

## Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date and Time - **Monday 21 November 2022 – 6:30pm**

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

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

P.N. Osborne (Chair), Mrs V. Cook (Vice-Chair), J. Barnes, J.J. Carroll, C.A. Clark, S.J. Coleman, P.C. Courtel, Mrs D.C. Earl-Williams, P.J. Gray, K.M. Harmer (ex-officio), C.A. Madeley, C.R. Maynard and M. Mooney.

**Substitute Members:** Mrs M.L. Barnes, L.M. Langlands and R.B. Thomas.

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## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To authorise the Chair to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 17 October 2022 as a correct record of proceedings.

### **2. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTES**

The Chairman to ask if any Member present is substituting for another Member and, if so, to declare his/her name as substitute Member and the name of the absent Member.

### **3. ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**

To consider such other items as the Chair decides are urgent and due notice of which has been given to the Head of Paid Service by 12 Noon on the day of the meeting.

### **4. 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.

### **5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2027/28 (Pages 3 - 14)**

### **6. REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING AS AT QUARTER 2 - 2022/23 (Pages 15 - 24)**

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7. **PERFORMANCE REPORT: SECOND QUARTER 2022/23** (Pages 25 - 36)
8. **PROGRESS ON THE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY (2020)** (Pages 37 - 52)
9. **BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA TASK AND FINISH GROUP** (Pages 53 - 58)
10. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 59 - 60)

Malcolm Johnston  
Chief Executive

Agenda Despatch Date: 11 November 2022

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**Rother District Council putting residents at the heart of everything we do.**

## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 21 November 2022

**Title:** Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28

**Report of:** Antony Baden – Chief Finance Officer (CFO)

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of Report:** To review the financial issues affecting the Council and their impact on the financial forecast for the five years ending 2027/28

### Officer

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

- 1) the financial forecast and proposed way forward be noted;
- 2) the Council maintain its policy of maximising the annual increase in Council Tax within the Government’s referendum limit, (see paragraph 29);
- 3) delegation be given to the Chief Finance Officer to finalise the wording of the budget consultation literature in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management;
- 4) the Council continues to be part of the East Sussex Business Rate pool in 2023/24 and that the Chief Finance Officer be given delegated authority to finalise the necessary agreement with the Member authorities in consultation with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance, (see paragraph 23); and
- 5) officers continue to develop proposals that will enable the Council to maintain or replenish its level of Revenue Reserves to £5m, (see paragraph 36).

If supported, the recommendations underpin some of the key assumptions within the financial forecast presented in this report. This provides the basis for the development of the detailed revenue budget for 2023/24 and the Capital Programme for approval in February 2023. The forecast also forms the basis of the public consultation on next year’s budget and council tax.

### Introduction

1. This document sets out the latest forecast budget for 2023/24 and updates the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2024/25 to 2027/28, (see Appendix A). It represents the latest view of the Council’s financial position over this five-year period and is subject to confirmation of Government funding and several other factors that may affect the Council’s finances.
2. The ongoing lack of certainty surrounding local government funding continues to limit the ability to produce reliable financial forecasts especially in respect of

Business Rates income and Government grant. The situation is exacerbated by the economic crisis, rising energy costs and wider global issues.

3. The report describes the financial pressures facing the Council and sets out how it can fulfil its statutory obligation and set a balanced budget. This will again necessitate the need to use reserves, but Members will note that this cannot be a permanent solution and the Council will need to make some difficult decisions over the next 12 months to achieve an affordable and sustainable budget.
4. Members should note that the financial forecast at Appendix A is work in progress and some issues discussed in the report still need to be fully quantified.

### **The Budget Process**

5. The budget process consists of three phases and this report is the result of the first phase. The process is outlined below:
  - i. Phase 1 - Update the MTFP setting out budget pressures and high-level estimates over the next five years;
  - ii. Phase 2 - Produce a detailed draft budget to be considered by Cabinet and referred to Overview & Scrutiny Committee in January 2023;
  - iii. Phase 3 - Finalise the budget, including the Capital Strategy and Capital Programme, for approval by Cabinet and full Council in February 2023.

### **Local Government Settlement 2023/24 and beyond**

6. In June 2022, the Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove, made a couple of key announcements concerning local government funding. Firstly, he indicated his intention to introduce a two-year financial assessment with effect from next year. Secondly, he stated that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) would complete the local government 'Fair Funding Review' in consultation with local authorities in 2022. He also announced that the DLUHC would look to reduce the number of funding pots that Councils must bid for in order to secure resources for specific initiatives.
7. The funding settlement for 2023/24 is expected around mid-December 2022, but at this stage it is unclear whether it will contain further clarification about the June 2022 announcements.

### **Cost Pressures**

8. **Contractual Inflation** – The base budget has been increased by £543,000 to allow for inflationary increases built into certain service contracts. The largest increases are in the Waste Collection (£410,000) and Grounds Maintenance contracts (£100,000).
9. **Homelessness** - The budget in 2020/21 was increased by £250,000 to meet increasing demand. The Temporary Accommodation (TA) acquisition project has also alleviated budget pressure by reducing the use of private rented accommodation however, as reported to Cabinet in the Quarter 2 monitoring report, volumes have increased again in 2022/23. Therefore, a further £260,000 has been included in the 2023/24 budget.

10. **External Audit fees** – Local authority external audits have received much criticism in recent years from the Financial Reporting Council, mainly over the quality of audits and the delays in completing them. Audit companies responded by stating that such audits would require additional resources to rectify these problems. The contract for delivering the audit is currently with Grant Thornton, but it expires at the end of 2022/23. A procurement process was conducted by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) Limited earlier this year on behalf of the Council. The Council has since been advised by the PSAA that our audit costs could increase by £98,000 from 2023/24 onwards.
11. **Net Financing Costs** – The Council continues to deliver an ambitious capital programme, especially with regards to the Property Investment Strategy and TA acquisition programme. Most of the programme will be financed from borrowing, which will incur significant financing costs and presents an affordability risk that has been exacerbated by recent interest rate rises. The budget assumes an underlying borrowing rate of 4%, which is in line with forecasts received from the Council treasury management advisors, however, the Council will be able to use capital receipts of almost £7m to offset its overall borrowing requirement. As a result, the 2023/24 budget includes borrowing costs of £1.4m, rising to £2.1m from 2024/25.
12. The Council has a fixed rate borrowing portfolio of about £32 million, which means that it is protected from interest rate increases. However, Members should note that the financing costs estimates are extremely sensitive to changes in future interest rates and capital expenditure cash flows. Therefore, larger and more complex schemes in the capital programme will be subject to a detailed affordability review before being reported to Members with any recommendations to approve. This is further discussed in paragraph 41.
13. Rising interest rates means that the Council will receive higher than anticipated investment income. The 2023/24 budget has been increased by £183,000 and this additional income will partially offset borrowing costs.
14. **Staffing Costs** – the forecast assumes an annual increase of 3% for the 2023/24 pay award and 2% per annum for each of the following years. This increases the full year budget requirement by approximately £207,000. Staffing budgets have also been decreased by a 1% vacancy allowance to allow for staff turnover, which reduces the budget requirement by about £106,000. The impact of the 1.25% increase in the employer's national insurance contribution rate had been reversed at the time of writing this report, thus reducing the budget requirement by a further £86,000.
15. **Non-Pay Inflation** – Based on forecast information from Link Asset Services, (the Council's Treasury Management advisors), non-pay inflation has been applied at a rate of 4.57% (£259,000) for 2023/24, 2.69% in 2024/25 (£152,400) and 3.37% (£191,000) per annum thereafter. An increase of 10% for Fees and Charges has also been included although this will be subject to approval by Members in a separate report to Cabinet later this financial year.
16. **Electricity** – The Council re-tendered its electricity contract earlier this year with the new prices being implemented from September 2022. Unsurprisingly, the cost has increased dramatically by 61.16%, which is estimated to increase costs by about £88,000 in a full year.

17. **Budget Contingency** – The 2022/23 revenue budget includes a contingency of £200,000, which was set up to absorb unexpected/additional inflationary cost pressures. The economic outlook remains extremely uncertain so it would be prudent to retain the budget contingency in each year of the financial forecast. However, Members will note that Finance will work with budget holders to contain any cost increases within existing budgets.

### **Rother District Council Corporate Plan**

18. The Corporate Plan was adopted by full Council on 5 July 2021. It includes several priority objectives, some of which may require revenue and/or capital investment. The MTFP forecast does not include any additional funding to deliver these objectives, so any proposals for further investment will need to be considered for affordability. This may also necessitate a need to realign existing resources or make compensatory savings elsewhere from the budget.
19. One of the Corporate Plan's priority objectives is to achieve financial stability by the end of 2025/26. The current forecast in Appendix A shows that without further action, an underlying budget deficit will remain until at least 2027/28 and the Council will not be able to replenish revenue reserves. This issue is discussed further in paragraph 22 below.

### **Financial Stability Programme (FSP) and Further Savings**

20. The FSP was agreed by Cabinet on 29 March 2021 (Minute CB20/120 refers) with the aim of achieving financial stability within five years by delivering cost savings and income. The MTFP forecast includes a savings target of £2.137m in 2023/24 and £2.197m in the following plan years.
21. Significant progress has been made in areas such as the devolution of services and other smaller initiatives will deliver savings of £133,000 in the current financial year. However, further work will be required if the Council is to achieve the targets referred to in paragraph 20 above. The situation will be kept under review by officers and any revision to the delivery timeline will be reported to Members along with any impact on the revenue budget.
22. Even with the achievement of the FSP targets, the Council still faces an underlying budget deficit therefore further savings will have to be identified. Officers have already held preliminary discussions with Members and will develop proposals as to how the funding gap should be addressed.

### **Business Rates (Non-Domestic Rates)**

23. The Council remains part of the East Sussex Business Rate Pool, which means it retains the levy on business rate growth which would otherwise be returned to central Government. The pooling arrangement will be reviewed, but it has previously been financially beneficial for the Council to remain in the pool so for the purpose of this forecast it is assumed that it will continue to do so. In September the DLHUC wrote to all councils in the pool asking them to indicate their preference, subject to confirmation by the Secretary of State that pooling arrangements will continue in 2023/24. The CFO provisionally accepted the invitation to remain in the pool, but this needs to be approved by Members.

24. There is still no indication as to when the Government will proceed with its Business Rate reset. Their original intention was to reset the baseline (the amount of business rates it expects councils to collect) by 2020, but various events have delayed this, e.g. a snap general election, Brexit, Covid, etc. The risk of a redistribution of business rates away from the Council still exists, but no assumptions have been included in the forecast.
25. In November 2021 the DLUHC announced its intention to implement a system of triennial property revaluations with effect from April 2023. It is not yet possible to predict the impact but the DLUHC have indicated that councils will be compensated for any adverse changes.

### Non-Specific Revenue Grants

26. The Council has engaged the services of local government policy specialists LG Futures to forecast likely government grant funding levels from 2023/24. The table below shows the forecast net decreases against the 2022/23 base budget in each year of the MTFP:

<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
£295,000	£266,000	£257,000	£306,000	£296,000

27. The main change is due to a £408,000 predicted reduction in the New Homes Bonus grant as this assumes that the Government will wind up the scheme by 2026/27. However, it is expected that this will be partially offset by increases in other grants, mainly the Homelessness Preventions and Services grants.
28. The above information will be confirmed in the local government funding settlement and any changes will be reported to Members in January 2023.

### Council Tax and Council Tax Base

29. For 2022/23, Council Tax was again only allowed to increase by the maximum of 2% or £5 per Band D average before a referendum would be required. There has been no indication that Government will change these parameters in the funding settlement, so the forecast includes these same assumptions.
30. The Council Tax Base in the forecast allows for an annual increase in new builds from housing developments based on the Council's targets less an allowance for collection losses and Council Tax Reduction claimants. The increases for each year of the MTFP are set out in the table below:

<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
426.0	462.1	657.4	612.8	572.8

31. The above increases will be reviewed during phase 2 of the budget process once the final council tax base figures are submitted to DLUHC in December.

### Collection Fund Surplus/Deficit

32. The forecast Collection Fund outturn for 2022/23, which will impact 2023/24 financial year, will be updated during phase 2 of the budget process.

## Revenue Reserves

33. Appendix B sets out the reserves position based on the updated MTFP. The MTFP forecast estimates that a further £5.186m of reserves will be needed to support the Revenue Budget and Capital Programme over the next five years and even at that point, an underlying budget deficit would still exist.
34. By the end of the five-year forecast, the balance of Revenue Reserves is forecast to be about £2.342m, which is well below the £5m level that has previously been used as the Council's preferred minimum level. Members will note that Grant Thornton (the Council's external auditors) recently published a paper entitled 'Lessons from recent Public Interest reports' and it includes a strong emphasis on the importance of maintaining an adequate level of reserves. There is no formal definition as to what constitutes adequate, but Grant Thornton's view is that reserves should be a minimum of 5% of net spending and preferably be somewhere between 5% and 10%. The table below sets out what this would look like for the Council:

	<b>2023/24</b>	<b>2024/25</b>	<b>2025/26</b>	<b>2026/27</b>	<b>2027/28</b>
	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>	<b>£'000s</b>
<b>Forecast Net Spend</b>	<b>15,205</b>	<b>14,814</b>	<b>14,172</b>	<b>14,097</b>	<b>14,404</b>
<b>Reserves @ 5%</b>	<b>760</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>705</b>	<b>720</b>
<b>Reserves @ 10%</b>	<b>1,520</b>	<b>1,481</b>	<b>1,417</b>	<b>1,140</b>	<b>1,440</b>
<b>Forecast Reserves</b>	<b>5,110</b>	<b>3,471</b>	<b>2,860</b>	<b>2,593</b>	<b>2,342</b>

35. The above table shows that the Council's predicted level of reserves would remain well above the threshold stated in Grant Thornton's paper. However, Members should note that the paper is only intended as a high-level guide and the judgment on the adequacy of the reserves is the responsibility of the Council. In the view of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) it would be prudent for the Council to ensure that its Revenue Reserves are at least £5m and where this cannot be achieved in the short term, to develop proposals that replenish reserves to that level. Members will recall that in 2020/21 the Council incurred additional expenditure of £3.3m in response to the pandemic and whilst £2.8m was covered by central Government grants, this perfectly highlighted the need to maintain a prudent level of reserves. Furthermore, there will also be an expectation on the part of the Council's external auditors that reserves are maintained at a suitable level.
36. The forecast level of Reserves is largely dependent on the delivery of the FSP and any additional savings targets as explained in paragraphs 20 to 22. Failure to meet agreed targets will obviously exacerbate the pressure on reserves and mean that they would fall to an unsustainably low level. If this were to be the case the CFO may be obliged to issue a section 114 notice. Under the Local Government Finance Act 1988, a CFO must issue such a notice if they conclude that the Council cannot balance its budget in-year and the necessary action to rectify the situation was not supported by Members. At this point, spending on all but essential services would cease.



37. As mentioned in paragraphs 22 and 36 the Council will need to identify additional savings in order to maintain its reserves at a sustainable level. Once the local government funding settlement has been announced, officers will develop a more detailed plan in the current financial year as to how this will be achieved and will report back to Members in due course.

### **Capital Programme**

38. The draft Capital Programme covering the current MTFP timeframe is shown in Appendix C. It comprises a range of strategic projects that span more than one year and many operate for several years or have recurrent investments. Some projects have recurring investment by the Council to deliver key priorities.
39. Projects that have not spent all their allocation in the year of inception can, if still required, have the remaining funding carried forward into the next financial year. This is known as 'slippage'. The CFO continues to work with Heads of Service to undertake a fundamental review of the capital schemes in 2022/23 and beyond, focusing on outcomes and affordability.
40. For the purpose of this report, slippage from prior year projects has been included in the capital programme in Appendix C, but more accurate cash flows will be developed during phase 2 of the budget process.
41. As mentioned in paragraph 12 capital financing costs estimates are extremely sensitive to changes in interest rates and along with inflation rises, this will have a significant impact on the affordability of some capital schemes. Therefore, larger and more complex schemes will be subject to a detailed affordability review by the CFO and Heads of Service before any proposals are reported to Members for their consideration.

### **Budget Consultation**

42. The Council is required to consult on its budget and council tax proposals with residents and local businesses. The opinions of residents, partner organisations, businesses and other interested parties are an important part of the budget setting process. It is planned to consult between 9 December 2022 and 31 January 2023. An interim report on the consultation will be reported to this Committee on 23 January 2023.
43. The consultation will need to highlight the continuing scale of the financial challenge facing the Council, and its response for dealing with it. Cabinet will be requested to agree that delegation be given to the CFO and Deputy Chief Executive to finalise the wording of the consultation in conjunction with the Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance and Performance Management.

### **Conclusion**

44. There is no doubt that the Council's financial outlook has deteriorated over the last twelve months. Global economic uncertainty, the cost of living crisis and spiralling inflation are predicted to have a major adverse impact on budgets over the next few years. Inflationary pressures alone are predicted to add approximately £1m to the budget deficit in 2023/24 and this will be exacerbated by increasing interest rates, although the Council will seek to offset the latter by

use of capital receipts and an increase in investment income. Also, uncertainty around future levels of government grant funding may well worsen the situation.

45. Further savings are inevitable if the Council is to set a balanced and sustainable budget that is not reliant on the use of reserves. Furthermore, resources will probably need to be realigned if the objectives of the Corporate Plan are to be achieved. Therefore, it is essential that the Council maintains an adequate level of reserves and continues to operate within its approved budget each financial year to prevent further unplanned drawdowns. Failure to do so will impact on the Council's ability to meet its statutory obligations.
46. However, despite the multiple financial pressures, the Council can deliver a balanced budget with a combination of sound financial management and the successful delivery of the FSP and Savings targets. The importance of this last point cannot be overstated and failure to achieve it will result in the Council having to make difficult decisions around the provision of local services.

### Financial Implications

47. As outlined in the report.

### Human Resources Implications

48. The report does not specifically mention the possibility of changes to staffing levels over the period of the financial forecast. If changes are required, the Council would need to follow its established procedures for this including consultation with the relevant Unions and Staff Side.

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

Chief Executive	Malcolm Johnston
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Appendices:	A – Financial Forecast. B – Revenue Reserves C – Capital Programme
Relevant Previous Minutes:	None.
Background Papers:	None.
Reference Documents:	None.

**Rother District Council**  
**2022/23 to 2026/27 Medium Term Financial Plan**

	Revised 2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)	2026/27 Budget £ (000)	2027/28 Budget £ (000)
<b>Departmental Budgets</b>						
Corporate Core	2,173	2,173	2,173	2,173	2,173	2,173
Environmental Services	629	674	674	674	674	674
Strategy and Planning	1,325	1,063	1,113	1,113	1,113	1,113
Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration	(11)	(456)	(1,000)	(1,716)	(1,760)	(1,734)
Housing, Community & Neighbourhood Services	8,211	8,889	8,593	8,581	8,571	8,754
Resources	3,302	3,443	3,443	3,443	3,443	3,443
<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>15,629</b>	<b>15,785</b>	<b>14,996</b>	<b>14,268</b>	<b>14,213</b>	<b>14,423</b>
Net Financing Costs	1,542	889	1,428	1,476	1,455	1,553
Inflation and Staff turnover savings	0	467	386	425	425	425
Budget Contingency	200	200	200	200	200	200
Financial Stability Programme	(635)	(2,137)	(2,197)	(2,197)	(2,197)	(2,197)
<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>16,736</b>	<b>15,205</b>	<b>14,814</b>	<b>14,172</b>	<b>14,097</b>	<b>14,404</b>
<b>Special Expenses</b>						
Special Expenses	(702)	0	0	0	0	0
Business Rates - retained share	(3,747)	(3,995)	(3,995)	(3,995)	(3,995)	(3,995)
Non-Specific Revenue Grants (Government)	(1,650)	(1,355)	(1,383)	(1,393)	(1,344)	(1,354)
Council Tax Requirement (Rother only)	(7,392)	(7,623)	(7,983)	(8,303)	(8,620)	(8,934)
Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	(59)	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(13,551)</b>	<b>(12,973)</b>	<b>(13,361)</b>	<b>(13,691)</b>	<b>(13,959)</b>	<b>(14,283)</b>
<b>Funding Gap</b>	<b>3,186</b>	<b>2,232</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>481</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>121</b>

## Revenue Reserves

Potential Use of Reserves	Revised 2022/23 Budget £ (000)	2023/24 Budget £ (000)	2024/25 Budget £ (000)	2025/26 Budget £ (000)	2026/27 Budget £ (000)	2027/28 Budget £ (000)
Earmarked Reserves and General Reserves	(11,088)	(7,528)	(5,110)	(3,471)	(2,860)	(2,593)
Use of/(Contribution to) Reserves	3,560	2,418	1,639	611	268	251
<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>(7,528)</b>	<b>(5,110)</b>	<b>(3,471)</b>	<b>(2,860)</b>	<b>(2,593)</b>	<b>(2,342)</b>

**Rother District Council  
Capital Programme Summary**

		2023/24		2024/25		2025/26		2026/27		2027/28		Project Budget to date
	Prior year costs	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Variance (Slippage)	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Variance (Slippage)	2025/26 Revised Budget	2025/26 Variance (Slippage)	2026/27 Revised Budget	2026/27 Variance (Slippage)	2027/28 Revised Budget	2027/28 Variance (Slippage)	
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
<b>Capital Project</b>												
<b>Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration</b>												
<b>Other Schemes</b>												
Corporate Document Image Processing System	15	105	0	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	120
Rother Transformation ICT Investment	269	268	138	138	38	38	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	537
Community Grants	693	96	(0)	130	(0)	130	(0)	130	(0)	130	(0)	789
Ravenside Roundabout	0	200	100	100	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	334	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	334
<b>Property Investment Strategy</b>												
PIS - 35 Beeching Road	2,417	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2,417
PIS - Beeching Road/Wainwright Road	384	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,549	3,933
PIS - Beeching Park Estate	0	450	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	450
PIS - Barnhorn Road	2,831	7,520	(73)	(73)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,351
PIS - Redevelopment at Beeching Rd - Wainwright Rd	2,050	12,950	5,450	5,450	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15,000
<b>Housing Development Schemes</b>												
Community Led Housing Scheme - CHF	297	469	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	766
RDC Housing Company Limited funding	4,000	75,923	45,923	45,923	20,923	20,923	0	0	0	0	0	79,923
RDC Housing Company share investment	0	301	301	301	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	301
Development of council owned sites	87	182	182	182	132	132	0	0	0	0	0	270
Community Led Housing Schemes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Prior year costs	2023/24 Revised Budget	2023/24 Variance (Slippage)	2024/25 Revised Budget	2024/25 Variance (Slippage)	2025/26 Revised Budget	2025/26 Variance (Slippage)	2026/27 Revised Budget	2026/27 Variance (Slippage)	2027/28 Revised Budget	2027/28 Variance (Slippage)	Project Budget to date
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
<b>Capital Project</b>												
<b>Housing and Community Services</b>												
De La Warr Pavilion - Capital Grant	290	41	41	98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	331
Land Swap re Former High School Site	0	1,085	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,085
Fairlight Coastal Protection	87	204	104	104	54	54	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	291
Disabled Facilities Grant	6,570	1,625	0	1,625	0	1,625	0	1,625	0	1,625	0	8,195
New bins	536	121	4	129	0	125	0	125	0	125	0	658
Housing (purchases - temp accommodation)	4,670	5,412	412	412	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10,083
Housing (purchases - temp accommodation)	0	817	817		0		0		0		0	817
Bexhill Promenade - Outflow pipe	28	172	172	172	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	200
Bexhill Leisure Centre - refurbishment	131	9	9	9	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	(0)	140
<b>Strategy &amp; Planning</b>												
Payments to Parishes - CIL	40	96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	136
CIL Scheme 1 Village Hall Energy Project	0	500	500	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	500
<b>Resources</b>												
ICT Infrastructure Replacement Programme	137	12	12	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	149
New website development	23	9	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	31
Invest To Save initiatives (Financial Stability Prog)	29	721	721	721	721	721	721	721	721	721	721	750
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>25,584</b>	<b>113,172</b>	<b>58,372</b>	<b>59,492</b>	<b>25,419</b>	<b>27,299</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>6,152</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>6,152</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>138,757</b>
	<b>Prior year funding</b>	<b>2023/24 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2023/24 Variance (Slippage)</b>	<b>2024/25 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2024/25 Variance (Slippage)</b>	<b>2025/26 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2025/26 Variance (Slippage)</b>	<b>2026/27 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2026/27 Variance (Slippage)</b>	<b>2027/28 Revised Budget</b>	<b>2027/28 Variance (Slippage)</b>	<b>Total Project Budget</b>
	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)	£ (000)
<b>Funded By:</b>												
Capital Receipts	0	1,085	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,085
Grants and contributions	6,954	3,449	921	1,729	54	1,679	(0)	1,625	(0)	1,625	(0)	10,403
CIL	40	596	500	500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	636
Borrowing	13,461	31,567	10,677	10,802	4,441	4,566	4,271	4,396	4,271	4,396	4,271	45,029
Capital Expenditure Charged to Revenue	1,129	251	50	237	(0)	130	(0)	130	(0)	130	(0)	1,380
Borrowing and Loan for Rother DC Housing Company Ltd	4,000	76,224	46,224	46,224	20,924	20,924	1	1	1	1	1	80,224
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>25,584</b>	<b>113,172</b>	<b>58,372</b>	<b>59,492</b>	<b>25,419</b>	<b>27,299</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>6,152</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>6,152</b>	<b>4,272</b>	<b>138,757</b>

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 November 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring as at Quarter 2 - 2022/23
<b>Report of:</b>	Antony Baden – Chief Finance Officer
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To note the estimated financial out turn for 2022/23 based on expenditure and income to the end of Quarter 2, 30 September 2022
<b>Officer</b>	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That the report be noted.

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### 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 collectable 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
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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
<b>7</b>	<b>Total Cost of Services</b>	<b>15,208</b>	<b>15,629</b>	<b>15,847</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>(311)</b>
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
<b>11</b>	<b>Net Cost of Services</b>	<b>15,292</b>	<b>16,736</b>	<b>16,299</b>	<b>(437)</b>	<b>(180)</b>
	<b>Income</b>					
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
	<b>Other Financing</b>					
16	Collection Fund (Surplus)/Deficit	120	(59)	(59)	0	0
17	Contributions to/(from) Earmarked Reserves	0				
<b>18</b>	<b>Total Income</b>	<b>(13,849)</b>	<b>(13,551)</b>	<b>(13,640)</b>	<b>(89)</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>19</b>	<b>Contribution from Reserves/Funding Gap</b>	<b>1,444</b>	<b>3,186</b>	<b>2,659</b>	<b>(527)</b>	<b>(180)</b>

## 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)
<b>Acquisitions, Transformation and Regeneration</b>					
<b>Other Schemes</b>					
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
<b>Property Investment Strategy</b>					
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
<b>Housing Development Schemes</b>					
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)
<b>Housing and Community Services</b>					
<b>Community</b>					
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)
<b>Strategy &amp; Planning</b>					
Payments to Parishes - CIL	48	96	0	0	96
CIL Scheme 1 Village Hall Energy Project	0	500	0	0	500
<b>Resources</b>					
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
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>85,438</b>	<b>140,160</b>	<b>14,911</b>	<b>13,041</b>	<b>112,208</b>

	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)
<b>Funded By:</b>					
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
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>85,438</b>	<b>140,160</b>	<b>14,911</b>	<b>13,041</b>	<b>112,208</b>

## 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)
<b>Revenue Reserves and General Fund - Opening Balance</b>	(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
<b>Balance 31st March</b>	<b>(11,088)</b>	<b>(7,528)</b>	<b>(8,016)</b>	<b>(488)</b>	<b>0</b>

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**Rother District Council**

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 November 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Performance Report: Second Quarter 2022/23
<b>Report of:</b>	Director - Place and Climate Change
<b>Ward(s):</b>	N/A
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To monitor the delivery of the Council's Key Performance Indicators
<b>Officer</b>	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee consider these findings and recommend any actions to Cabinet, as necessary.

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**Introduction**

- For the financial year 2022/23, Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) and Cabinet selected a set of 14 key performance indicators (KPIs). These indicators stand as a barometer of the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and those service areas that Members wish to scrutinise over the year. This was agreed by [Cabinet on 7 February 2022](#) (Minute CB21/80 refers)
- For the 2022/23 financial year, the focus had been set on five themes:
  - Housing and Communities**: four indicators to monitor delivery of the Housing and Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
  - Finance Performance**: three indicators to monitor significant non-tax income as a part of the Council's revenue streams and a cost from the housing strategy.
  - Economic Development and Poverty**: three indicators to monitor the impact of the pandemic on household incomes, council tax and business rates collection.
  - Environment**: two indicators to monitor the proportion of household waste collected that is sent for reuse, composting and recycling.
  - Planning**: two indicators to monitor the processing times of applications.
- This report is a summary of the Council's performance against the five themes at the end of the second financial quarter (1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022). The report gives Members an opportunity to scrutinise the progress towards the Council's stated aims, outcomes and actions in the Corporate Plan and make any necessary recommendations to Cabinet for future service delivery.
- A table of the KPI performance can be found at Appendix A. More detailed explanations or definitions on how the KPI is measured can be found at Appendix B.

## Housing & Communities Summary

5. **The total number of households in temporary accommodation (TA).** It is recommended that the number of households in TA is considered by the Council as an indicator of performance rather than a targeted performance measure. The Council has a limited ability to influence the various factors that increase homelessness and the number of households in TA. It is recommended that the Council focus on its homelessness prevention measure as a measure of performance for the Housing Service (see below). The current number of households in TA is 129 of which 19 are discretionary placements that are made for rough sleepers.
6. The increase in TA placements overall is significant compared to the same time last year where there were approximately 90 placements with a similar number of rough sleepers placed. The increase correlates with an overall increase in homelessness presentations caused by a combination of factors including, stored-up demand over the pandemic, the Ukraine crisis, rising house prices and rent costs alongside the impact of the ensuing cost of living crisis on the ability of households to afford their rent. In response, the service is embarking on a recruitment drive to bring in additional resources to improve the flow of households out of (TA) and better prevent homelessness.
7. We are reporting the figures differently from previous years, as discretionary placements have now become more commonplace as we work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to end rough sleeping. We have reviewed the viability of these placements in East Sussex with the DLUHC, as the cost is proving unsustainable in the longer term. We are working with wider partners in East Sussex to secure additional funding to support the cost of these discretionary placements in 2022/23. We are also executing a plan to reduce these discretionary placements in a managed and measured way, utilising the county-wide Rough Sleeping Initiative and locally commissioned services to ensure rough sleeper numbers are minimised.
8. **Average unit cost of TA** – This is a new target and we have set the target at £1,201 that is 10% above the average cost per placement in 2021/22, to allow for the 10.1% CPI rate of inflation for September 2022. We have developed the target to better measure our efforts to reduce the cost of TA per household placed. As Members are aware, the Temporary Accommodation Support Service (TASS) is designed to reduce the cost of TA placements through the purchase of accommodation and the Council now has 24 properties under its management for use as TA. However, the majority of placements are still supplied by third party providers in the private sector.
9. The performance for Q2 is £1,130, which is below the new target and 3% increase on the same quarter last year; however, when we allow for inflation over the period, the average unit cost is less than last year, in real terms. We are still monitoring the impact of inflation on the cost of placements which will form part of future reports. We also expect the figure to be revised downwards once we are reimbursed by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) for the cost of placements under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

10. **Homelessness prevented or relieved** - The new homelessness prevention target is proposed at 120 per year or 30 per quarter. This is based on a performance average of 25 preventions per quarter in 2021/22. The performance in Q2 2022/23 was 30 preventions and reliefs, which is an increase of 20% on the average in 2021/22. We are improving our rate of preventions and reliefs through the work of the Rother Tenant Finder service, which offers landlord incentives and support for tenants to access rent in advance and deposit. We have also begun to lease accommodation from landlords to increase our performance.
11. **Number on the Housing Register** - The number on the housing register will reduce significantly once the new process of migrating households to the new Allocations Scheme is completed within 2022/23. The number on the register is as much a measure of the relative inclusivity of the criteria within the Allocations Policy as it is an indicator of the level of housing need in the district.
12. **Affordable homes built** - At end of quarter two, there are 64 new homes built. This is 61% of the year end supply target. In the second quarter there were completed 15 units for rent and 6 for shared ownership. This included 15 units at our first Community Led Housing scheme at Orchard Close, Icklesham (12 rented, 3 shared ownership). We remain on track to meet the supply target for 2022/23.

## Finance Performance

13. The acquisition of the Sainsbury's site at Buckhurst Place, Bexhill has meant that the estimated income for this will significantly out-perform the anticipated income target. The Property Investment Strategy originally made available £35m with a £2.1m gross income target and the ambition of generating £700k of net additional income after borrowing costs. The full £35m has now been either spent or allocated and is already generating an annual income of £1.687m. Due to lower than anticipated borrowing costs, the net income from investments so far is £850k per year. Three of the acquired sites are development sites and are yet to produce an income.
14. The Council Tax collection rate was at 57.31% at the end of September compared to 57.17% for the same period last year. Although collection is becoming more challenging as yet this has not been reflected in the recovery rates. However, this will continue to be closely monitored.
15. The Business Rates collection rate was at 59.17% at the end of September compared to 46.16% up to September last year (2021).

## Economic Development and Poverty Summary

16. The number of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) scheme claimants has not significantly changed from the Q1 numbers. In total there are 6,548 CTR claimants made up of 2,852 pensioners households (44%) and 3,696 working age households (56%). Numbers are closely monitored to try and identify any significant changes as soon as possible.
17. The Council Tax collection rate was at 57.31% at the end of September compared to 57.17% for the same period last year. Although collection is

becoming more challenging as yet this has not been reflected in the recovery rates. However, this will continue to be closely monitored over the winter period as household bills continue to rise.

18. The Business Rates collection was at 59.17% at the end of September compared to 46.68% for the same period last year. However, with the number of different reliefs available to businesses over the past few years it is difficult to compare collection year on year. The last time we had similar reliefs available to businesses was during 2019/20 and our current collection rate is in line with this period.

## **Environment Summary**

19. The current waste collection system is based on collecting recycling materials co-mingled. That is collecting glass bottles, plastic bottles, plastic packaging, drinks cans, yoghurt pots, and cardboard, all mixed together in the resident's green bin and collected by Biffa at the resident's kerbside.
20. The most effective method of collecting these items accurately is at the kerbside, where the waste crews can do a superficial check on each bin for contamination.
21. The recycling rate is measured by the tonnage collected of co-mingled recyclable material versus total refuse and is translated into percentage.
22. We currently have 20,641 garden waste subscribers whose garden waste tonnages is included in the recycling tonnages and so very much contributes to the overall recycling percentage, as garden waste weighs more than dry recycling.
23. Residents also have had access to various recycling 'bring sites' across the district which offered the same co-mingling recycling facilities. Despite concerted efforts to enforce accurate use of the containers, including officer monitoring, use of CCTV and posters, these sites all suffer from excessive contamination i.e. people mixing general refuse in with the recycling. This has meant that these contaminated 'bring site' containers have had to be emptied as refuse rather than recycling.
24. As mentioned previously, a far better quality of material is collected at the resident's kerbside and so the bring sites are gradually being phased out over a period of time. The Ravenside 'bring site' - one of the most heavily contaminated sites - was closed on 19 October 2022. These closures will encourage people to use their green containers more, and excess recycling material can be presented alongside their green container on recycling collection days, suitably contained in a clear plastic bag. There is no restriction on the amount of recycling material that can be presented on recycling collection days.
25. Alternatively, it may encourage people to use their local tips more. This will also improve the quality of recycling as tips are closely monitored by East Sussex

County Council (ESCC). But the tonnages collected will not count towards the RDC recycling percentage.

26. During COVID, the general household waste tonnages increased as people shopped and worked from home; pre-COVID (2019-2020) from 18K tonnes to 20.5K tonnes in 2021-2022. During the same pre-COVID period recycling was at 18K tonnes and increased to 19.5K tonnes in 2021-2022. This is largely due to the increase in garden waste subscribers. The amount of dry recycling tonnages has remained static throughout the period.
27. The important focus is to work both on improving the quality of the recycling material collected as well as the amount of recycling material collected.
28. For 2021/2022, RDC achieved an overall annual recycling rate of 48.52%. It peaked at 54.39% in July 2021 and hit its lowest of 39.35% in February 2022. The previous year averaged 47.07% 2020/2021.
29. For the first quarter April 2022 to June 2022 recycling percentage was at 52.49% compared with 50.79% for the same quarter 2021/2022.
30. A number of actions are being taken to improve recycling and re-use. As reported above, the first steps have been taken in closing the most contaminated recycling 'bring sites'. Further banners and social media were used during the summer to encourage visitors to the tourist beaches and towns to 'take their litter home with them' to aid recycling using their green bin.
31. The current focus being worked on across the waste partnership and ESCC is with regards to the separate kerbside collection available for the recycling of small electrical items and batteries, often termed small WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment). Residents are encouraged to present small electrical items such as toasters, power drills, hair dryers etc in a plastic bag on top of their bin on their collections days and Biffa will collect these items and store in them in a separate compartment on the waste vehicle. If collected separately, these items are managed and disposed by Light Brothers who are specialists in recycling these items, stripping down metal for reuse and separating out hazardous waste.
32. The above actions all make significant contributions towards the quality of recycling but may not necessarily be reflected in an increase in the recycling percentage rate, which this year (2022/2023) may well drop due to the summer drought affecting garden waste tonnages.
33. Going forward, the waste industry is still waiting for further directives from Government on secondary legislation regarding the impact of the UK Environment Bill on the future of recycling. The main impact will be the anticipated separate collection of food waste; the introduction of extended producer responsibility whereby producers are made responsible for the entire life of the products they introduce on the market; and the 'deposit return scheme' whereby people are encouraged to return drinks containers for recycling in return for a small amount of money.

34. Officers have been investigating the request from Members to add to the KPIs a measurement of a carbon baseline. There are two possible measurements, one for the operations of the Council and one for the whole district. Members may wish to consider whether they wish to monitor one or both.
35. The advantage of using the measurement of the Council's own CO2 emissions are that emissions are under its direct control. This measurement is calculated by the Council's own staff using a national approach and can be reported annually as each financial year ends. Based on the creation data and subsequent delivery of the Environment Strategy, the baseline year was selected as 2019/20 because it was the year before the strategy was adopted. RDC's Scope 1 and 2 emissions for the baseline year of 2019/20 up to 2021/22 are as follows:

Scope	Emissions Type	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
		Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total	Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total	Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total
Scope 1	Heating	57.61	<b>21.6%</b>	66.68	<b>33.6%</b>	74.97	<b>34.29%</b>
	Fleet	9.55	<b>3.6%</b>	8.71	<b>4.4%</b>	8.77	<b>4.01%</b>
Scope 2	Electricity	199.42	<b>74.8%</b>	123.07	<b>62%</b>	134.92	<b>61.70%</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>266.58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>198.46</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>218.66</b>	<b>100%</b>

36. As expected, the pandemic caused quite a decrease in emissions in 2020/21 and this rose slightly as we emerged from this the following year. However, emissions were still 18% lower in 2021/22 than our baseline year.
37. Our current Environment Strategy was published in September 2020. The policy is being reviewed and an action plan drawn up that will set out a pathway to Net Zero by 2030, with scientifically based reduction targets for the Council's own emissions year on year.
38. There is a second measurement that there are district-wide carbon emission figures for Rother here. These figures come from the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). These would be a reasonable and consistent base to report because they are Government figures and nationally recognised. In addition, the current work on the Local Plan is looking at these figures in more detail from a local perspective to identify what is unique about Rother and where we should focus the Local Plan's efforts to reduce CO2 emissions. Another advantage of this measurement is that we can make comparison to other local authorities and the county and national results. It is even more comparable if we use emissions per capita or the average tonnes for each person in the district.
39. There are drawbacks to using this measurement. The most recent data available is for 2020 and there will always be a reporting lag. No matter what the Environment Strategy may deliver, the impact will not be visible in the data for at least two years. The main reason the national emissions have dropped year on year is that the UK has phased out coal and the renewables sector has grown. The table below shows that Rother's emissions are higher than the East Sussex average per person, but lower than for the South East and England. As reported above, due to the pandemic, the year 2020 was not an average year and setting any target should take that into account.

All sectors	Emissions in Kt		Emissions per person t	
	2019	2020	2019	2020
<b>Rother</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>341</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>3.2</b>
East Sussex	1,880	1,672	3.4	3.0
South East	40,240	35,657	4.4	3.9
England	274,433	245,713	4.9	4.3

40. Members may wish to consider making a recommendation to Cabinet on whether it should be monitoring one of these measurements or splitting this KPI into a part a) for the Council's own emissions and a part b) for the emissions for the whole district. The targets for a) would be the same as those in the action plan of our Environment Strategy.

### Planning Processing Summary

41. The returns show a continued downward trend in the average number of days processing Major applications for the quarter, because there are relatively few Major decisions. With a dedicated pre-application and Planning Performance Agreements (PPA) service, it is anticipated that the management of Major applications, including the actual application phase, will result in continued improved times for processing planning applications. Although, with most permissions subject to legal agreements and ongoing delays in statutory consultee responses, the timescale is, to considerable extent, outside of the service's control.
42. From July to September inclusive, again a downward trend in the average number of days to process a Non-Major application is demonstrated. It is considered that, with reduced applications on hand, removed validation backlogs and controlled application backlogs, the figures should see further improvement.
43. The improved time to validate applications is expected to continue to improve with the knock-on effect of these applications getting to case officers sooner, giving them more time to process planning applications and reduce the need to seek extensions of time.

### Conclusion

44. This report sets our performance against the agreed key performance indicators for the five themes for the second quarter of 2022/23.
45. Members are requested to consider performance against targets or forecasts, as well as potential new targets, and pass recommendations for action to Cabinet for consideration.

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



Risk Management	Yes	Exempt from publication	No
Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston		
Report Contact Officer:	Joanne Wright		
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:joanne.wright@rother.gov.uk">joanne.wright@rother.gov.uk</a>		
Appendices:	A – Summary KPI Table B – KPI Definitions		
Relevant previous Minutes:	CB21/7		
Background Papers:	None		
Reference Documents:	None		



## Summary of All KPIs

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

<b>Housing &amp; Communities</b>	Status	Target	Q2 Result	Compared to Q2 2021/22	Compared to previous quarter
Number of all households in temporary accommodation		60	136		
Number of households on the housing register		1,200	2,068		
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) (supply target: end of year)		106	64		
Homelessness Prevented and Homelessness Relieved (new KPI)		No target	Prvt: 14 Relv: 14		
Cost of temporary accommodation (new for 2022/23)		£1,201	£1,130		
<b>Finance Performance</b>					
Net income from all investment assets		£1,850,000	£2,566,126		
Additional income generation		£107,000	£55,200		
<b>Economic Development and Poverty</b>					
Number of Council Tax reduction claimants: Total, Pensioners and Working Age		T: 6,960 P: 3,041 W: 3,919	T: 6,548 P: 2852 W: 3,696		
Council Tax collection rates (income received as a % of collectable debit)		98.3%	57.31%		
Business Rates collection rates (income received as a % of collectable debit)		98%	59.17%		
<b>Waste Collection</b>					
ESCC Waste re-used, composted and recycled (reported one quarter in arrears)		54%	Q1: 52.28%		
Carbon baseline (new for 2022/23) (no target yet)					
<b>Planning Processing</b>					
Major applications: weeks to process or calendar days to process		13 weeks 91 days	26 w & 4d: 186 days		
Minor applications: days to process		8 weeks 56 days	19w & 4d: 137 days		

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

## Notes on KPI Measurement Definitions

### Number of all Households in Temporary Accommodation

1. This measurement is the number of households that the Council has placed in temporary accommodation (TA) and are resident in TA on the last day of the quarter. Mainly these are households either waiting for a decision on their application for homelessness or accepted as homeless and waiting for suitable permanent accommodation.

### Average Weeks in Temporary Accommodation

2. This measurement is the average number of weeks that the households who are in temporary accommodation have been living in temporary accommodation.

### Number of Households on the Housing Register

3. This measurement is the number of households on the housing register on the last day of the quarter. This list covers all households who have met the criteria to be able to join the register.

### Additional Homes Provided

4. This measurement counts the number of all new homes in Rother, allowing for demolitions and change of use to give a net gain. This measurement monitors the delivery of the Corporate Plan outcomes to manage spatial development and the provision of affordable and decent housing stock.
5. As the Core Strategy is now more than five years old, the Local Plan target has been replaced with a Local Housing Need figure based on the standard method (until a new Local Plan is adopted).
6. This indicator has two components: the supply target and the Local Housing Need figure. The supply target is based on the projected delivery for the year, as set out in the April 2022 Housing Land Supply and Trajectory report.

### Affordable Homes Built

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

### Number of Council Tax Reduction Claimants

9. This measurement monitors the total number of council tax reduction (CTR) claimants (working age and pensioner) in a receipt of a reduced council tax bill.

### **Council Tax Collection Rates**

10. This measurement monitors the percentage of collected council tax as a percentage of the estimated collectable debt in the year.

### **Business Rates Collection rates**

11. This measurement monitors the percentage of business rates collected of the estimated collectable debt in the year.

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

12. This measurement is the percentage of collected household waste sent to be re-used, recycled and composted.
13. This is based on data reported by East Sussex County Council (ESCC), which includes all waste collection streams and is reported one quarter in arrears. The target in each quarter varies, depending on the time of year, leading to an average of 52%.

### **Net Income from All Investment Assets**

14. This measurement is forecast annual net income from investments calculated from gross income less expenditure, excluding borrowing and interest payments.
15. The Asset Income total does not include 'community' assets which might also generate an income, such as sports facilities, allotments etc.

### **Additional Income Generation**

16. This measures additional income generation through increased or new fees for discretionary services.

### **Days to Process Major Housing Development Applications**

17. This measurement is the average number of weeks, or calendar days, to determine 'major' planning applications from the date of receipt of the application to the date that the council made a decision. Major planning applications is a reference to major or larger housing developments.

### **Days to Process Minor Housing Development Planning Applications**

18. This measurement is the average number of calendar days to determine 'minor' planning applications. Minor applications is a reference to smaller housing developments. It does not include changes to single homes.

## Rother District Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Date:</b>	21 November 2022
<b>Title:</b>	Progress on the Environment Strategy (2020)
<b>Report of:</b>	Ben Hook, Director – Place and Climate Change
<b>Ward(s):</b>	All
<b>Purpose of Report:</b>	To update Members on progress of implementation of the Council’s Environment Strategy.
<b>Officer</b>	
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It be <b>RESOLVED</b> : That the progress made against the Environment Strategy (2020) be noted.

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### Introduction

1. On 16 September 2019, full Council passed a motion declaring a ‘Climate Emergency’ and made a carbon neutrality commitment for Rother District Council (RDC) with a target date of 2030. The Climate Change Steering Group (CCSG) has been established by Cabinet to develop, plan, and initiate the steps that the Council will need to take to meet this highly ambitious target. The Environment Strategy (ES) was developed in 2019 and subsequently adopted on 21 September 2020. The ES and its action plan are delivered across all the Council’s service areas.
2. This report is intended to update Members on progress made since the last report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 25 April 2022.

### Overview of last 6 months activities

#### Staff resources

3. Since the previous report, two new staff members have joined to lead our work on carbon reduction and the ES. Elize Manning joined us in April 2022 as Projects Officer – Environment; her role is to develop and deliver projects that aim to reduce the carbon footprint of both the Council and the wider district.
4. Lucie Bolton joined us in October as the Environment Strategy Officer and is responsible for reviewing and updating our strategic approach to carbon reduction and the environment.

### Projects

#### Baselining and Monitoring our Annual Emissions

5. We have adopted the LGA Green House Gas (GHG) Accounting Tool for Local Authorities to track our annual emission of tonnes of Carbon dioxide (tCO<sub>2</sub>e) and other GHGs, starting from a baseline year of April 2019 – March 2020.

6. The tool categorises emissions into three distinct Scopes;
  - Scope 1: Emissions released as a direct result of organisational activity.  
This includes our consumption of gas for heating and fuel consumed by our fleet vehicles.
  - Scope 2: Emissions released as an indirect consumption of an energy commodity.  
This includes our purchased grid electricity.
  - Scope 3: All other indirect emissions other than electricity, as well as emissions from operations that have been outsourced.  
This includes water supply and waste, staff business travel and commuting, and all emissions by providers of our statutory services. Work is ongoing to identify our Scope 3 emission sources and implement methods to capture the required data. It is estimated Scope 3 emissions make up 60% - 80% of a Local Authority's total emissions.
7. Our Scope 1 and 2 emissions since 2019/20 are shown in table 1 below.

Table 1: Rother District Council annual GHG emissions

Scope	Type	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
		Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total	Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total	Emissions (tCO2e)	Percentage of Total
Scope 1	Heating	57.61	21.6%	66.68	33.6%	74.97	34.29%
	Fleet	9.55	3.6%	8.71	4.4%	8.77	4.01%
Scope 2	Electricity	199.42	74.8%	123.07	62%	134.92	61.70%
<b>Total</b>		<b>266.58</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>198.46</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>218.66</b>	<b>100%</b>

8. Emissions generated by the Town Hall made up 39% of total emissions in the baseline year 2019/20.
9. Going forward, it is intended our annual emissions will be routinely published in line with the developing Climate Action Communications and Engagement Plan.

### Village Halls Energy Project

10. The Village Halls Energy Project, led by the Projects Officer – Environment, aims to reduce the carbon footprints of Village and Community Halls across Rother through energy efficiency measures, switching to low carbon energy systems and installing renewables. £500k of project funding was approved by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) panel in July 2022 from the Climate Emergency Bonus fund.
11. 40 halls have expressed an interest in taking part, which will begin with a bespoke Net Zero plan developed for each site to identify appropriate measures and estimate costs. A prioritisation process will follow to allocate funds to the proposals that will have the greatest impact on emissions. The intended project completion date is May 2024.

### Electric vehicle charging points in Council owned car parks

12. On 28 March 2022, Council approved procurement of a provider to complete feasibility studies to install charging points at nil capital cost to the Council. Site surveys have since been undertaken by the provider and we are awaiting the

outcome of detailed feasibility studies, to include details of infrastructure capability from UKPN. Once the feasibility studies are complete, an application for the funding of equipment and installations will be made.

13. Subject to favourable feasibility reports and successful funding, the provider is confident that installation at the priority car parks of De La Warr Bexhill, Bedford Place Rye and Mount Street Battle will be complete by spring 2023.

### **Couch to Carbon Zero**

14. We are the first local authority to commit to the Couch to Carbon Zero Sprint. All employees and Members have been invited to join the sprint, which involves receiving one email a day for ten days, featuring advice on small lifestyle changes that will have a big impact on the planet.
15. To incentivise participation, a prize draw is being offered with an opportunity to win a £150 voucher to a local green Michelin star restaurant, or one of two luxury food hampers.
16. Our sprint is running from 7 to 18 November, in line with the annual UN Climate Change conference, COP27, in Egypt. The winner of the prize draw will be announced on 25 November.
17. We are also inviting Rother Parish Councillors, residents and businesses to join us. Information has been emailed to clerks and included in the MyAlerts / My Business Alerts emails, as well as social media posts and a news article on our website. (No prize draw is being offered for external participants).

### **Green Team**

18. The Green Team was re-launched in June 2022, chaired by the Projects Officer (Environment) and meets every 4 – 6 weeks. Membership currently comprises of 16 employees from a cross section of Council departments.
19. Projects that have been prioritised for immediate action by the Green Team include improving recycling rates at Town Hall and reducing emissions from staff commuting.

### **Hydro-treated Vegetable Oil (HVO) Waste collection fuel trial**

20. Waste collection and street cleansing services generate carbon emissions through the operation and consequently the fuel consumption of the vehicles which are required to deliver these services. Changing the fuel used by the vehicles from diesel to hydrotreated vegetable oil (HVO) offers an immediate reduction in the carbon being generated and the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee has recommended that each partner council consider the implications of funding HVO in 2023/24. Minute JWRC 462022 (b) refers.
21. This recommendation follows a lengthy period of work by the Joint Waste Climate Change Working Group to consider short- and longer-term options to minimise carbon emissions. The principles for an agreement aligned with the Joint Waste Contract to enable use of HVO have been agreed with Biffa and the councils are liable to fund the cost differential between diesel and HVO fuel. While the cost per litre of both fuels' changes regularly in response to external

economic and market forces, fuel consumption can be more directly linked to distance travelled and it is estimated that circa 1million litres of fuel per annum are required across the whole partnership.

22. As a guideline, in the Rother District area, circa 336,000 litres of fuel is required to operate the existing fleet and allowing a 64.8pence differential concludes that an estimated additional annual budget of £218,000 will enable use of HVO and secure an immediate reduction in carbon emission of up to/approximately 90%.
23. It is important to be aware that a single fuel tank, located at the St Leonards depot, supplies the vehicles used to operate in both the Hastings and Rother areas. To enable the change to HVO will therefore require both Hastings and Rother Councils to accept the terms of the agreement in due course.
24. The detailed business case, including carbon reduction benefits, continues to be developed and will be considered by the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee in January 2023. It is intended for the final terms of the Agreement to secure use of HVO fuel as the alternative to diesel to be approved by the Joint Waste and Recycling Committee in January 2023, with a view to be contractually enabled and operationally implemented by April 2023.
25. A full and detailed report will be presented to Cabinet in due course for their consideration.

### **Strategy Review and Update**

26. Climate science and climate action have progressed significantly in the last two years. The ES will be reviewed and updated considering these advancements. The revised strategy will be evidenced-based and Rother specific. As a coastal and rural community, the Strategy will reflect the unique challenges Rother faces.
27. A Climate Action Plan with measurable deliverables will be developed to support the ES, providing clear, timely direction for staff, Members and stakeholders.

### **Conclusion**

28. Delivery of the ES and action plan has significantly improved over the last six months. There is a renewed focus within the CCSG which is now meeting monthly and driving the policy agenda of the Council's climate change ambitions. A full summary of the projects being reviewed by the Climate Change Steering Group can be found at Appendix A. The new staff resourcing has made a significant impact on the ability of the Council to deliver against its aims.
29. The current adopted ES is outdated and the strategic ambitions lack clarity of focus. As such, a full review and rewrite of the strategy is required with a view to have a fully adopted revision by December 2023.

### **Environmental implications**

30. This report is about delivery progress against a key strategic document, Rother's Environment Strategy (2020).



## Financial Implications

31. The cost of the proposals set out in paragraph 22 indicate an additional budget requirement of £218,000 per annum, which would currently be unfunded. If Members wish to accept these proposals, officers will need to identify funding from elsewhere within the base budget. This may well result in a cut in other service areas. Any such changes will need to be agreed with the Chief Finance Officer and require Member approval.

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

Chief Executive:	Malcolm Johnston
Report Contact Officer:	Ben Hook/Elize Manning/Lucie Bolton
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:ben.hook@rother.gov.uk">ben.hook@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	A - CCSG Project Summary
Relevant previous Minutes:	N/A
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

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**Climate Change Steering Group: Environment Projects Summary**

Updated 10/10/2022

Strategic Priorities:  
 1 – Becoming a Smart digital district. 2 – Green Economy. 3 – Air quality & sustainable transport. 4 – Sustainable waste management.  
 5 – Sustainable Energy. 6 - Protecting & enhancing bio-diversity. 7 – Construction & existing buildings. 8 – Environmentally friendly council

PROPOSALS TO DISCHARGE:

- Electric Community Bus Service
- Repair Swap Shop / Café

Projects added since last circulated are highlighted in bold.

1. Ongoing / planned Projects

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Page 43  Tier 1  Immediate Action	Establish a Green page on the Council website to highlight accomplishments & proposed projects	Corporate									x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer/Green Team.</u> At 10/10/22: Climate Emergency web page has been re-designed to link to all RDC pages that contribute to the Environment Strategy. Additional pages are being drafted, including RDC baseline emissions, summary of RDC climate achievements each year and additional advice / guidance for residents and businesses.
	Evaluate & reduce Council staff travel emissions	Corporate			x						x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer/Green Team</u>  On 11/10/22 the 10 week SusTrans Active Steps cycling programme was completed. This involved guided bike rides, maintenance and advice sessions for cyclists to encourage staff commuting by bicycle.  The cycle to work scheme is due to be re-launched imminently - awaiting date for a site visit.  Team Charters are being produced to outline WFH strategies. This was due to be discussed at the Manager's Forum in July 2022, but this was postponed until September. Request has been submitted to HR that environmental impact of commuting is included as a factor for consideration in each Team Charter.

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Page 44											A Green Team sub-group has been convened to devise the best way to measure baseline commuting emissions – most likely through staff survey
	Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Points in Council Car Parks	District			x						<p><u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> On 28 March 2022 Council approved procurement of a provider to complete feasibility studies to install charging points at nil capital cost to the Council. Installations to be completed in at least 3 car parks by May 2023.</p> <p>At 04/10/22: The site surveys have been completed and we are now progressing feasibility studies. In order to progress as quickly as possible, we have prioritised De La Warr, Bedford Place, Rye car park and Mount Street (Battle) car parks. EB Charging will establish costings and seek infrastructure capability from UKPN. Once the feasibility studies are complete, RDC/EB Charging will be able to apply for funding for the equipment and install.</p> <p>Further meeting booked 21/10/22. EB Charging are aiming to get Phase 1 charge points installed by Christmas, however there are risks; some or all sites will not prove economically viable for EB Charging to invest / delays due to UKPN infrastructure / not meeting funding criteria / legal requirements.</p>
	Electric community bus service	District			x						<p><u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> Project not yet started but expected to be considered for CIL funding in second round of 2022.</p> <p>10/10/22: Procurement of an electric bus for lease to the Community Bus service now been specifically included in Bexhill Town Council's Environment Strategy.</p>
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Street Tree Project, Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF)	Partnership							x		<p><u>Lead: Project Manager – Highways Funding and Development (ESCC).</u> RDC submitted a bid to UTCF for tree planting on roadside verges at 31 locations in Bexhill. ESCC have taken over working with Trees for Cities to progress this project and planting is due to take place in winter of 2022/23.</p> <p>At June 2022, ESCC confirmed 14 proposed sites will not be planted on due to lack of funding. However, Trees for Cities have applied for the next round of the UTCF and included the remaining sites within this bid. This will give them more time to seek the additional match funding needed for the project.</p> <p>At August 2022, Trees for Cities updated that the scanning of locations for confirmed viability will commence on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2022, with planting immediately thereafter.</p>

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary			
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8				
Page 45	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Green Recovery Challenge fund project								x			<u>Lead: Parks Technical Officer:</u> Trees for Cities secured funding of £143,000 to increase tree cover in Bexhill. As of 28/07/22, 3 sites have been shortlisted (Bexhill Downs, Sidley Rec. and Southlands Open Space) with an additional 3 'back-up' sites in case any are unfeasible. First phase consultation at Southlands Open Space was due to take place on 29/07/22, with remaining two sites to follow shortly. A Celebration Event took place at DLWP on 02/10/22. Planting is due to take place Autumn – Winter 2022-23.		
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Working with BEG								x			The Council continue to work with Bexhill Environmental Group on tree and hedge planting proposals for Winter 2022 – 23. An additional 2000 trees are to be planted at Bexhill Down in Nov 2022.		
	Improve Tree cover in Bexhill: Complete I-Tree Eco study report and develop subsequent strategy to protect and enhance tree cover in Bexhill	Corporate								x			<u>Lead: Parks Technical Officer / Environment Strategy Officer.</u> The Bexhill i-Tree Eco study began in February 2021 and a report was drafted in April 2022 by Treeconomics. Report was reviewed by the Parks Technical Officer and returned for finalisation in June 2022. The development of a strategic Urban Forest Master Plan, as recommended within the draft report, will be considered with the Environment Strategy Officer who started end of September 2022.	
	Roll out of "One Digital"	Corporate										x	<u>Lead: Corporate Business Analyst:</u> One Digital, which includes a switch to Council Tax e-billing and electronic communications RE benefits, is almost ready to go live. Discussions on whether this should be implemented as an opt in or opt out are ongoing. Designed as a cost saving measure, however, the footprint of paper use in current Council Tax system has been estimated at 1.88 tCO2e per year. At 10/10/22: The briefing to Members scheduled for 19/10/22 has been delayed due to technical issues with the system delaying launch, as soon as they are resolved, launch date / briefing will be confirmed.	
Tier 2	Reduce Village Hall carbon emissions & install EVCPs: Village Halls Energy Project	Partnership						x			x	<u>Lead: Environment Project Officer.</u> Project was signed off by full Council on 07/09/22. Awaiting sign off by legal so we can invite quotes for Phase 1 (net zero plans for each hall and prioritisation report). Target completion date for Phase 1 is March 2023.		
Short Term (Complete within 2 years, by 2024)	Ensuring the new Local Plan (2019-39) includes policies that demand higher bio-diversity net gain measures than required by National Planning Policy.	Corporate									x	x	x	<u>Lead: Planning Policy Manager.</u> The existing Local Plan came into effect in 2014. The emerging plan, which was hoped to be drafted by late 2022 and adopted in 2024, sets out our response to the climate emergency with a vision of 'Green to the Core', as presented to the CCSG by the Planning Policy Manager on 12/05/22. <a href="#">Position Statement April 2022.</a>  Public consultation was due to take place in Summer 2022, however now postponed until early 2023. Consultation with Parish/Town Councils due to take place Autumn 2022.  In October 2022 RDC commissioned a report to outline the Net Zero Evidence

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary	
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
											base in Rother to shape the new local plan. First draft expected in December 2022	
	Plant more wildflower areas on green spaces	Corporate / District								x	Lead: Parks Development Officer. At 10/10/2022: From May 2023 seasonal bedding to be replaced with Herbaceous perennials, shrubs, hedges or pine trees at Bexhill Cemetery Garden of Remembrance, Polegrove Bowls Club, DLWP Car Park, East Parade and Lanes Gardens.	
	Real time display on Town Hall to show solar power generated	Corporate						x			x	To be progressed in line with Town Hall Renaissance programme.
	Meet the Target page on the Council website for Tree Coverage	Corporate									x	Lead: Environment Project Officer. At August 2022 previous progress was made available to the current EPO. To be progressed with Environment Strategy Officer on appointment.
	Electric bike hire	Corporate / District			x							
	Encourage Biodiversity audits by Parish Councils	District / Partnership								x		
	Charging points for electric bikes	District			x							
	Rother Carbon Reduction Award for businesses	District		x								Lead: Environment Strategy Officer: Not yet started. This could build upon the pledges made on the Bexhill Unwrapped webpage: <a href="http://Bexhill-on-Sea(mytownunwrapped.co.uk)">Bexhill-on-Sea (mytownunwrapped.co.uk)</a>
	Air quality measurement kit for cyclists	District			x							What's the purpose? Lots of data already exists. Mobile unit of this size may not be accurate. In air quality management areas there may be more data available for cyclists to avoid area
	Install Air quality monitors throughout the district	District			x							Lead: Environment Project Officer. At 10/10/2022, meeting scheduled on 13/10/22 with Environmental Health to discuss air quality measures in Rother.  Continuous analysers cost £20k plus each. We have around a dozen tubes (£7 each plus officer time to collect / send off), as per the annual Air Quality Status report. £5 500 for portable monitors.  Sussex air want a real time quality monitoring system for Sussex – possible DEFRA grant to provide these across Sussex to give real time monitoring,
	Increase the proportion of waste that is recycled by Rother residents.	District				x						Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager. The UK Environment Bill obtained Royal Assent in Nov 21 and we await secondary legislation regarding food waste collections and the deposit return scheme. Until these are implemented - perhaps 2025 - a realistic target for recycling percentage remains at approx. 50%. ESCC compiled an update on the UK Environmental Bill in September 2022, stating next update from government expected Spring 2023.

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
											ESO and EPO to visit Energy Recovery Facility (Newhaven) and the In Vessel Composting facility (Lewes) in Nov 2022.
	incentivising Parish and Town Councils to adopt Climate Emergency Policies	Partnership			x				x	x	Lead: Environment Strategy Officer: Hurst Green were the first Parish Council to declare a Climate emergency in July 2022. They have called on RDC to support PCs with a framework template. To be progressed once ESO is in post. Bexhill Town Council declared a Climate and Nature emergency in June 2021 and in October 2022 drafted a Climate Action Plan. Crowhurst PC and Battle TC also have declared Climate Emergencies. ESO / EPO top collate a package of resources to support Parish / Town Councils with Net Zero ambitions.
Tier 3	Solar panels on leisure facilities & other Council buildings	Corporate						x		x	Lead: Environment Project Officer. As of August 2022, previous reports and surveys detailing solar feasibility at RDC sites have been collated and will be reviewed. A memorandum of co-operation is being drafted between RDC and Energise Sussex Coast.
Medium Term	Pollinator and pesticide policy review	Corporate							x		Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
(Complete up to 5 years, by 2027)	Supply composters	District				x					Lead: Environment Project Officer. As of August 2022, RDC website has a composting page which links to resources, including ESCC guidance with link to a provider. The UK Environment Bill obtained Royal Assent in Nov 21 and we await secondary legislation that will introduce food waste collections.
	Verges campaign	District							x		
	Incentivise drivers to go electric	Partnership			x						
Tier 4	Green Asset Management Plan	Corporate							x	x	Lead: Corporate Programme and Projects Officer: Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
	Develop a plan to ensure all Rother District Council assets are carbon neutral	Corporate								x	Lead: Economic Development Manager: Deferred awaiting outcome of possible devolvement of responsibilities to Parish Councils.
	Heat pumps on new housing and retrospectively	Corporate/ District / Partnership						x		x	Lead: Planning Policy Manager. Renewables feature heavily in the Emerging Local Plan, expected to be drafted by end of 2023.  East Sussex Directors Meeting held on 08/08/2022 considered a coordinated approach across East Sussex for decarbonisation of housing. It was agreed the officer from ESCC would have more in depth discussions with housing leads and come back to the September meeting.

Priority Level	Project/Objective	Category	Strategic Priority								Status summary
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Page 48											East Sussex Housing Group (ESHOG) have formed a Climate Sub-group to discuss joint bids for retro-fit grant applications for housing stock. First meeting was held 03/10/22.
	Improve signage on waste bins at bring sites	District				x					(Bring sites at Rye Leisure Centre and Ravenside Retail Centre have been closed in 2022.)
	Repair swap shop	District / Partnership		x		x					Repair Café features in Bexhill Town Council Climate Action Plan.
	Re-usable Nappy Scheme	District / Partnership				x					<u>Lead: Environment Strategy Officer.</u> Initiatives at WDC and LBC reviewed in August 2022 - these require significant resources and funding respectively. ESO due to meet with local Nappy Library company 04/11/22 to discuss promoting re-usable nappy use in Rother.
	Become a veg first District	District							x		
	Increase use of public transport and active travel	Partnership		x	x						
	Pedestrianise streets in Town Centres	Partnership		x	x						
	De-carbonise Waste Fleet	Partnership			x	x					<u>Lead: Neighbourhood Services Manager.</u> The Joint Waste Members and Officer working group held an inception meeting in July 2022 to discuss TOR and see which direction Cllrs wanted to proceed. Lead Cllrs were in agreement to proceed with switch to HVO instead of diesel as is practicable. The team will work with our consultants Hester to progress this, with next report expected Jan 2023.
Total No. of projects covering each priority											

## 2. Completed Projects Summary

Project/Objective	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Developing a Net Zero Evidence Base to support the Local Plan	Corporate / District									x	(Expected by Jan 2023.)
Reducing RDC Staff Travel Emissions	Corporate			x						x	In August 2022 RDC signed up to Active Travel Charity SusTrans' 10 week Active Steps Programme, loaning bikes to staff and providing support sessions including guided bike rides, maintenance sessions and route planning advice.
Reduce, Re-use and Recycle Grants Scheme	Corporate/ District				x						In September 2022, £15 000 was ringfenced from the 2023/24 Community Grants Scheme for Reduce, Re-use and Recycle Grants, available to Parish and Town Councils or Community Groups. Grants are limited to £1000 and may be used for eligible projects or activities including workshops, practical equipment, education and awareness raising.



Project/Objective	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
Village Halls Energy Project	Partnership					x		x		In July 2022 £500k of funding from the CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund was awarded to the Village Halls Energy Project. The project aims to reduce the carbon emission of Village and Community Halls across Rother. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2024.
RDC Staff Green Team established	Corporate								x	In May 2022 the Green Team was established, made up of a cross-section of RDC employees to identify and tackle issues to bring us towards our carbon neutral target.
100% renewable energy contracts adopted	Corporate					x			x	In May 2022 the Council procured 100% renewable energy contracts, due to come into force September / October 2022.
UK Green Building Council	Corporate							x	x	In May 2022, RDC joined the UK Green Building Council, gaining access to advice, information and training on all matters relating to net zero/low carbon development, climate resilience and nature-based solutions, and further expressing our intent to achieve carbon net-zero by 2030.
Switch to waterless urinals	District							x	x	In April 2022 waterless urinals were installed at Town Hall and Devonshire Road Public Conveniences.
Eco-Tips added to My Alerts	Corporate								x	Implemented April 2022, the weekly My Alerts email sent to Rother residents includes tips on how to become more environmentally friendly. As of May 2022, the weekly Eco-Tip is also published on the internal staff notice board.
Rural Superfast Broadband Scheme	Partnership	x								This project aimed to support 4 community applications for superfast Broadband, and this was achieved in March 2022. Openreach have advised they are not accepting new schemes.
Discouraging green cultural development & events in Rother	District / Partnership								x	A workshop with a focus on hosting events with the Environment and Sustainability in mind was commissioned by Rother District Council's Regeneration Team in January 2022, as part of a wider range of free workshops delivered between April 2021 and March 2022 for local community events promoters. The team have also added a section to the Rother Events Grant application form requiring details of how each applicant intends to make their event Eco-Friendly.
Carbon literacy training for Council staff & members.	Corporate								x	Two rounds of carbon literacy training were completed at the Council in 2021 and 2022, attended by a total of 17 members and 24 officers. It is anticipated that further training will be scheduled.
Planting of wildflower areas	Corporate / District						x			Flower towers at Marina Gardens have been replaced with an annual meadow mix for Summer 2022.
Introduction of CIL Climate Emergency Bonus Fund	Corporate								x	As set out in the Corporate Plan, a new process for distributing the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was approved in March 2022, reserving a proportion of funds for projects that directly address the climate emergency or those which have a distinctive environmental benefit, as long as they meet the base criteria for CIL.
Increase tree cover in Bexhill	District / Partnership								x	Bexhill Environment Group completed hedgerow planting at Broad Oak Park Dec 2021 plus tree planting on Bexhill Down.  Tree planting was completed at Sidley Recreation Ground in Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 as part of the Bexhill BMX and Skate Park project.  As part of the Trees For Cities Forgotten Places Project, the environmental education charity Field Studies Council is helping Rother residents connect with nature and improve their knowledge and skills to plant, protect and promote urban trees. On 7 <sup>th</sup> May 2022 Field Studies Council offered free places on spring tree identification and care training courses to residents of Bexhill and the surrounding urban areas.

Project/Objective	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary	
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8		
Environmental Clause in all new contracts	Corporate									x	As set out in the Corporate Plan, from 2021 carbon reduction clauses are now included in all new Council contracts and included in Neighbourhood Services officer appraisal targets.
Swap shop for office moves	Corporate									x	Following a suggestion made via the staff digital suggestion box, an online swap shop was created in July 2021, where staff can post to either offer or request office equipment from colleagues. This is helping us to reduce our consumption through ordering less equipment and saving equipment from being disposed of when it could in fact be useful to others.
Virtual mailroom	Corporate									x	Adopted in May 2021 as a cost saving measure, we now outsource the printing and posting of our mail to an external provider through a digital system. This removes another barrier to staff working from home, negating the need to travel into the office in order to send post, as well as reducing the number of printers needed within the organisation, consumption of ink and paper etc. We continue to work with the provider to improve their practices by, for example, switching away from envelopes containing plastic windows.
Maintenance Tracker Developed	Corporate									x	In early 2021, a digital maintenance tracking system was developed, superseding a manual paper-based system. Digitising the system allows for photos be uploaded alongside a maintenance issue being reported, so the team can assess what materials will be required to fix the issue without a preliminary site visit. The system has improved efficiency of the team and reduced travel emissions.
Page 50 Council's Paperless Pledge & Digital Image Processing	Corporate									x	<p>In November 2020 the Climate Change Steering Group made a pledge to go paperless – only receiving printed material if specifically required for issues such as health or poor eyesight. By May 2021 all committees were given an option to go paperless.</p> <p>The Council's Customer Services Team also committed to the pledge and reduced their annual use of A4 sheets from 60,000 to 10,000 and their use of A3 sheets from 500 to zero in the first year. Where there are still printing requirements, black &amp; white and double-sided printing is used by default to help reduce ink and paper consumption. Much of this progress was made by introducing a process of scanning documents produced by residents and emailing them to the correct department, rather than making copies.</p> <p>In 2021 RDC began a 12 month roll out of switching from a paper-based process for annual leave requests to an electronic system. This has saved 250 pieces of card annually.</p>
Staff digital suggestion box	Corporate									x	Implemented November 2020 for any staff suggestions for improvements, including those that have an environmental benefit.
Increase in working from home and on-line meetings	Corporate			x						x	As a result of the constraints imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020, RDC has seen a dramatic increase in staff working from home and continues to support staff to do so through the provision of technology solutions and plans to adopt an agile working policy. Carbon emissions are therefore reduced through less miles travelled by staff to attend the office.
Solar panels on Council owned buildings	Corporate					x		x	x		Solar arrays were installed at Bexhill Town Hall and Bexhill museum in Feb 2019. More council buildings are due to be reviewed for further solar arrays to be installed.
Corporate Plan 2020 - 2027	Corporate									x	Climate Emergency was included as a priority objective in the Corporate Plan 2020 – 2027.
Environment Strategy Published	Corporate									x	In September 2020 the Council published the Environment Strategy 2020 – 2030, setting out 8 priorities: 1 – Becoming a Smart digital district. 2 – Green Economy. 3 – Air quality & sustainable

Project/Objective	Category	Linked Strategic Priority								Status / Update summary
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
										transport. 4 – Sustainable waste management. 5 – Sustainable Energy. 6 - Protecting & enhancing biodiversity. 7 – Construction & existing buildings. 8 – Environmentally friendly council
Climate emergency Declared	Corporate								x	Rother District Council declared a Climate Emergency in September 2019, with the ambitious target of being carbon, and other noxious gas, neutral by 2030.

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## Rother District Council

**Report to:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 21 November 2022

**Title:** Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group

**Report of:** Ben Hook, Director – Place and Climate Change

**Ward(s):** All

### Officer

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

- 1) a Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area (BTCCA) Task and Finish Group be established, comprising five non-Executive Members, to review the BTCCA Technical Advice Note;
  - 2) the Terms of Reference at Appendix A and appointments to the Group be approved; and
  - 3) any recommendations from the Task and Finish Group be considered by the Committee following the production of a final report.
- 

### Background

1. In September 2022, this Committee, during its consideration of three Technical Advice Notes (TANs) regarding the implication and application of various elements of planning policy, decided that a Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group (BTCCAT&FG) should be established (Minute OSC22/20 refers).
2. This Task and Finish Group will examine national regulation, local policy, and enforcement process in relation to the BTCCA and how this is reflected in the TAN.

### Terms of Reference

3. The draft Terms of Reference for the BTCCAT&FG can be found at Appendix A.

### Conclusion

4. The BTCCAT&FG will consider the format and content of the TAN, consult with local stakeholders and identify key areas where greater clarity or detail is needed.
5. The Group may wish to make additional recommendations in relation to how the Conservation Area is treated as part of local plan policy, which could be reviewed as part of the local plan review.

6. The Group may also wish to make additional recommendations in relation to how the Conservation Area is considered in relation to the Rother District Council Planning Enforcement Policy, which could be reviewed and amended if necessary, subject to normal policy governance.

### Human Resources Implications

7. The BTCCAT&FG will be led by the Planning Policy Manager, with additional resources from the Development Management team.

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:	Ben Hook
e-mail address:	<a href="mailto:ben.hook@rother.gov.uk">ben.hook@rother.gov.uk</a>
Appendices:	A – Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task and Finish Group: proposed Terms of Reference
Relevant previous Minutes:	OSCS22/08
Background Papers:	None
Reference Documents:	None

## BEXHILL TOWN CENTRE CONSERVATION AREA – WINDOWS TECHNICAL ADVICE NOTE TASK AND FINISH GROUP

### Terms of Reference

- Aims and Origin** - Most of Bexhill town centre was built between 1895 and 1905 and because of this short building period the architecture is particularly homogenous.

The quality and character of its late Victorian/ Edwardian architecture was recognised in 1992 through the designation of the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area. This designation, made under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, bestows a statutory duty on the Local Planning Authority to pay special attention, in exercising planning functions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

Recently, an argument has been made that the requirement to protect or enhance the character or appearance of the conservation area hinders investment, with window replacement being an issue raised through a number of planning applications.

A technical advice note (TAN) was drafted to provide advice to developers and decision-makers on how the Council's adopted planning policies should be applied to planning applications for alterations to, or replacement of, windows within the Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area. It does not, and cannot, set new planning policy. It presents a series of scenarios to increase understanding of how planning applications would be considered in four generic situations.

On considering the draft TAN, on 29 September 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee resolved that a Task and Finish Group be set up to consider the draft TAN.

### Scope

To consider:

- a) National legislation regarding conservation areas.
- b) The information and guidance provided in the draft technical advice note.
- c) What can be done to support business and investment in Bexhill town centre without damaging or devaluing

the conservation area.

## **Approach**

- a) Introductory presentation of draft TAN by Rother planning officers.
- b) Review national legislation relating to conservation areas.
- c) Review previous documents and initiatives<sup>1</sup> relating to the Town Centre Conservation Area, including its designation, policy and guidance.  
Receive a view from local businesses and Bexhill Heritage.
- e) Receive the advice of historic building experts – including Rother planning officers, Historic England and independent professionals in relation Conservation Areas.
- f) Peer review of guidance produced by other LPAs on this subject.
- g) Consider the pros and cons of a TAN in relation to alterations or replacement to windows, and if a TAN is supported, recommend any amendments to the TAN that the group considers appropriate based on the information it has received.
- h) Consider initiatives to support businesses and residents and the conservation area.

## **Desired Outcomes**

- a) An understanding of Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area, the legislation related to this designation, the benefits of such a designation, and the impact on business and residents.
- b) Analysis of the draft TAN, including recommendations for any proposed amendments to the technical advice note that the group considers appropriate, along with other initiatives that would enhance the town centre's commercial vitality, reduce levels of deprivation, and enhance the quality of its built environment.

## **Timescale**

- A full day exploratory meeting to be held January/February 2023.
- Analysis, report writing and recommendations – February 2023.

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### <sup>1</sup> Including:

- A three year programme (2002-2005) of grant aid funded by the Council and English Heritage provided assistance to repair buildings in the town centre's commercial streets and restore lost character (the Heritage Economic Regeneration Scheme – HERS).
- A Conservation Area Appraisal, published in 2004.
- The Bexhill-on-Sea Town Centre Conservation Area: Shopfronts + Signage Guidance, published in 2006.
- A 'Strategy for Bexhill Town Centre, which considered the inter-relationships of conservation and development factors, published in 2013.



- Report back to OSC – March 2023.
- Membership** - Five Non-Executive Councillors as nominated by the Committee (not necessarily Members of the OSC).
- Officer Lead** - Jeff Pyrah – Planning Policy Manager

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2023</b>		
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>SUBJECT – MAIN ITEM IN BOLD</b>	<b>Cabinet Portfolio Holder</b>
<b>21.11.22</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2027/28</b></li> <li>• Performance Report: Second Quarter 2022/23</li> <li>• Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 2 2022/23</li> <li>• Bexhill Town Centre Conservation Area Task &amp; Finish Group</li> <li>• Progress on the Environment Strategy (2020)</li> </ul>	<b>Jeeawon Field</b>
<b>28.11.22 (Additional)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Temporary Closure of Rye Swimming Pool</b></li> </ul>	<b>Timpe</b>
<b>23.01.23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Draft Revenue Budget Proposals 2023/24</b></li> <li>• Annual Review of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (2019-2024)</li> <li>• Rother Health and Well-Being: Leisure Facilities Strategy</li> <li>• Key Performance Targets 2023/24</li> </ul>	<b>Jeeawon Byrne Timpe</b>
<b>13.03.23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Crime and Disorder Committee: to receive a report from the Community Safety Partnership</b></li> <li>• Performance Report: Third Quarter 2022/23</li> <li>• Revenue Budget and Capital Programme Monitoring – Quarter 3 2022/23</li> <li>• Recommendations of the Off-Street Car Parks Task &amp; Finish Group</li> <li>• Recommendations of the Health &amp; Well-Being Task &amp; Finish Group</li> </ul>	<b>Jeeawon Field</b>
<b>24.04.23</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call-in and Urgency Procedures</li> <li>• Draft Annual Report to Council</li> </ul>	
<b>ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION</b>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regeneration inc. Leisure Centre, Fountains, Skate Park and Accessibility of Green Spaces across the district</li> <li>• Review of the Economic Regeneration Strategy</li> <li>• Peer Review</li> <li>• Draft Corporate Customer Services Strategy Proposals</li> <li>• Litter Strategy</li> <li>• Review of the Tourism Strategy and the impact of Airbnbs – date TBC</li> <li>• Impact of Airbnb and second homes in Rye/Winchelsea/Camber</li> <li>• Effectiveness of 'MyAlerts'</li> <li>• Update report from the Local Strategic Partnership</li> <li>• Update report from the Health and Wellbeing Board</li> <li>• Corporate Plan review – to be referred back by Cabinet – date TBC</li> <li>• Review of the Financial Stability Programme – date TBC</li> <li>• A review of Mental Health across the district – date TBC</li> </ul>		

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