherever possible. However, in some instances this will not be possible and as a result some households will require temporary accommodation.
- 1.2 This policy sets out the five East Sussex councils' policy for the placement of homeless households in emergency and temporary accommodation, both within District or Borough, and outside of the placement authority area.
- 1.3 This Policy covers both interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996, during the relief duty and while homelessness enquires are undertaken, and longer-term temporary accommodation placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the Housing Act 1996. Within this document placements under both of these duties will be referred to as temporary accommodation placements.

2. Securing Temporary Accommodation resources available in East Sussex

- 2.1 All Councils will, where possible, try to secure suitable emergency and temporary accommodation within their own District or Borough to allow a household to maintain their existing networks, such as employment, schooling, medical care and family and social support. However, due to the very limited supply of temporary accommodation, this may not always be possible.

3. Cost of Temporary Accommodation

- 3.1 Households placed in temporary accommodation will usually have to make a financial contribution towards their housing costs. This contribution can include:
 - responsibility for utility bills and rent in self-contained temporary accommodation (the rental element may be covered by housing benefit if the client is eligible),
 - 'personal contribution' or 'service charge' recoverable by the Council which usually covers non-eligible accommodation charges and /or management costs.
- 3.2 In cases where a homeless household does not receive full housing benefit due to eligibility, income or savings, the applicant will be responsible for meeting the cost of the difference between their maximum housing benefit entitlement and what they received in housing benefit. For example, if the cost of placement is £350 per week and the maximum HB award £150 per week, the client is responsible for this element. The local authority will cover the difference of £200. If the client's HB award is then £100 per week, then they have to pay an additional £50 per week (to make their contribution up to the maximum HB award) as well as their personal contribution/service charge and / or utility bills.

4. Making an accommodation placement

- 4.1 Homeless households who are accommodated under an interim duty (s.188 Housing Act 1996) will normally be offered bed and breakfast or short term self-contained accommodation while the Council fulfils their relief duty and enquiries are carried out.
- 4.2 The Council will seek to avoid placing families with children, pregnant women into bed and breakfast accommodation with shared facilities. In the unusual event that such a placement cannot be avoided, the household will be moved to self-contained emergency accommodation as soon as possible and within six weeks of initial placement.
- 4.3 In the case of any 16-17 year-olds that are homeless and approach the Council, they will be referred to East Sussex County Council Children's Services so that appropriate accommodation and support can be provided as per their obligations under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989.
- 4.4 Homeless households placed in accommodation under an interim duty (s.188) are not protected under the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 and do not have security of tenure. Where the Council decides it does not owe the household a main housing duty, they will be notified and given a reasonable timescale to vacate, as detailed in their homelessness decision letter.
- 4.5 Homeless households who are placed in accommodation outside the placing authority's own area, the placing Council will notify the area in which placement is made under s.208 of the Housing Act 1996. In addition, in relevant cases, they will notify the Violent and Sex Offender Register (VISOR) or equivalent in order to ensure public protection obligations are fulfilled. Consent to disclose relevant risk information to emergency or temporary accommodation providers will be obtained from Police or Probation or other relevant agency prior to placement, as appropriate.
- 4.6 Where emergency accommodation within the placing District or Borough is available, the Council will prioritise cases in accordance with Section 7 of this policy for this accommodation.
- 4.7 Where accommodation is not available within the placing District or Borough's own area, the Council will look to neighbouring Council areas within East Sussex, and following this, into Kent or further afield.
- 4.8 As assessment of housing and support needs is carried out for all applicants which will identify any support needs and risks that the household presents with that may need to be taken into account in any temporary accommodation placement.
- 4.9 Households will be provided with information on how to access services and support in the area of placement.
- 4.10 Households assessed with known risks to themselves or others, such as history of offending, licence conditions, drug and alcohol use, mental or physical health may be placed outside of District or Borough due to the shortage of accommodation able to accommodate their needs.

5. Offers and refusals of accommodation

- 5.1 Homeless households will be made one offer of suitable interim or longer term temporary accommodation and will be asked to accept it straight away. There is no opportunity for households to view the accommodation offered under s.188 or under the Council's discretionary powers, prior to acceptance.
- 5.2 In making any offer of temporary accommodation, the needs, requirements and circumstances of each homeless household member will be considered, taking into account the factors set out in section 6 of this policy. All offers of temporary accommodation have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 5.3 Where a homeless applicant refuses an offer of suitable temporary accommodation, or fail to take up occupation of the property, they will be asked for their reasons for refusal or non-occupation. The Council will consider the reasons and undertake further enquiries if necessary.
- 5.4 If the Council accepts the reasons for refusal and agree the offer was unsuitable, a further offer will be made.
- 5.5 If the Council does not accept the reasons for refusal, no further offer of temporary accommodation will be made and the homeless household will need to make their own arrangements. There is no right of appeal against the suitability of offers made under s.188 Housing Act 1996 (although judicial review can be applied for). For homeless households where the Council has accepted a housing duty under s.193 they can exercise their right to review the suitability, under s.202 within 21 days of being notified that the offer is suitable; after that time the only remedy is judicial review.
- 5.6 Homeless households who question the suitability of the temporary accommodation are advised to accept the offer of accommodation and pursue a review of the suitability of the accommodation whilst in occupation.

6. Factors affecting suitability of accommodation

- 6.1 The Council will take into account s.208 and s.210 of the Housing Act 1996, the Code of Guidance and relevant case law when determining the suitability of any offer of temporary accommodation. The accommodation must be suitable in relation to the homeless applicant and to all members of their household who normally reside with them, or who might reasonably be expected to reside with them. Through consideration of the following factors the Council will meet their obligations under the Equalities Act 2010 by showing due regard for an individual's medical condition and vulnerability.

In determining this, the following factors will be considered:-

- i. *Whether suitable accommodation is available within the District or Borough* – if accommodation is available, homeless households will be accommodated within the area subject to section 7. However, given the shortage of short-term, temporary accommodation, it is inevitable that accommodation outside the District, Borough or County may be used.
- ii. *Size of the accommodation* – accommodation must provide adequate space standards for the household to inhabit. However, given the short

term nature of the accommodation and lack of available housing at short notice, it is possible that a homeless household would be offered a placement with fewer bedrooms than a household would be entitled to on a permanent basis.

- iii. *Medical needs of the household/Physical needs* – consideration will be made in relation to the homeless applicant or resident member of the household's medical needs, such as ability to climb stairs, medical equipment required within the accommodation, care and support provided by other agencies and access to any specialist treatment only available locally. If the homeless applicant, or a member of the resident household identifies medical needs as an issue with any potential offer of temporary accommodation that were not identified at the point of initial application, the homeless applicant must provide medical evidence in support of this within 24 hours. The test applied by the Council with regards to medical needs is whether the condition makes the offer unsuitable.
- iv. *Education* – consideration will be given to the impact on schooling and travelling distance to the school. However, it is not considered unreasonable that children enrol in a school closer to the temporary accommodation. Pupils who are close to taking public examinations or those with specialist educational provision that is only available in a particular school, will be considered for temporary accommodation within or closest to the District (see section 7 below).
- v. *Care and Support*- consideration will be made in relation to the homeless applicant or any resident member of the household who is receiving care and support provided by other agencies and who made need to access local support/care services.
- vi. *Age and vulnerability* – consideration will be given to the age of the homeless applicant and their resident household members as well as any vulnerability (also see medical, care and support needs and risk of violence or harassment).
- vii. *Employment* – consideration will be given to the needs of applicants in paid employment who need to reach their place of work from any temporary accommodation within a reasonable commuting distance of less than 60 minutes.
- viii. *Proximity to services* – consideration will be made of the proximity to a school, public transport, primary care and other local services, to avoid isolation of the household. This does not extend to providing temporary accommodation in the applicants' chosen area to access preferred services.
- ix. *Affordability* - In determining whether accommodation is suitable, the Council will take into account affordability and will consider:
 - financial resources available to the homeless applicant; including salary, benefits, pensions and savings
 - costs in respect of the accommodation; including rent, mortgage costs, service charges, council tax, any deposit and payments to an accommodation agency
 - maintenance and child support payments

- reasonable living expenses.
- x. *Risk of violence or harassment* - the Council will take into account any social considerations relating to the homeless applicant and their household that might affect the suitability of accommodation, including any risk of violence, racial or other harassment in a particular locality. Where domestic violence or abuse is involved the Council will consider Refuge in the first instance.
 - xi. *Exceptional circumstances* – consideration will be made of any special circumstances submitted by the applicant that may impact on the suitability of the offer of temporary accommodation.
- 6.2 Assessments are made within the context of the accommodation available and limited options and resources available to the Council on the day of the applicant presenting as homeless.

7. Criteria for prioritising placements within the District or Borough

- 7.1 In the event that short term interim accommodation within the District or Borough is available to the Council, priority for such accommodation will be given to homeless households whose circumstances may include:-
- i. *Applicants with children on the Child Protection register* or with significantly high or complex welfare needs where support can only be provided by statutory agencies within the placing District or Borough area.
 - ii. *Households with a dependent child with an Education Health Care plan* who is receiving specialist education support within the placing District or Borough area and where this cannot be transferred to another school.
 - iii. *Applicants with a diagnosed severe and enduring mental health issue* who is receiving regular psychiatric treatment within the within the placing District or Borough area and a transfer of care would severely impact on their wellbeing.
 - iv. *Applicants who have been continuously employed within the placing District or Borough area* for a period of at least one year and for 16 or more hours a week. Women on maternity leave from employment meeting the same criteria would also be considered.
 - v. *Applicants who have a child within the household who are due to take public examinations* within the current school year, e.g. GCSEs, 'A' Levels or equivalent.
 - vi. *Exceptional circumstances* – where a household's circumstances are particularly complex or significant vulnerabilities exist, to be considered on a case by case basis.
- 7.2 The above categories are not listed in priority order, nor is the list exhaustive. It may be considered that, following a detailed assessment of the household's circumstances, they should qualify for an offer of accommodation within the placing authority area, or outside it.

- 7.3 Given the shortage of temporary accommodation, it is inevitable that Councils will need to make decisions to prioritise the offer of particular temporary accommodation within their own areas. This means that prioritisation may occur, not just between those who fall within one or more of the priority groups set out above and those who do not, but between those households who fall within the priority groups.
- 7.4 The following circumstances will be taken into account by the Council when reaching decisions on prioritisation between households:
- Welfare and safeguarding of any children in the household
 - Level of special educational need
 - Risks posed by living in particular areas;
 - The permanency/flexibility of employment;
 - Access to transport, services, medical facilities, support, cultural or religious amenities;
 - Impact on caring responsibilities;
 - Affordability of the accommodation.
- 7.5 Where accommodation is available within the District or Borough's area and no priority groups require this accommodation, all other households, subject to suitability and risk assessment, will be considered for this accommodation.

8. Moving within temporary accommodation

- 8.1 Where it is considered that the household falls within a priority group for accommodation within the placing authority but no accommodation is available, the households will be placed in any location where there is availability on that day. This accommodation may be suitable in the short-term but not the long-term. If the accommodation provided is deemed unsuitable in the longer term a household will be given priority to be transferred to alternative accommodation within the Council's area, or as close to it as possible, as soon as a more suitable unit becomes available.
- 8.2 It may be necessary to move homeless households to another temporary accommodation property to make best use of available resources.
- 8.3 Households will be required to move when requested. If the households refuses to move, this may result in the Council ending their duties.

9. Ending of temporary accommodation placements

- 9.1 The Council may end emergency/temporary accommodation for those placed under a relief duty, after informing the household in the following circumstances:
- Where a homeless applicant is found not to be in priority need, or is intentionally homeless,
 - Where it is accepted that the homeless applicant has 'deliberately and unreasonably refused to cooperate' with a step in the personalised housing plan,
 - If a homeless applicant rejects or doesn't move following a reasonable offer of accommodation,
 - Where the behaviour of the household results in loss of the emergency or temporary accommodation.

- 9.2 The household will be informed of the situation and the date that the placement will end so that they can make alternative arrangements. If there are children in the household the Council will notify East Sussex County Council's Children's Services for assistance under Section 17 Children Act 1989.

10. Breaches of licence conditions

- 10.1 The household will have been notified about the consequences of breaching the terms of their placement, at the beginning of the placement.
- 10.2 In the event of a breach of the terms of placement, the placing authority will issue a verbal and written final warning to the applicant or a member of their household. If this is the first breach and not of the most serious nature then the placement (or an alternative placement) will not be ended but a final warning will be given explaining that a further breach will result in the termination of the placement. If following a final warning, a further breach is committed, the placement will be terminated and any duty or discretionary power offered by the Council is likely to end.
- 10.3 If the household's behaviour is extreme (e.g. violence), the placement may be ended immediately. If the placement is terminated any duty or discretionary power offered by the Council will then be ended.

11. Pets

- 11.1 The Councils do not have a duty to accommodate pets and are usually not able to accommodate pets within emergency or temporary accommodation. Applicants will need to make alternative arrangements for any pets whilst they are in such accommodation and the placing Council will discuss these options with them.
- 11.2 The Council can help place dogs and cats in kennels and catteries. Applicants are liable for the cost of accommodating pets, and will need to ensure the pet/s are vaccinated, neutered, wormed and de-flead.
- 11.3 There is no provision for accommodating non-domestic pets, but support will be provided to access appropriate re-homing options.

12. Data Protection and Information Sharing

- 11.1 Applicants' privacy is protected and the Council's policy to this policy will only use and store personal data in line with the General Data Protection Regulation 2016 and the Data Protection Act 2018.
- 11.2 The information provided by the customer will be treated confidentially at all times. Security safeguards apply to both manual and electronically held data and only relevant staff can access this information. As a data controller, each Council has a responsibility to make sure the applicant knows why and how their personal information is being used in accordance with relevant data protection laws.
- 11.3 The Councils will only use the applicant's personal data for the purposes for

which it is collected, unless it is reasonably considered that we will need to use it for another legitimate reason and that reason is compatible with the original purpose. If personal data is used for an unrelated purpose, the placing Council will notify the applicant and explain the legal basis for doing so. Processing personal data without the applicant's knowledge or consent, where this is required or permitted by law, may be done.

13. Performance Monitoring and Review

- 13.1 The Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis and updated as required, for example due to changes in legislation, guidance or case law.
- 13.2 Monitoring will include, the numbers of applicants placed in temporary accommodation within and outside the District or Borough.

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 17 October 2022

**OSC22/27. EAST SUSSEX TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY
(6)**

Members received the report of the Head of Housing and Community which gave details of the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy that had been written by the operational housing managers across all five districts and boroughs. The Policy outlined the standards applied to the size and location of Temporary Accommodation (TA) as well as the processes and procedures to follow. The Policy applied both within district or borough, and outside of the placement authority area. The Policy was appended at Appendix A to the report.

The Policy covered both interim placements made under Section 188 Housing Act 1996 (as amended), during the relief duty and while homelessness enquiries were undertaken, and longer-term TA placements for households accepted as homeless under Section 193 of the Act. 4.

The East Sussex Housing Officers Group had identified that a more consistent approach to the placement of households in TA was needed across East Sussex. The new policy would lead to a more efficient process and procedure for making placements between local authorities and the various private providers of TA within East Sussex.

The Policy did not cover the standard of TA used, with these standards being dictated by the national Housing Health and Safety Rating System overseen by the different local authority housing teams. The Policy was relatively limited in its scope, focusing on the suitability standards for the size and location of TA, as well as the processes and procedures local authorities would follow when placing households in TA.

The main areas of the Policy were: what constituted suitable TA, in terms of its size and location; to provide a more consistent approach to the amount of money working households were expected to contribute; and that the districts and boroughs did not accommodate pets in TA and how breaches of licence conditions would be addressed.

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

- the number of households in TA over recent months was 130, which was 90 more than at the current time the previous year;
- an increase in households requiring TA was expected, due to the current cost of living crisis;
- employment considerations and households with a child or children due to take public examinations within the current school year should be given higher priority when looking at TA placements;

- the policy reflected best practice, which the Council already had in place; and
- the number of verified rough sleepers in the district was currently three, the annual count was three or four. Members would be alerted if the number increased in the quarterly performance review reports.

RESOLVED: That the East Sussex Temporary Accommodation Policy be recommended to Cabinet and full Council for adoption.

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

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	31 October 2022
Title:	Rother District Council Owned / Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy
Report of:	Joe Powell – Head of Housing and Community
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Byrne
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To consider the recommendation arising from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 17 October 2022, regarding the proposed Rother District Council Owned / Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy. The report and recommendations arising are reproduced below and the Minutes of that meeting (Appendix B) should be read in conjunction with this report.
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation(s):	Recommendation to COUNCIL: That the Rother District Council Owned / Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy be approved and adopted.

Introduction

1. In 2020, Rother District Council (RDC) became a Registered Provider of accommodation. Thus far, we have 24 units of accommodation that we own and one unit of accommodation that we lease and manage. The number of units of accommodation we own and lease is set to rise further as we increase the scale of the Temporary Accommodation Support Scheme (TASS) and leasing scheme.
2. This is the first Policy that we are statutorily required to have as part of the emerging Social Housing White Paper, which includes a range of improvements to the safety and management standards of social housing following the tragic events of Grenfell. A suite of further policies is presently in development as we prepare for the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill to progress through its readings in Parliament. The Bill is currently approaching the third reading in the House of Lords. These policies will include, but not limited to, a Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Rent Setting Policy, Tenant Involvement Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy.
3. The Policy applies to RDC tenants of temporary accommodation and leased properties only. The complaints handling policy will apply to all activity

undertaken by Council staff or contractors that may be involved in property management and support of tenants. The policy can be read in full at Appendix A.

Complaints Policy

4. In July 2020, the Housing Ombudsman introduced the Complaint Handling Code which sets out good practice that would allow landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly. An updated Code took effect from 1 April 2022, with Landlords having until 1 October 2022 to become compliant. The Council has already adopted the new Policy standards in practice, ahead of formal adoption therefore.
5. There are a range of benefits to be gained from having an effective and efficient complaints policy:
 - Complaints allow an issue to be resolved before it becomes worse. Those issues not resolved quickly can take significant resource and time to remedy.
 - Involvement in complaint resolution develops staff ownership, decision-making and engagement.
 - Complaints provide senior staff with essential insight into day-to-day operations allowing them to assess effectiveness and drive a positive complaint handling culture.
 - Good complaint handling promotes a positive landlord and resident relationship
6. It was felt, after consulting with the Council's Complaints Team, that a separate complaints policy was needed as the standards required by the Housing Ombudsman for housing tenant complaints are higher than the Council's complaints standards.
7. To complement the Policy there is a leaflet that will be given to all tenants at tenancy sign-up to ensure the tenant is aware of the complaints process and standards to expect.
8. We will also have to complete an internal self-assessment of our complaints handling performance annually. Following each self-assessment, we must:
 - report the outcome of our self-assessment to elected Members; this will be to the Audit and Standards Committee when standards related matters are considered at the December meetings, commencing in December 2023;
 - publish the outcome of our assessment on our website and make accessible to residents; and
 - include the self-assessment in our annual report to tenants.

Conclusion

9. It is a requirement of the Housing Ombudsman that we have a housing Complaints Handling Policy adopted and we recommend that Members approve the Complaints Handling Policy proposed at Appendix A.

Equalities

10. An equality impact assessment has been completed.

Financial Implications

11. If we are found to be in breach of the Complaints Handling Code, RDC could be prosecuted which is likely to include a significant fine and may impact on future funding bids.

Legal Implications

12. All bodies registered with the Regulator for Social Housing must be in the Ombudsman's jurisdiction by effect of the 1996 Housing Act and 2011 Localism Act. Through having this membership, RDC are held accountable and if we do not follow our complaints handling policy then compensation may be requested by Ombudsman to our tenants.

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:	Joe Powell
e-mail address:	joe.powell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A - RDC Owned Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy Appendix B - OSC Minute Extract – 17 October 2022
Relevant previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

**RDC owned and leased
accommodation complaints handling
policy**

1.0 Introduction

A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents.

The policy applies across housing that is owned or leased by Rother District Council. It does not cover social housing by other Registered Providers but administered by RDC Homemove or complaints about homelessness services.

There are times when we get things wrong and do not meet the standards we aim to achieve. We are open to receive complaints about our service. This policy sets out how we will investigate complaints and our aim to resolve things promptly, fairly and politely, and say sorry when we have got things wrong.

We recognise complaints can tell us a lot about how our service can be improved and we commit to understand and act on both the overall headlines about complaints and the learning from individual cases.

We take all complaints seriously and have developed a complaints procedure (see Appendix 1) to ensure we:

- ensure that lessons learnt from our complaints and are used to inform service improvements
- monitor and check our performance
- have a clear process that we tell people about so that our clients and other stakeholders know what to do when they are not happy with something about our services
- comply with current data protection law.

2.0 Complaints – Key Principles

We will:

- resolve complaints where they arise (locally, informally, quickly), wherever possible through in person meetings, or via the telephone
- receive complaints in any format including written, telephone, text, email and verbally
- make the complaint process easily available to all
- treat all complaints seriously
- deal with complaints as sensitively as possible. Information will only be divulged if it is necessary to the investigation, and with the consent of the complainant
- issue an apology where a complaint is upheld, with an explanation of any action or learning taken because of the complaint

Summary of process (see also the procedure in Appendix 1):

- we will acknowledge the complaint in writing as soon as possible, within a maximum of 5 working days from when received. There will be a lead person to investigate the complaint; the complaint lead will provide a written response to the complainant within a maximum of 10 working days from receipt (if this must take longer, they will let the complainant know)
- any staff members who are the subject of the complaint will be informed of the complaint (and its outcome)

- if the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome they can request a review (this should be requested within 10 days). The complaint will then be escalated to an appropriate manager to review, known as Stage 2
- this is the final phase of RDC's internal process. Responses will be provided in 20 working days from when the request to escalate is received – if this is not possible an explanation and a date provided explaining when the Stage 2 response will be completed. This will not exceed a further 10 working days without good reason
- RDC owned/leased accommodation residents may refer their complaint to the Housing Ombudsman at any stage in the process or once the internal process has been completed, as described above, if they are not satisfied with the outcome
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Complaint-Handling-Code.pdf
- RDC has a complaints register; this is part of our quality assurance processes so we can monitor the number of complaints, their progress and any themes to support service improvements

Matters excluded are as follows:

- the issue giving rise to the complaint occurred over six months ago, other than in exceptional circumstances
- the issue is or has been subject to legal proceedings
- the element of the complaint that relates to an insurance claim
- the complaint has been considered already
- the complaint is being pursued in an unreasonable way

3.0 Complaints Register

This register will be securely stored, electronically, within a central location. This register is accessed by those with responsibility for complaints and for Subject Access Requests. The information held on the register will be minimal but will include brief details of complaints, along with the named lead for the complaint and dates of key progress, learning and outcomes.

4.0 Data Retention

We comply with the Data Protection Act 2018 in relation to keeping records of each complaint we receive. Records relating to each case will be kept for 6 years after which they will securely destroyed.

Appendix 1: Complaints Procedure

1.0 How to raise a complaint

You can raise a complaint by:

- speaking to a member of staff, by telephone or face to face
- writing a letter or email
- asking someone else to raise a complaint on your behalf (we will need permission from you to investigate)

2.0 Stage 1 – what happens when a complaint is raised

The manager for the service will acknowledge your complaint, in writing, no more than 5 working days from receipt, or you may receive an acknowledgement from one of the staff who manage the complaints email system. On most occasions we will contact you to either meet with you in person, or talk to you over the telephone, to resolve your complaint. Where this is not possible or appropriate, we will tell you about the next steps, and who will be leading on the complaint. If we decide not to accept a complaint, a detailed explanation will be provided to explain to you the reasons why the matter is not suitable for the complaints process. You have the right to challenge this decision by raising your complaint with the Housing Ombudsman.

2.1 Discussing your complaint

If a meeting is to be held, it will be with the accommodation manager (or other senior member of staff who will investigate the complaint). The meeting may also be attended by another member of staff to take notes. Any actions will be written by the manager, or the note taker, for you. If you are satisfied with the complaint outcome, then the complaint will be recorded as closed. If you are not satisfied with the outcome then you may ask that your complaint is reviewed by another manager at Stage 2 of the process, in line with the complaints policy which will require further investigation, if needed. Any earlier meetings relating to your complaint will form part of this stage.

2.2 Complaint Investigation

If a full investigation is needed, someone appropriate will be asked to investigate your complaint. This will normally be a manager who is not directly connected to the accommodation scheme. The subject of the complaint i.e. staff member will be informed as to the nature of the complaint that has been made. The investigating manager will look at all evidence from anybody involved in the complaint. They will also talk to the relevant staff involved. They will then write a report, issuing you with a written response, and deciding what actions to put forward.

2.3 Investigation Outcome

You should receive a formal and final written response within 10 working days from receipt of the complaint. The letter will state:

- the nature of the complaint raised
- the nature of the investigation undertaken
- the conclusions reached by the investigating manager, for example whether it is upheld, partially upheld, or we do not uphold each of your points

- what action has been taken to resolve the situation and to avoid such situations reoccurring
- a full apology, if applicable

If you complained about a staff member they will also be informed of the outcome of the complaint, and opportunities to improve e.g. training will be made available. You may not be told of any formal action taken against a member of staff, for data protection reasons.

If a final written response cannot be sent within 10 working days we will notify you, explaining the reasons for the delay to you and when we will provide a final response. We aim to ensure that any extension will not exceed a further 10 days without good reason.

2.4 How to withdraw your complaint

You can inform the investigating manager at any time that you want to withdraw a complaint. This will need to be in writing (letter or email). It may be that despite repeated attempts we are unable to contact you and in this case the Head of Service may deem the complaint is withdrawn and close it.

2.5 Stage 2 – if you are not happy with the outcome of your complaint

If you are not happy with the outcome of the complaint you can request that someone else review your complaint. This must be done within 10 working days and should be done in writing. Your request will be acknowledged within 5 working days and escalated to an appropriate person not connected to the original complaint. We aim to consider complaint reviews within 10 working days. If a final written response cannot be sent within 10 working days we will notify you, explaining the reasons for the delay to you and when we will provide a final response. We aim that any extension will not exceed a further 10 days without good reason. This is the final stage of our internal complaints handling procedure.

2.6 Housing Ombudsman Service

Tenants have the right to access the Housing Ombudsman Service at any point during the complaint process. The Housing Ombudsman can be contacted via email at info@housing-ombudsman.org.uk. Their website is www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk

Minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting – 17 October 2022**OSC22/28. ROTHER DISTRICT COUNCIL OWNED / LEASED
(7) ACCOMMODATION COMPLAINTS HANDLING POLICY**

Members received the report of the Head of Housing and Community which gave details of the Rother District Council Owned/Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy. In 2020, Rother District Council became a Registered Provider of accommodation and thus far, owned 24 units of accommodation and one unit of accommodation that the Council leased and managed. The number of units of accommodation the Council owned and leased was set to rise further as the scale of the Temporary Accommodation Support Scheme and leasing scheme were increased.

The Policy was the first that the Council was statutorily required to have as part of the emerging Social Housing White Paper, which included a range of improvements to the safety and management standards of social housing following the tragic events of Grenfell. A suite of further policies was presently in development as preparations were underway for the Social Housing (Regulation) Bill to progress through its readings in Parliament. These policies would include, but not limited to, a Reasonable Adjustments Policy, Rent Setting Policy, Tenant Involvement Policy, Anti-Social Behaviour Policy, Unacceptable Behaviour Policy and Domestic Abuse Policy.

The Complaints Handling Policy would apply to all activity undertaken by Council staff or contractors that might be involved in property management and support of tenants. The Policy was appended at Appendix A to the report.

There were a range of benefits to be gained from having an effective and efficient complaints policy. After consulting with the Council's Complaints Team, it was felt that a separate complaints policy was needed as the standards required by the Housing Ombudsman for housing tenant complaints were higher than the Council's complaints standards. To complement the Policy, a leaflet that would be given to all tenants at tenancy sign-up to ensure the tenant was aware of the complaints process and standards to expect.

The Council would be required to complete an internal self-assessment of the complaints handling performance annually and report the outcome to Members of the Audit and Standards Committee when standards related matters were considered at the December meetings, commencing in December 2023. The outcome of the assessment would be published on the Council's website and made accessible to residents and the self-assessment would be included in the annual report to tenants.

RESOLVED: That the Rother District Council Owned/Leased Accommodation Complaints Handling Policy be recommended to Cabinet and full Council for adoption.

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	31 October 2022
Title:	Economic Recovery Plan Update
Report of:	Ben Hook
Cabinet Member:	Councillor Bayliss
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To update Members on progress against the Council's Covid Recovery Plan and plan next steps.
Decision Type:	Non-Key
Officer Recommendation(s):	It be RESOLVED: That <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) the report be noted; and 2) work commence on a new Regeneration Strategy for the Council.
Reasons for Recommendations:	Funding associated with COVID-19 recovery has now come to an end.

Introduction

1. In November 2020 Cabinet approved the Council's Economic Recovery Action Plan, setting out the actions that the Council will take to support local economic recovery in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic (Minute CB20/64 refers). This was subsequently adopted by the Council in December 2020.
2. This followed the work of the Economic Recovery Steering Group which was established in June 2020 to consider the impact of COVID-19 on the local economy and agree and recommend a recovery strategy and action plan for Cabinet and full Council approval.
3. The Economic Recovery Plan was further guided by the work Councillor Bayliss undertook in May 2020 in running a series of Zoom meetings with local businesses in the district to better understand where there were gaps in support. 35 businesses took part and offered feedback that supported the planning of the Local Authority Discretionary Grants Fund.
4. A report was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny in October 2021 giving an update on the progress and actions in delivery of the Recovery Plan up to that point. Since then a further 5 months of project detail has been included in the Plan.

Analysis

5. A copy of the Economic Recovery Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1. The Plan sets out six broad ambitions: thinking local, acting local; building skills, creating jobs; fast-forwarding business; better places, fuller lives; cleaner energy, greener transport; and the future is digital.
6. Returns for the Welcome Back funding were submitted by the deadline date of 31 March 2022, with all grant spending defrayed by that date. This final grant deadline marked an end to the COVID-19 recovery funding being used to support the ambitions of the Recovery Plan. No new COVID-19 related funding streams have been realised this financial year.
7. Since October the Government has moved focus away from COVID-19 recovery to a Levelling Up agenda with the launch of grants schemes including; Levelling Up Fund Rounds 1 and 2 and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund which has just been extended to include the Rural England Prosperity Fund.
8. The Economic Recovery Plan is Attached at Appendix 1, the main additional points to note are:

Supporting business:

9. **Rye Fisheries:** A feasibility study was commissioned by Rother District Council (RDC) to firm up a proposal to create a developmental kitchen at the Chapman's business in Rye, supporting local fishermen in the process. This has been completed and highlights the following:
 - Chapman's pledges to take all of the catch that a boat brings in, to provide their fishermen/women with greater financial stability, something that not all fish merchants do.
 - Before Brexit, Chapman's could export this fish efficiently to France and Belgium. However, since Brexit the market has changed, and the value of this catch is lowered due to higher paperwork demands.
 - Chapman's have decided that they want to use the left over catch to make their own soups, stocks, sauces, and ready-made meals. Their proposed project is to install a development kitchen on their premises to make these products onsite. This allows the spare catch that is currently going to waste to be used, and it adds value to this catch.
 - The project will safeguard and create jobs, upskill locals, support the local supply chain and support other work ongoing by Chapman's.
10. **Business Alerts:** RDC through its Communications Team will be launching the new Business Alerts that will provide information direct to businesses. Work will partner the Sussex Chamber of Commerce, Locate East Sussex and Federation of Small Businesses to ensure that opportunities are clearly communicated District wide ensuring support reaches those in need.
11. **Rural Grants:** Through the COVID-19 Rural Grants Scheme we are able to support a number of businesses to expand and increase their offer, train staff and redevelop business plans. This was a one-off grant scheme, however, the drive to support rural business has continued and RDC are currently working with the LGA and consultants Urban Foresight on a rural economy strategy that will assess rural business need including:
 - Sustainability of the traditional land-based and agricultural industries

- Opportunities for diversification and economic growth in an area of 83% AONB status
12. The rural economy is a key growth opportunity and through this work the Council can ascertain what the emerging opportunities are for rural businesses in order to inform future Local Plan and economic regeneration policy.

Supporting events:

13. Welcome Back funding supported the first Bexhill After Dark festival in January 2022. Produced by 18 Hours Ltd in partnership with Arts Council England, Rother District Council, East Sussex Arts Partnership, De La Warr Pavilion and 1066 Country and supported by a wide range of local community organisations. This was the first festival of its kind in Bexhill and featured light installations, illuminated performances and community parades, presenting an inclusive programme of excellent quality art in the off season and was extremely well supported by the local community.
14. Welcome Back Funding supported new events during times of social distancing and the reintroduction of events across the District, some having been postponed for 2 years.

Supporting skills:

15. As part of Ambition 2, RDC worked with Bexhill College on an application to Arts Council England to support 6 graduate artists in the transition from education to work. The application allows subsidised workspace, dedicated one-to-one support from Flatland Projects, community engagement through workshops with local schools and an exhibition opportunity at Beeching Road Studios (BRS). The six artists were selected by the BRS Steering Group and have been working from the studios since June this year. They will be joined by artists in the main studios in the coming weeks.
16. Additional to support given by RDC for the Jobs Fair we were able to offer increased funding for the return event in March 2022 through Welcome Back Funds.

Supporting tourism:

17. 1066 Country Marketing commissioned a report from Blue Sail to review the impacts of 1066 Country Marketing on supporting tourism. The report details the effects of the pandemic on the sector and the measures that were taken to support businesses. The summary infographic is attached at Appendix 2.

New funding:

18. Since April 2022 RDC have applied for the allocated UKSPF grant of £1,000,000 over 3 years. A partnership group has been established, chaired by Councillor Oliver, to oversee the spend and RDC has submitted an Investment Plan for the Rother district. We are awaiting a decision.
19. A Round 2 Levelling Up Fund application has been submitted expanding on Rother's Round 1 application to include a community and leisure hub in Sidley. We await the result of the £19,192,000 bid entitled Bexhill; culture, community and skills.

Next Steps

20. In light of the return to work post COVID-19, the Economic Recovery Plan has served its purpose in guiding our work through this time of crisis. Rother's last Economic Regeneration Strategy *Innovation, Inclusion, Inspiration* ran from 2010-2015. This now needs to be reviewed and refreshed following on from the Economic Recovery Plan.

Conclusion

21. That the Economic Recovery Plan work is now drawn to a close and a new regeneration strategy and action plan be developed to guide the next 5 years of work.

Other Implications	Applies?	Other Implications	Applies?
Human Rights	No	Equalities and Diversity	No
Crime and Disorder	No	Consultation	No
Environmental	No	Access to Information	No
Risk Management	No	Exempt from publication	No
Risk Management	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:	
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB20/64
Background Papers:	N/A
Reference Documents:	N/A

Rother District Economic Recovery Action Plan Priority areas

General:

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

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

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

East Sussex Reset: Thinking local, acting local

Objectives:

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

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Be ready for a second / further waves of COVID-19 and possible future local lockdowns.	<p>Much of the lockdown infrastructure has now been put in place and can be picked up again should further waves occur.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of local infection rates. • Communications with Director of Health on local lockdown protocol. • Engage directly with businesses. • Be clear with any further public messaging via communications team. • Work with Environmental Health on guidance and possible additional prevention support. 	Continuous from now.	Speedy decisions to ensure public safety.	<p>2 x Covid information officers paid for through the Reopening the High Streets Safely funding worked with businesses to ensure they were compliant with Covid restrictions and guidelines. We continue to employ 1 Covid officer with the Welcome Back Funding. During lockdown the officers also worked with specific sectors: nursery and preschools / garden centres / churches / car washing to help through some of the more grey areas.</p> <p>Cabinet (6th Sept 21) agreed Additional Restrictions Grant of</p>

				£554,531 to be administered through Community Grants Panel.
Help promote training from external providers.	Direct information through the RDC website and social media platforms. Brief newly appointed communication officers to supply up to date information to local businesses.	Started and will be ongoing.	Local businesses accessing recovery support.	Let's Do Business have run a series of social media online workshops. Firstly, funded through CHART which limited engagement to Bexhill Central and Sidley but now with Welcome Back these have opened up to the whole of Rother District.
Push for increased capacity at the Business East Sussex (BES) Growth Hub	Work with other Districts and Boroughs to support additional funding for Growth Hub expansion. Signpost more local businesses to Growth Hub for bespoke advice. Be clear on Brexit in readiness for January 2021.	Already flagged as an issue and additional staff employed.	More capacity to support businesses.	Brexit Officer was employed for changes from 1 st January 2021 as difficulties still remained around a lack of detail of the changes that came into play on the 1 st Jan. Env Health worked directly with Rye Fisheries to ensure supply chains were unbroken and are continuing to do this placing additional ongoing demands on Env Health.
Support businesses to reopen and trade whilst conforming to government guidelines on social distancing and safety measures.	Employ two communications officers (six month contracts) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor business feedback • Survey broadband speeds 	Started 1 st October until 19 th July.	Businesses are confident in their approach.	Feedback from the Bexhill Christmas Shop Local campaign Appendix 2 identified a need for driving traffic online which resulted in the online training delivered by Let's Do Business (below). RDC ran 2 customer confidence surveys (Nov 2020 and June 2021) -second survey showed a small increase in confidence and a small decrease in concern when visiting the high street. Points to note: 57% of respondents had increased how much they shop online. There was a 23% increase

				<p>from 2020 on those returning for leisure and social purposes. Social media campaign to support coming out of lockdown on 19th July.</p> <p>Monitoring by RDC officers on number of shops in Bexhill, Battle and Rye reopening after Covid.</p>
<p>Work with Locate East Sussex to match premises to businesses relocating to Rother.</p>	<p>Propose to sponsors board research project to identify vacant buildings.</p> <p>Work with Locate to start discussion with leisure operators.</p>		<p>Maximise opportunity for inward investment.</p>	<p>Monthly reports received from Locate throughout Covid tracking business movement.</p> <p>New Director of Locate East Sussex to revise focus areas – specifically North East Bexhill. The demand for larger industrial units is growing.</p> <p>Marketing team at Locate working with RDC and Bexhill College on the Beeching Road Studios project.</p>
<p>Promote the 'Better Business for All' Toolkit on the Sussex Chambers of Commerce website</p>	<p>Toolkit adapted for local use - led by BES.</p>	<p>Continual promotion</p>		<p>Done</p>
<p>Help deliver government recovery grants</p>	<p>Additional funding to business through the Empty Business Property grant: In the district there are vacant retail, industrial and other commercial premises that are a wasted resource to the local economy. To encourage new businesses or business expansion to the area one-off grants were provided open to new tenants. The maximum grant £20,000.</p> <p>Additional grant for Rural Businesses: Rother has a significant rural economy and due to a number of</p>			<p>Through</p> <p>6th Oct: £26,305,750 paid out to 2312 businesses.</p> <p>28th Jan: Since Rother entered Tier 4 we have paid £5,760,493.58 in support to closed businesses.</p> <p>Rural Grants paid out: £299,750 and Empty Business Rates Grant paid out £147,000</p>

	<p>factors, many are struggling to remain viable, especially through difficulties in recruitment. Grants were available to those businesses incurring additional costs to remain operational. The maximum grant £30,000.</p>			In total £45.5m paid out in grants for Covid recovery since March 2020.
<p>A full breakdown of Covid grants can be found at the end of this document.</p>				
Rural Business Development Grants				
Robertsbridge Children Services	£30,000	Day nursery		
Oastbrook Estate Ltd	£30,000	Vineyard		
Stonelynk Organics	£30,000	Market Garden		
Mantel Farm Ltd	£30,000	Shop/ Garden farming		
Battle Brewery	£22,750	Brewery		
Carr Taylor Wines Ltd	£27,000	Viticulture		
Amadeus Performance Equipment Ltd	£30,000	Performance equipment		
Resin Bonded Slab Co. Ltd	£30,000	Manufacturing		
Mr Gregory Grabowski	£10,000	Motorcycle workshop / sales		
Little Gate Farm	£30,000	Learning disability support		
On Tap Networks Ltd	£30,000	Software development		
TOTAL	£299,750			
Empty Business Grants				
Battle Organic Cider Ltd	£12,000	Cider making		
Cinnamon Café / Syrian Lounge	£20,000	Café		
Olive Pine Accountancy Ltd	£20,000	Accountancy		
Qooking Table	£12,000	Retail		
Monarch Spices Ltd	£11,000	Spice retail		
South West Smile Centre Ltd (waiting on lease)	£20,000	Dental surgery		
Ms Marsha Dupont-Ellis	£12,000	Design & Made retail		
Maltbys Property Management Ltd	£20,000	Estate agent		
Common Clay	£12,000	Ceramics studio		
TOTAL	£139,000			

AMBITION 2: Retain our skills infrastructure, support employment, build workforce resilience

East Sussex Reset: Building skills, creating jobs

Objectives:

- Expand our local skills base to increase employment opportunity
- Support young people into training and work
- Increase digital inclusion and digital skills

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Future proofing with digital skills development.	Work with businesses who wish to develop or enhance their online presence. Work with James Wilkinson Digital Skills Partnership Co-ordinator to see what can be offered in Rother.	Started and will continue	Digital awareness and increased skills. Retail moving online.	As per training update above. Most requests from business for support was around growing business on line effectively. An example of this done well is seen in The KiteSurf Centre case study Appendix 3 . RDC continues to offer training in this area through Let's Do Business. RDC has also signposted to external training providers through Social Media posts and emails to Town / Parish Councils and Chambers.
Work with LEP sub groups to develop sector skills funding bids.	Cultural bid being developed around high streets. Be mindful of Shared Prosperity Fund.	October deadline on SSF round 2 Poss January announcement	Maximise grant funding into the District.	LEP funded funds: £2m Skills Covid Recovery Fund / £2.4m Covid Business Skills Fund RDC has signposted these to businesses £17m Levelling Up Fund bid submitted June 2021 for dlwp capital project, - awaiting result. Cultural Development Fund bid EOI submitted July 2021 – not invited to next stage. UK Community Renewal Fund (precursor to Shared Prosperity)

				– administered by ESCC, 6 projects with Rother element passed for funding with total UKCRF ask of £2.5m.
Provision of affordable childcare	RDC supporting the provision of affordable childcare across the District to ensure parity of access to work.	To be picked up in the BTSSG meeting as a starting point	Equitable increase in employment by gender.	RDC has facilitated the reinstatement of nursery provision at Sidley Children's Centre by taking a sublease from ESCC.
Opportunities for young people.	<p>Work with Skills East Sussex and intermediary organisations: Sussex Chambers / Artswork, using the Kickstart scheme to develop six month job placements for young people. Encourage local businesses to get involved. Encourage local young people to apply.</p> <p>Encourage creative pathways through partnerships established in the Beeching Road studios.</p>	<p>October start applications</p> <p>Workspace from Spring 2021</p>	<p>Clear career pathways in creative industries.</p>	<p>Local business and organisations using the Kickstarter programme including Optivo / The Pelham / local schools. MP endorsement of scheme Sept 2020. Kickstarter scheme closed for new applications Jan 2022.</p> <p>Creative pathways bid to Arts Council successful (£50k) able to subsidise 6 young graduate placements when Beeching Road Studios open. Artists selected through an open application process and working at BRS since June 2022. Partnership between RDC and UCL (Slade School of Fine Art) to enable this pathway to develop. DLWP have included this programme into their NPO bid.</p>
Local Skills and Employment Plans (LSEP) alongside construction projects.	Implement RDC planning policy changes that introduce a standardised requirement for Section 106 to support skills and employment plans. Encourage pathways into construction with on the job training. Increase number of CSCS (construction skills certification scheme) cards.	Currently working with RDC Planning Policy on inclusion in	Standardised method for S106 for employment and skills.	<p>Local Skills & Employment Plan (LSEP) in delivery: Bovis/Vistry at Worsham Farm Rosewood Park, Little Common</p> <p>LSEP Confirmed: Blackfriars, Battle</p>

	Increase number of work placements and apprenticeships offered. Work with our most local communities first.	next Local Plan.	Local construction opportunities improved through local development.	Bexhill High School site Former Thomas Peacock school, Rye
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AMBITION 3: Re-start the leisure, hospitality, tourism, retail and cultural economy to get people back into work

East Sussex Reset: Fast-forwarding business

Objectives:

- Support jobs in these sectors
- Help freelancers to access advice, funding and guidance
- Maintain the status of the District as a visitor attraction through safe and sustainable tourism
- Sector skills development

Be mindful of local community health and wellbeing as key to growth and prosperity

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
<p>Encourage and promote use of the site mark: We're Good to Go to show businesses are COVID compliant.</p> <p>Work with the De La Warr Pavilion (DLWP) to re-promote Bexhill as a visitor destination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • https://www.visit1066country.com/visitor-information/were-good-to-go • RDC social media • Work with DLWP for safe reopening of public events with consideration for staff and public. • Ensure DLWP avoids further lock-down by closely managing the amount of activity offered. 	<p>1-2 months</p> <p>Aug-March</p>	<p>Businesses using kitemark as standard at</p> <p>Staff brought off furlough. Some small amount of risk assessed activity. Building up to events re-starting in March 2021.</p>	<p>21/07/2020 = 59 signed up</p> <p>1066 Country Marketing provided members with information about preparing to re-open, clarity on an organisation's legal responsibilities on Covid compliance, and encouraged businesses to participate in initiatives such as Know Before You Go and We're Good To Go, designed to encourage visitors to return to destinations safely.</p> <p>Nov 2020: light show to thank the NHS – Social reach 10,000. May 2021: England's Creative Coast, £1.3m cultural tourism project to increase coastal tourists</p>

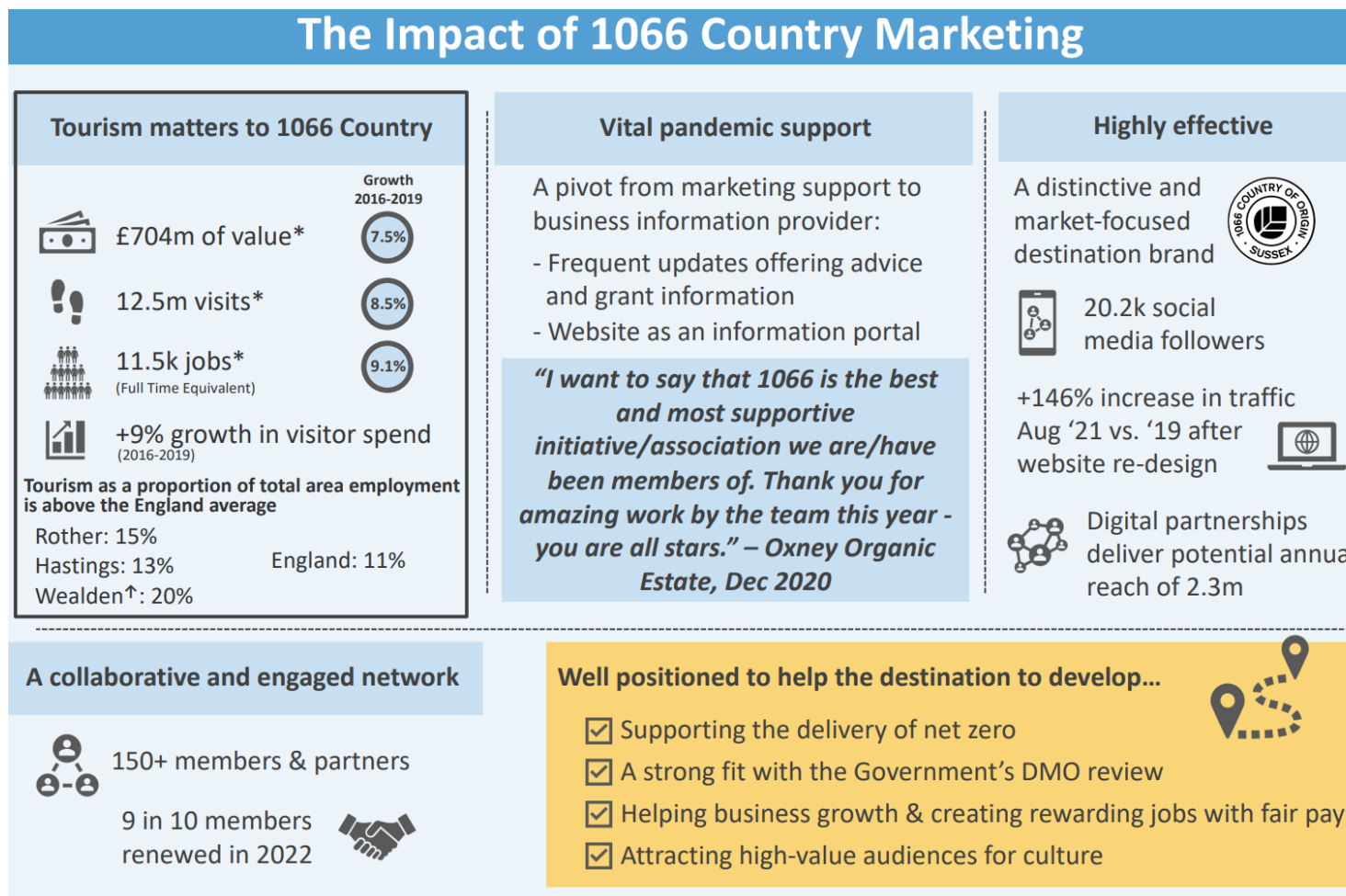
				by 3%. Dlwip one of 7 venues involved. Summer 2021: Sea Art campaign with Dlwip and Towner Gallery
Event strategy paper from Overview and Scrutiny Committee to November Cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolve events budget to towns and roll over unallocated funds from 2020. Towns (Rye & Bexhill) to programme own events in 2021. 	November Cabinet Implement by spring 2021 onwards	Events budget devolved to Rye & Bexhill (Battle already devolved)	Done
Christmas Campaign to encourage people to shop in local high streets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If viable in line with Government social distancing measures - work with 18 Hours for a 'Streets of' feel using the 2019/20 events pot. Work with Town Councils to animate high streets for Christmas. Website to direct traffic. Christmas markets (local suppliers). 	2-3 months	Officer lead in partnership with 18 Hours and town/parish councils.	<p>Cllr led 'Shop Local' campaign Christmas 2020, posters and social media. Different levels of success in each town.</p> <p>Many events not able to happen Christmas 2020 due to Tier 4 restrictions.</p> <p>Autumn / Winter 2021 events supported through Welcome Back Fund: Rye Jazz / Rye Town App/ Bexhill Winter Festival</p>
Enhancing the 1066Walk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver the project as detailed and agreed in the EAFRD funding application. 	By summer 2021	Renewed attention on the 1066 walk.	<p>Launch events Rye / Battle / Pevensey 17th Sept 2021 - 100 pieces of new infrastructure: way markers / signages / benches / sculptures: 12 left to install. National publicity being generated for the project.</p> <p>https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/best-uk-travel-staycation-2021-b1778681.html</p> <p>Try a new type of glamping and soak up the rich history of the Sussex countryside (thescottishsun.co.uk)</p>

				All returns completed and grant received. All pieces of infrastructure now in place. New feature in the August BBC Countryfile Magazine about the 1066 Walk.
Pudding and Pathways Marketing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Led by 18 Hours event company this project supports the RDC led 1066 pathways project by marketing businesses along the route. Discussion with restaurants and eateries along the route. Ensure all participating businesses support the 'Were Good to Go' kitemark. 	Spring 2021	Direct support to local business on 1066walk.	A series of eateries along the 1066 Walk route have embraced this project with themed 1066 Puddings, we hope this grows led by them, with full 1066 Country support and would hope we can help support a long term vision for this new festival, supporting rural business economy and tourism.
Support events spring / summer 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call out to promoters early 2021 – work with neighbourhood services to manage expectations with regards use of RDC land. Cabinet approval for Section 106 funds to support railways station poster campaign. 	January 2021	Events budget	<p>Events started again from 19th July onwards with Streets of Battle and Bexhill.</p> <p>On line programme of support for event programmers delivered by 18 Hours April 2021 – Feb 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event Concept Development Covid Safe Events Perfect Programming Budget, Finance & Fundraising Marketing & Audience Dev Diversity & Integration Events, Environment & Sustainability Monitoring & Evaluation <p>Railway station campaign run by 1066 Country Spring/ Summer 2022.</p>

Re-start of live performances / cinemas / outdoor markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support events with licences as necessary and use of RDC spaces. 		Promote the area with live events	<p>See above re events programme and budget support. Use of RDC land to support the following events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bexhill 100 Static Car Show Bexhill Regatta Bowls Tournament Made in Bexhill Summer Fair Little Lily Harley Bexhill Rotary Club Scrapheap Challenge Shaw's Fair, Rye Bexhill 100 <p>Summer 2022 usual programme of events including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bexfest Rye Jazz Christmas Capers: Robertsbridge Winter Wonderland: Rye International Composers Festival
Review of tourism businesses at the end of the summer season	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with 1066 Country on a member's survey to understand where tourism businesses find themselves at the end of the season. 	November 2020	Understand how businesses are likely to fare over winter.	<p>1066 Country Covid related surveys of members. 1066 Country Covid Recovery Plan.</p> <p>Summer 2022: 1066 Country Marketing commissioned a report from Blue Sail to review the impacts of 1066 Country Marketing on supporting tourism.</p>

Promote Julie's Bicycle accreditation to creative businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Certification scheme, Creative Green, is the recognised benchmark for sustainability achievement within the creative industries. 		Ensure environmental impact is considered in adaptation strategies.	Ongoing working with new environmental officer. All events now encourages to consider how they deliver in a sustainable manner.
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Summary infographic of post Covid report for 1066 Country Marketing:



AMBITION 4: Adapt and improve places				
East Sussex Reset: Better places, fuller lives				
Objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support high street changes and adaptation • Create safe social spaces • Maintain strong community led change working with community leaders and the voluntary sector 				
Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Monitor the impact of the temporary road changes made by ESCC under the Emergency Active Transport Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footfall counts • Business interviews • Local surveys 	Six months	Have a clear understanding to the impact of the scheme	ESCC yet to evaluate.
Bexhill Town Centre strategy development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appoint Resident Representatives. • Bexhill Town Centre SG to relook at consultant brief and appoint consultant to undertake work. • Share the learning from this piece of work with other Town Centres. 	Interviews September 1 SG meeting September 29	Resident voice on the SG Consider changes in High Street post COVID.	Resident representatives now appointed to BTCSG. Cabinet agreed remaining Section 106 funds to be allocated to projects by the Town Centre SG, supporting refurbishment of Devonshire Sq toilets / railway footbridge mural project. With the formation of Bexhill Town Council, it is proposed that the Town Council oversee the future of the Bexhill Town Centre Steering Group - discussions are underway.
Reopening the High Streets Safely (RHSS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shop local banners for Bexhill / Film and social media campaign in Rye / Banners and bags for Battle. • Employment of 2 x communications officers. • Monitor impact on high streets through footfall. 	Waiting on grant Start 1 October	Towns highlight they are open for business message. Bespoke guidance for businesses across Rother.	RHSS funding was followed by Welcome Back funding which has been allocated in the following way: 1x Covid Information Officer retained / Work on road options at Camber Sands during peak season / additional bins and collection across the summer / support for off season events to

				drive footfall / training for businesses.
Push for investment in public realm to improve town centre environments	Keep aware of funding streams as they become available and make bids as and when appropriate.	Ongoing	Grant funding investment into Rother.	<p>Levelling Up Round 2 application for dlwp includes public realm work around the building. New community hub in Sidley will public sport facilities.</p> <p>ESCC planned improvements to London Road Corridor now incorporated into Town Hall Renaissance scheme.</p>
Work with communities to maximise the benefits of rural areas of Rother.	Work with Environment Officer to assess the viability of improving places' aesthetics through greening and rewilding, with associated wellbeing and health benefits as well as benefits for the wildlife.	Spring 2021		1066 Country Walk development. Work with Neighbourhood services and Comms Team to encourage traffic away from honey pots (Camber) to visit rural areas of Rother.

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AMBITION 5: Expand low carbon transport and energy infrastructure

East Sussex Reset: Cleaner energy, greener transport

Objectives:

- Be aware in all projects of the RDC carbon neutral target by 2030

Encourage clean methods of transport

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	Update
Local Growth Fund (LGF) walking and cycling infrastructure packages in growth corridor areas.	Work with ESCC's 2020/21 and emerging 2021/22 capital programme for local transport improvements, supporting design and delivery of LGF funded walking and cycling packages for Bexhill.	12 months+		
Match economic goals with environment objectives already specified in the RDC environment strategy.	RDC Environment Strategy 2020-2030 (currently in draft) https://www.rother.gov.uk/consultations/draft-environment-strategy/		Aligning this action plan and subsequent regeneration strategies with	Strategy adopted September 2020; awaiting subsequent action plan Working with officers to embed regeneration planning with environmental strategy.

			the RDC Environment Strategy.	Inclusion of green business grant scheme in the UKSPF Investment Plan.
Reduce unnecessary commuting.	Supporting people to work at home bring life back into local village communities and reducing carbon emissions.		People supported to work from home.	It is likely that Covid-19 will have a lasting impact on commuting patterns due to the increase in home working. Support hybrid working. DLWP has facilities.
Grow public transport network.	Lobby for continued, improved public transport service.		Public transport as a viable option across Rother.	
Local Plan	Work with officers to highlight areas where carbon neutral areas of economic growth could feed into the Local Plan.		All future growth is considered for its environmental impact.	Continue to work with planning.

AMBITION 6: Capitalise on digital connectivity

East Sussex Reset: The future is digital

Objectives:

- Embrace the new digital landscape and use it to best advantage
- Ensure our communities; businesses and residents, are digitally skilled
- Work for digital access to all areas of the District

Action	Plan	Timeframe	Outcome	
Support push for 100% ultrafast broadband cover for the area	<p>Promote the government Gigabit voucher scheme (rural premises with broadband speeds of less than 100Mbps can use vouchers £1,500 per home and up to £3,500 for each small SME to support the cost of installing new fast and reliable connections for those who meet the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing broadband speeds are less than 100Mbps 	Scheme runs until end March 2021 – then being relaunched.	Communities encouraged to collaborate and apply to the scheme.	The Scheme has been promoted through Parish councils to encourage sign up. Sign up in Robertsbridge and Sedlescombe. Cllr case study of Russett Farm application to the scheme attached Appendix 4 . Case study circulated to business through Locate East Sussex, internal comms team.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A gigabit capable network isn't likely to be built to that area commercially in the near future • There is no government-funded contract planned or in place to improve the network already 			<p>Totals connected: Rural Gigabit Connectivity scheme: 33 connected Gigabit Voucher Scheme (urban): 5 UK Gigabit Voucher: 28</p> <p>To continue to support digital development in the form of skills with digital being included in Rother's UKSPF Investment Plan.</p>
Support push for 5G rollout across the District	With 5G now available in Brighton and Eastbourne we will continue to lobby for roll out in Bexhill. Look for government schemes to be involved with 5G opportunities.		5G roll out in Rother	Liaising with County team who are leading on this.

Covid Grants Breakdown

All those highlighted in yellow were discretionary schemes.

<i>Scheme Name</i>	<i>Number Of Grants Paid</i>	<i>Value Of Grants Paid</i>
Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant	2179	£24,850,000.00
ARG Discretionary Omicron grant- (Non Business Rated Premises)	6	£16,002.00
Christmas Support Payment for wet-led pubs	34	£34,000.00
Grant for Closed Businesses RV £15,000 and under - 02/12/2020 to 15/12/2020	10	£6,670.00
Grant for Closed Businesses RV £15,001 to £50,999 - 02/12/2020 to 15/12/2020	8	£8,000.00
Tier 4 and National Lockdown Restriction Grant (£15,000 and under) - 19/12/2020 to 31/03/2021	855	£7,583,032.00
Tier 4 and National Lockdown Restriction Grant (RV £15,001 to £50,999) - 19/12/2020 to 31/03/2021	143	£1,907,663.89
Tier 4 and National Lockdown Restriction Grant (RV £51,000 and over) - 19/12/2020 to 31/03/2021	33	£656,455.19
Open Businesses affected by Tier 2 restrictions for the period 02/12/20 - 18/12/20. RV below 15,000	101	£57,274.07
Open Businesses affected by Tier 2 restrictions (02/12/20 – 18/12/20) RV £15,001 - £51,000	43	£36,550.00
Open Businesses affected by Tier 2 restrictions (02/12/20 – 18/12/20) RV over £51,000	9	£11,475.00
Open B&B and other Non-Business Rated Self-Contained Holiday Accommodation (02/12/20 – 18/12/20)	18	£10,207.26
Restart Grant 1 - Non Essential Retail - RV £15,000 & Under	233	£621,411.00
Restart Grant 2 - Hospitality, Accommodation, Leisure, Personal Care and Gyms - RV £51,000 & Over	26	£468,000.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Second Payment Cycle) 16/02/21 - 31/03/21(RV £15,001 to £50,999)	3	£9,429.00
Restart Grant 1 - Non Essential Retail - RV £15,001 to £50,999	31	£124,000.00
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Second Payment Cycle) 16/02/21 - 31/03/21 - RV £15,000 and under	12	£25,152.00
Restart Grant 1 - Non Essential Retail - RV £51,000 & Over	4	£24,000.00
Restart Grant 2 - Hospitality, Accommodation, Leisure, Personal Care and Gyms - RV £15,000 & Under	457	£3,650,667.00
Restart Grant 2 - Hospitality, Accommodation, Leisure, Personal Care and Gyms - RV £15,001 - £50,999	102	£1,224,000.00
A Restart Grant Top Up for Hospitality businesses affected by extended restrictions	172	£236,386.48
Shop Front Grant (occupied premises)	12	£17,445.00
Business Interruption Grant	25	£38,657.00
Shop Front Grant (unoccupied premises)	1	£1,500.00
Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant - RV £15,001 - £50,999	76	£304,000.00
Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant - RV £15,000 & Under	248	£661,416.00
Omicron Hospitality & Leisure Grant - RV £51,000 and over	16	£96,000.00
National Restrictions Grant RV £15,001 to £50,999 - November 2020	126	£252,000.00
National Restrictions Grant RV £51,000 and over - November 2020	27	£81,000.00
Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Suppliers	13	£134,500.00
National Restrictions Grant RV £15,000 and under - November 2020	666	£888,444.00
Discretionary Restart Grant for Home Based in person businesses	47	£23,500.00

Discretionary Scheme - Shared Accommodation(2nd National Lockdown)	19	£25,346.00
Discretionary Restart Grant Scheme - Shared Accommodation	45	£120,015.00
Discretionary Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grant (shared Spaces)	13	£170,000.00
Open Businesses and Charities that have been severely impacted by restrictions. RV Below £15,000	11	£53,976.23
Discretionary Scheme - Arts and Entertainment (2nd National Lockdown)	31	£41,354.00
Business in industry mandated to close with no business premises. (Home Based)	18	£14,400.00
Rural Business Development Grant	11	£299,750.00
Cultural and Tourist Venues	3	£43,000.00
Discretionary Scheme - B&Bs (2nd National Lockdown)	5	£6,670.00
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Discretionary Scheme - Shared Accommodation 19/12/20 - 31/03/21	55	£269,881.15
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Discretionary Scheme - Supply Chain 19/12/20 - 31/03/21	101	£500,500.63
Discretionary Restart Grant Scheme - Supply Chain	33	£96,010.00
Discretionary Restart Grant Scheme - Events	17	£136,000.00
Self Contained Holiday Accommodation	22	£103,750.00
Charities	5	£70,000.00
Open Businesses and Charities that have been severely impacted by restrictions. RV 15.001- 50.999	1	£7,357.28
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Discretionary Scheme - B&Bs 19/12/20 - 31/03/21	14	£68,697.02
Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers	6	£6,000.00
Staff Training and Development Grant	29	£171,167.80
Bed and Breakfast	4	£28,000.00
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Discretionary Scheme - Arts and Entertainment 19/12/20 - 31/03/21	41	£201,184.13
Discretionary Scheme Self Contained Holiday Accommodation (2nd National Lockdown)	21	£28,014.00
Other Businesses	61	£813,500.00
Entertainment Industries	11	£98,000.00
Empty Business Rated Property Grant	9	£139,000.00
ARG Discretionary Omicron grant- (Business Rated Premises)	13	£34,671.00
ARG for businesses eligible for National Support Grants that did not apply for them	7	£51,409.08
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Grant for Businesses mandated to close with no business premises.	94	£274,942.19
Discretionary Restart Grant Scheme- Holiday Accommodation	51	£408,000.00
Discretionary Scheme - Supply Chain (2nd National Lockdown)	35	£46,690.00
Tier 4 and National Restrictions Discretionary Scheme- Holiday Accommodation 19/12/20 - 31/03/21	38	£186,463.34
	6560	£48,572,585.74

The Impact of 1066 Country Marketing

Tourism matters to 1066 Country



£704m of value*

Growth
2016-2019



12.5m visits*



11.5k jobs*
(Full Time Equivalent)



+9% growth in visitor spend
(2016-2019)

Tourism as a proportion of total area employment
is above the England average

Rother: 15%

Hastings: 13%

England: 11%

Wealden[↑]: 20%

Vital pandemic support

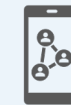
A pivot from marketing support to
business information provider:

- Frequent updates offering advice
and grant information
- Website as an information portal

***"I want to say that 1066 is the best
and most supportive
initiative/association we are/have
been members of. Thank you for
amazing work by the team this year -
you are all stars." – Oxney Organic
Estate, Dec 2020***

Highly effective

A distinctive and
market-focused
destination brand



20.2k social
media followers

+146% increase in traffic
Aug '21 vs. '19 after
website re-design



Digital partnerships
deliver potential annual
reach of 2.3m

A collaborative and engaged network



150+ members & partners

9 in 10 members
renewed in 2022



Well positioned to help the destination to develop...

- ✓ Supporting the delivery of net zero
- ✓ A strong fit with the Government's DMO review
- ✓ Helping business growth & creating rewarding jobs with fair pay
- ✓ Attracting high-value audiences for culture



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Rother District Council

Report to: Cabinet

Date: 31 October 2022

Title: Section 106 funds to support Community Led Housing – Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill

Report of: Joe Powell, Head of Housing and Community Services

Cabinet Member: Councillor T. Byrne

Ward(s): Bexhill St Stephens

Purpose of Report: To approve the allocation of s106 funds to facilitate the development of affordable housing

Decision Type: Key Decision

Officer

Recommendation(s): **Recommendation to COUNCIL:** That subject to 1) and 2) below the Capital Funding programme to be updated accordingly; **AND**

It be **RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) a grant of £200,000 to Bexhill Community Land Trust be approved from the S106 Affordable Housing Funding for the delivery of six affordable homes at Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill, match funding funds already secured by the Community Land Trust; and
- 2) the Head of Housing and Community Services be granted delegated authority to agree the final terms of grant in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Housing and Homes.

Reasons for Recommendations: To increase the supply of affordable housing. The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (HH&RSS) identifies an objective of delivering affordable community led housing (1.2) under priority one: 'Increasing the supply of housing'. The Corporate Plan commits to increase affordable housing, to deliver 400 affordable rented homes across the district and use of council owned sites to bring Rother above a 5-year land supply by end 2023.

Introduction

1. This report makes a request to use Section 106 (S106) funds received by the Council through developer contributions that are ringfenced for affordable housing development. The funds requested will facilitate the delivery of new affordable housing provision, via a community led housing (CLH) scheme in Bexhill, which is also utilising a Council-owned site at Cemetery Lodge.
2. The development is being led by Bexhill Community Land Trust (BCLT). Community land trusts (CLTs) are democratic, non-profit organisations that own and develop land for the benefit of the community. They typically provide

affordable homes, community gardens, civic buildings, pubs, shops, shared workspace, energy schemes and conservation landscapes. BCLT aim to help Bexhill residents' access affordable homes in perpetuity so that they help create vibrant communities with access to educational, recreational and job opportunities

3. In seeking approval, officers have considered alternative funding options, including the allocation of the remaining Rother Community Housing Fund (CHF) grant, that is ring-fenced to enable a pipeline of CLH schemes in Rother, as explained later in this report. Use of the remaining CHF grant on this scheme would exhaust the CHF completely, and mean we are not able to support any further projects for community-led housing or exception sites.
4. The planned development of the Cemetery Lodge site for affordable community-led housing for local people has been long established and forms a significant project included in the Council's Community Led Housing Programme. Members have received annual updates on this programme, most recently in September 2021 (CB21/31) and through the annual Housing Homelessness and Rough Strategy Review 2019-2024 (HH&RSS).

S106 Affordable Housing Payments

5. The Council currently holds £377,797.49 in S106 planning contributions (or 'commuted sums') paid by developers instead of providing onsite affordable housing. For example, commuted sums are negotiated when the affordable housing planning policy does not round up to a whole house or flat. This funding is ringfenced to facilitate the development of new affordable housing provision in Rother.
6. Although there are no time limits attached to any of the payments currently held, with the oldest payment received in October 2018, there is nevertheless an expectation these funds are allocated within a reasonable timescale. Typically, these funds have been used to support viability gaps on registered provider housing schemes and to support delivery of small schemes including delivery of the former rural exception site programme; see Figure 1 below for further details of previous S106/commuted housing allocations. These payments have tended to be made in rural areas, partly as they have supported our exception site programme and due to site viability issues in rural areas.

Site	Parish/Ward	Year	Number of homes	Amount spent
Tresco House	Old Town & Worsham	2008	14	245,000
Udimore Road	Rye	2009	54	130,000
Hollenden House	Bexhill Central	2009	42	500,000
Dixter Lane	Northiam	2011	8	120,000
Hop Gardens	Staplecross	2012	8	50,000
The Orangery	Sidley	2014	58	295,000
Morris Close	Burwash	2015	10	65,000
Dairy Close	Hurst Green	2015	10	65,000
Ostlers Field	Brede	2016	13	150,000

The Maltings	Peasmarsh	2018	36	133,000
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Figure 1 - previous S106/commuted housing allocations

Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill

7. Capital funding totalling £200,000 is needed to enable BCLT to deliver the new build and refurbishment scheme of Cemetery Lodge, Bexhill and provide six new affordable homes for local people of Bexhill, as per planning application RR/2022/1233/P. It is proposed that £200,000 of the above S106 affordable housing allocation be granted to deliver this scheme.
8. This sum is required to support the considerable refurbishment costs of retaining the lodge as part of any future scheme, based on initial surveys of the building and the expertise of the Sussex Community Housing Hub (SCHH). The proposed funding streams for the scheme are set out below. All funding has been secured and agreed in principle with lenders (subject to this grant) supported by the SCHH. Any funding agreement between the Council and BCLT will be made subject to BCLT being able to demonstrate having secured the remaining funds required to deliver the whole scheme.

RDC s106/Commuted Sums	£200,000
RDC Community Housing Revenue fund (Match funding provided by HE in 2020) (received)	£11,017
Homes England Community Housing Fund (received)	£109,323
Bexhill CLT Loan	£904,814
Total funding	£1,225,154

9. Subject to planning approval (expected in November 2022) and final terms of sale of the site to BCLT (CB21/31), Cemetery Lodge will now progress to the development phase where other funding options have been established. The current indicative programme for delivery is shown below:

Cemetery Lodge	
Pre Planning Phase	Quarter 4 - 2021 / 2022
Planning Application Submission	Quarter 1 - 2022 / 2023
Start On Site	Quarter 4 - 2022 / 2023
Practical Completion	Quarter 3 - 2023 / 2024

Community Led Housing Programme

10. Nationally, funding of the community led sector remains very uncertain. There is currently no new CHF to replace the former scheme and no sign as yet, of any renewal under the new Government administration; meaning current and new CLH schemes are at risk of being aborted at critical pre-development stage. As such, Local Authority support for both revenue and capital funds, and in any form, is critical for CLH projects to be able to progress.

11. While it is recognised there are enough CHF funds remaining to deliver this scheme (total £203,200.28), this would mean there is no funding left to support smaller revenue bids on future CLH schemes, where funding is most needed. A depletion of CLH funds may undermine our Community Led Housing Programme and devalue our service level agreement with the SCHH by reducing our shared ability to achieve agreed performance indicators included in the HH&RSS. A full breakdown of the CHF allocations to date are summarised at Appendix A.

Conclusion

12. The affordable housing S106 budget currently remains unallocated and is recommended that further investment in the CLH programme and the Cemetery Lodge site offers the best opportunity to deliver new affordable housing provision that is driven locally, and accordance with our housing policy and corporate priorities.
13. Officers propose £200,000 of grant funding to BCLT from Council S106 Affordable Housing Fund to ensure BCLT have the remaining capital finance needed to progress this scheme to deliver six much needed affordable homes.
14. The Council's Corporate Plan sets out that 400 homes for Affordable Rent will be delivered during the plan period. This small development site is a good opportunity to move further towards meeting this ambitious target. As the development climate becomes increasingly challenging and proposed national planning reforms potentially reduce the provision of affordable housing, it is important that opportunities within the Council's control are fully realised.

Financial Implications

15. The Council is required to use S106 funding ringfenced for affordable housing through developer contributions for the purposes of delivering new affordable housing in Rother. Failing to use this fund could risk the funding being withdrawn for failure to use, especially where a time limit has been agreed for spend.

Environmental & Sustainability

16. Full design for the Cemetery Lodge redevelopment and extension is being produced. There is a clear intention from BCLT with their development partners to incorporate renewable technologies in the scheme. Construction methods that promote affordable warmth are also being considered. This is in line with the HH&RSS.

Legal Implications

17. A grant application for these funds has been made by BCLT. Members have previously given delegated authority to the Director of Place and Climate Change 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

Human Resources Implications

18. None.

Crime and Disorder

19. This empty building is at risk of vandalism and attracting further anti-social behaviour in the vicinity of Bexhill Cemetery. Development of the site will mean it is occupied.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Joe Powell – Head of Housing and Community
e-mail address:	joe.powell@rother.gov.uk
Appendices:	A Previous Community Housing Fund spend
Relevant Previous Minutes:	CB21/31
Background Papers:	Housing Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-24
Reference Documents:	

Appendix A

Total spend to date from Community Housing Fund (CHF)

Capital and Revenue spend

Organisation	Capital	Revenue
Bexhill CLT		£12,066
Ickelsham Parish CLT	£297,000	£30,000
Pett & Guestling PCs	£6,633	
Sussex Community Housing Hub (SLA)	£100,000	
Sub Totals	£403,632.62	£42,066
Total	£445,698.62	

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Rother District Council

Report to:	Cabinet
Date:	31 October 2022
Title:	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring as at Quarter 2 - 2022/23
Report of:	Antony Baden – Chief Finance Officer
Ward(s):	All
Purpose of Report:	To note the estimated financial out turn for 2022/23 based on expenditure and income to the end of Quarter 2, 30 September 2022
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 financial position as at the 30 September 2022 and projects a provisional outturn for 2022/23. The revenue budget and capital programme statements are summarised in Appendices A and B, respectively. The impact of the forecast on the Council's reserves is summarised in Appendix C. The report also includes a brief update on the Collection Fund performance.

Revenue Budget

2. The revenue budget forecast as at the 30 September 2022 indicates a surplus of £527,000 against the approved budgeted drawdown from Reserves of £3.2 million. The position is summarised in Appendix A and the main variances are explained in paragraphs 3 to 15.

Corporate Core – Deficit £14,000

3. There have been no material changes since the last forecast.

Environmental Services – Surplus £1,000

4. There have been no material changes since the last forecast.

Strategy and Planning – Deficit £98,000

5. The forecast deficit has decreased by £24,000 since Quarter 1. Planning Appeal costs have reduced by £150,000 due to the Planning Inspectorate not awarding costs to the appellant in respect of the Strand Meadow appeal. Also, income from planning applications has continued to improve (£15,000).

6. However, these have been partially offset by additional staffing costs (£41,000) and expenditure on the Local Development Framework (£100,000).

Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration– Surplus £563,000

7. The forecast shows a surplus improvement of £563,000 mainly due to rental income of £583,000 from the purchase of Buckhurst Place in April 2022. This figure is reduced by £20,000 due to other rent write offs and repairs.

Housing and Community Services – Deficit £87,000

8. The forecast deficit has reduced by £217,000, which is due to higher than anticipated Car Parking income.
9. There have been other changes since the last forecast, which have a net zero impact. Administration costs in respect of the Refuse Collection contract have decreased by £95,000, salary savings have also increased by £46,000 and other smaller savings have contributed a further £39,000. However, these have been offset the rising costs of Temporary Accommodation costs of £180,000.

Resources – Deficit £583,000

10. The deficit has increased by £480,000 mainly due to less than anticipated recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments (£435,000) arising from the improved performance of claims processing. Whilst this is a significant figure, Members should note that this figure represents just 2% of the overall expenditure on Housing Benefit claims. The Chief Finance Officer will continue to work with Revenues and Benefits to improve the accuracy of this forecast.
11. Additional computer licence of £25,000 have also contributed to the increase and smaller variances totalling £20,000 make up the remainder.

Net Financing Costs – Surplus £1,157,000

12. The surplus has increased by £371,000 since the last forecast because no new borrowing has been taken out since the last forecast and the pace of the capital programme has not increased significantly.
13. Members will note that this budget is subject to a detailed review as part of the Medium-Term Financial Planning process to be reported later this year.

Financial Stability Programme (FSP) – Deficit £502,000

14. Whilst significant progress has been made in some areas of the FSP, such as the devolution of services, these will not begin to be delivered until 2023/24. Some modest savings have been realised mainly from additional rent income from Amherst Road (£55,000) and the reduction of a post in the Environmental Health department (£25,000), which will partially offset the shortfall.

Income – Surplus £89,000

15. There have been no material changes since the last forecast.

Capital Programme

16. The Capital Programme comprises a range of strategic projects that span more than one year and many operate for several years or have recurrent investments. Projects that have not spent all their allocation in the year of inception have the remaining funding carried forward into the next financial year. This is known as 'slippage'. The Chief Finance Officer continues to work with Heads of Service to undertake a fundamental review of the capital schemes in 2022/23 and beyond. The inflation and interest rate rises are having a significant impact on the affordability of some capital programmes, especially since the cost of capital is met by revenue expenditure.
17. Appendix B shows the original budget approved by Cabinet on the 22 February 2022, totalling £85.4m. Slippage from prior years accounts for a further £54.7m, including the items detailed in paragraph 14, giving a revised in year capital budget of £140.2m. The actual figures represent the expenditure to September 2022 of £14.9m.
18. The programme includes two new schemes since the budget was approved. The first is the purchase of a property in Buckhurst Place for £10.5 million as part of the £35 million approved Property Investment Strategy. The second relates to the redevelopment of a council-owned site at Beeching Road/Wainwright Road, Bexhill for £15 million, (approved by Cabinet on the 7 February 2022, Minute CB21/77 refers).
19. The forecast outturns have been derived from reviewing the progress of the schemes, project cashflows and assessing the expected position at the year end. Several projects are under review or have encountered delays, including the housing company scheme and PIS developments, this has reduced the forecast spend this year to £13m.
20. Other schemes – Corporate document and ICT schemes are expected to be spent in future years. The Community Grant scheme has an anticipated overspend of £34k this year, due to a higher take up of grants from previous years than previously anticipated. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund is a 3-year revenue/capital programme and its allocation is recorded in the capital programme for future allocation and monitoring.
21. Property Investment Strategy – All schemes will continue to be reviewed for affordability and reported to the Property Investment Panel. The previously delayed Beeching Park Estate is now an active project and the initiation development at Wainwright Road is progressing.
22. Housing Development Schemes – The Community Led Housing is a rolling grant and will be allocated at a suitable time. The Blackfriars Housing site is progressing, and the HIF grant is all allocated. King Offa and Camber sites are in the process of securing central government grants and the business cases are being reviewed to be presented to Cabinet later in the year.
23. Community – The Leisure centre projects are currently on hold. The Disabled Facilities Grant is being spent and the balance will be allocated in due course. The Temporary Accommodation purchase budget will be allocated when

suitable properties become available, this is a fund expected to operate over several years.

24. The capital programme is funded by numerous sources, the majority being borrowing, although grants account for 7% of the revised budget. Borrowing attracts a revenue cost to the Council and at the time of writing, Public Works Loan Board rates across the board are in excess of 5%. Therefore, it is essential that the affordability of the Council's capital programme is reviewed as part of the Medium-Term Financial Planning process.

Impact on Reserves

25. The forecast impact on Reserves is a drawdown of £3.072m, which is £488,000 lower than the planned use of £3.560m.

Collection Fund

26. The collection rate at the 31 August 2022 for the Council Tax part of the Collection Fund was 47.97% of the collectable debit, which is 0.04% lower than the corresponding figure in 2021/22. The budgeted yield is 49.09%, which is 0.43% lower than the same period in 2021/22. Collection performance is shown below:

	2022/2023	Equivalent Period 2021/2022
Income Received	£86,484,070.68	£82,264,280.12
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	47.97%	48.01%
Budgeted yield (at 98.3% collection)	£84,513,438.24	£79,751,694.59
Income Received as a % of budgeted yield	49.09%	49.52%

27. The collection rate at the 31 August 2022 for the Business Rates part of the Collection Fund was 51.17% of the collectable debit, which is 14.47% higher than the corresponding figure in 2021/22. Collection performance is shown below:

	2022/2023	Equivalent Period 2021/2022
Collectable debit	£17,595,402.81	£14,814,736.60
Income Received	£9,003,290.39	£5,437,112.31
Income Received as a % of collectable debit	51.17%	36.70%
Amount outstanding for year	£8,592,112.42	£9,377,624.29

28. There are two reasons for the large difference. Firstly, the 2021/22 quarter 1 collectible debit was reduced due to retail businesses receiving 100% relief, which was then reduced to 66% in quarter 2 thus increasing the collectable debit by about £5.1m. Secondly, Schools now pay Business Rates in a single payment whereas last year they paid over several instalments. The 2022/23 collection rates are now in line with pre-Covid 2019/20 rates.
29. Collection rates continue to hold up well but there are some early signs of lower collection rates on council tax, albeit very marginal at this stage. The next few

months should provide a much clearer picture of the impact that the current economic crisis may have on Council Tax and Business Rates income.

Conclusion

30. The revenue forecast for Quarter 2 2022/23 is a deficit of £2.659 million, which is £527,000 lower than the approved planned use of Reserves. The Chief Finance Officer will work closely with Heads of Services and Members to reduce areas of overspend and its impact on reserves.
31. The Council's capital programme is forecast to underspend by £112.2 million against the revised budget. Slippage relating to schemes in 2022/23 will be reviewed by the Chief Finance Officer and Heads of Services and carried forward into the following financial years following if required.

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 Revenue Budget Forecast Appendix B Capital Programme Forecast Appendix C Reserves
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.

Revenue Budget 2022/23 Forecast as at the September 2022

Line	Rother District Council General Fund Summary	Draft 2021/22 Actual £ (000)	Revised 2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Estimated Outturn £ (000)	2022/23 Quarter 2 Variance £ (000)	Change in Previous Month £ (000)
1	Corporate Core	1,938	2,173	2,187	14	14
2	Environmental Services	451	629	628	(1)	(1)
3	Strategy and Planning	1,506	1,325	1,423	98	(24)
4	Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(384)	(11)	(574)	(563)	(563)
5	Housing & Community Services	8,116	8,211	8,298	87	(217)
6	Resources	3,580	3,302	3,885	583	480
7	Total Cost of Services	15,208	15,629	15,847	218	(311)
8	Net Financing Costs	281	1,542	386	(1,157)	(371)
9	Budget Contingency	0	200	200	0	0
10	Financial Stability Programme - savings/cost reductions	(196)	(635)	(133)	502	502
11	Net Cost of Services	15,292	16,736	16,299	(437)	(180)
	Income					
12	Special Expenses	(692)	(702)	(702)	0	0
13	Net Business Rates & Section 31 Grants	(3,745)	(3,747)	(3,747)	0	0
14	Non-Specific Revenue Grants	(2,436)	(1,650)	(1,739)	(89)	0
15	Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,097)	(7,392)	(7,392)	0	0
	Other Financing					
16	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	120	(59)	(59)	0	0
17	Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	0				
18	Total Income	(13,849)	(13,551)	(13,640)	(89)	0
19	Contribution from Reserves/Funding Gap	1,444	3,186	2,659	(527)	(180)

Capital Programme 2022/23 Forecast as at the September 2022

	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual to Month 6	2022/23 Forecast	2022/23 Variance (Slippage)
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration					
Other Schemes					
Corporate Document Image Processing System	399	105	0	0	105
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	153	304	36	0	268
Community Grants	130	143	82	96	(34)
Cemetery Entrance	83	1	1	0	(0)
Development of Town Hall Bexhill	15	172	309	54	(191)
Ravenside Roundabout	200	200	0	0	200
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	334	0	0	334
Property Investment Strategy					
PIS - Beeching Road/Wainwright Road	2,590	3,549	0	0	3,549
PIS - Beeching Park Estate	0	450	0	0	450
PIS - Beeching Road 18-40 (Creative Workspace)	29	29	152	35	(158)
PIS - Barnhorn Road	6,099	6,099	148	1,671	4,280
Mount View Street Development - Public commercial	0	964	0	0	964
PIS - Buckhurst Place	0	10,500	10,182	0	318
PIS - Redevelopment at Beeching Rd - Wainwright Rd	0	15,000	0	2,050	12,950
Housing Development Schemes					
Community Led Housing Scheme - CHF	0	600	297	0	303
Blackfriars Housing Development - infrastructure only	7,450	5,143	1,322	3,822	(1)
RDC Housing Company Limited funding	60,492	79,923	0	4,000	75,923
RDC Housing Company share investment	0	301	0	0	301
Development of council owned sites	0	213	6	25	182
King Offa Residential scheme	0	398	16	645	(263)
Mount View Street Development - Housing	0	2,450	0	0	2,450
Camber, Old Lydd Road	0	0	0	4	(4)
Housing and Community Services					
Community					
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	55	58	29	29	(0)
Land Swap re Former High School Site	900	1,985	0	0	1,985
Bexhill Leisure Centre - site development	189	189	0	0	189
Fairlight Coastal Protection	0	229	0	14	215
Disabled Facilities Grant	1,625	1,903	490	11	1,402
Sidley Sports and Recreation	101	297	194	6	98
New bins	125	149	38	114	(4)
Improvements to Northiam Recreation Ground s106	0	0	0	7	(7)
Bexhill Promenade - Protective Barriers	0	2	0	1	1
Housing (purchases - temp accommodation)	4,000	6,743	1,509	321	4,913
Bexhill Promenade - Shelter 1	55	55	24	32	(1)
Bexhill Promenade - Outflow pipe	80	191	0	19	172
Bexhill Leisure Centre - refurbishment	90	140	24	85	31
Capital - Northiam Cemetery Extension – S106	0	0	50	0	(50)
Strategy & Planning					
Payments to Parishes - CIL	48	96	0	0	96
CIL Scheme 1 Village Hall Energy Project	0	500	0	0	500
Resources					
ICT Infrastructure Replacement Programme	0	12	0	0	12
New website development	14	12	3	0	9
Invest To Save initiatives (Financial Stability Prog)	350	721	0	0	721
Total Capital Programme	85,438	140,160	14,911	13,041	112,208

	2022/23 Original Budget	2022/23 Revised Budget	2022/23 Actual to Month 6	2022/23 Forecast	2022/23 Variance (Slippage)
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
Funded By:					
Capital Receipts	900	1,985	50	0	1,935
Grants and contributions	9,371	9,750	2,471	4,537	2,742
CIL	48	596	0	0	596
Borrowing	13,953	47,160	12,255	4,294	30,610
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	674	445	135	210	101
Borrowing and Loan for Rother DC Housing Company Ltd	60,492	80,224	0	4,000	76,224
Total Funding	85,438	140,160	14,911	13,041	112,208

Reserves

	Draft 2021/22 Actual £ (000)	Revised 2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2022/23 Estimated Outturn £ (000)	2022/23 Quarter 2 Variance £ (000)	Change in Previous Month £ (000)
Revenue Reserves and General Fund - Opening Balance	(13,209)	(11,088)	(11,088)	0	0
Use of Reserves to Fund Capital Expenditure	678	374	413	39	0
Use of Reserves to Balance Budget incl deficit	1,444	3,186	2,659	(527)	0
Balance 31st March	(11,088)	(7,528)	(8,016)	(488)	0

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